



Puppy Health Care

A puppy is a bundle of joy and needs special care to grow into a well-behaved and healthy dog. Here is an overview of what to do for success.

Vaccinations

Distemper/Parvo combination is given at 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age and is recommended for all puppies. If older than 16 weeks, only one booster is given. After this first series, the Distemper/Parvo vaccine is given every 3 years.



Rabies is given at 3-4 months of age and is legally required for all dogs. The first rabies vaccine is good for 1 year. After that, your dog can have a rabies vaccine that lasts for 3 years.

Leptospirosis (often just called Lepto) is advised for all dogs. They need 2 vaccines initially. The vaccine is good for 1 year.

Bordetella is needed if the puppy will be around other dogs such as during boarding, grooming, puppy classes, or at the dog park. The vaccine is good for 1 year. since all you have to do is feed them like normal.

Nutrition

Puppies less than 4 months old should be fed 3 meals per day. Adult dogs should be fed 2 times daily. Food labeled for puppies has extra energy and nutrients that are required for a growing puppy. Feed a high quality food. You really get what you pay for when it comes to pet food.

Spay and Neuter

Your puppy should be spayed or neutered between 4 and 6 months of age. Females are less likely to develop mammary tumors and males are less likely to develop anal tumors or prostate problems if they are spayed and neutered when they are young. This is also an ideal time to place a microchip ID.

Parasites

All puppies need to be treated for roundworms as they get them from their mother. A stool sample should be checked at the first appointment and again 1 month later or after treatment. Other parasites seen in puppies include hookworms, whipworms, giardia and coccidia.

Heartworm preventive medication should be started at 8 weeks and the puppy should be tested when 6 months or older. All puppies should be on flea prevention.



Grooming

Getting your puppy used to grooming early in life will make it easier to groom him when he is grown. Train your puppy to allow you to handle their feet and ears as these tend to be the most sensitive areas. Nails grow quickly and should be trimmed regularly, generally every couple of weeks.



Clean his ears out as needed. Flea combs are useful to check for fleas and to remove them. Getting him to enjoy a bath now will make it easier later on. Be sure to use a dog shampoo.

Dental Care

Your puppy's permanent teeth will come in between 3½ to 7 months of age. Dogs can have the same dental problems that humans have so it is important to brush their teeth regularly.



This works best if you start when they are puppies. Other options include special foods or dental chews.

Training

An obedience class is a great idea for dogs of all ages! Register your puppy for puppy kindergarten classes as soon as possible. Use a crate to confine your puppy whenever you can't watch him. This aids in housetraining and prevents unwanted chewing. Always praise your puppy for doing what you like rather than scolding when he does something wrong. Be patient and consistent.

