

## **Basic Information for Dog Owners**

**1. Vaccines** - All puppies should start the vaccine series between 6-8 weeks of age. Puppies receive the DHPP (distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza and parvovirus) vaccine and the coronavirus vaccine every 3 weeks until 4 months of age. Adult dogs should receive the DHPP vaccine every year thereafter. Rabies is given at 3 months. The first rabies vaccine is good for 1 year, and then each one after that lasts for 3 years. Any additional vaccines that may be needed will be tailored to the individual dog.

**2. Heartworm Testing and Prevention** - Heartworms are actual worms that live in the heart and cause heart failure. Heartworms are transmitted through a mosquito bite. It is very easy to prevent heartworm disease, but much more difficult to treat. We recommend that all dogs 3 months or older be on monthly heartworm prevention. Dogs over 6 months of age will need to have a heartworm test done prior to starting the prevention to ensure they do not have a current infection. After starting the prevention, a test is recommended every 2 years to confirm effectiveness.

**3. Spay or Neuter-** Spaying eliminates the risk of ovarian and uterine cancer and uterine infections, and significantly reduces the risk of mammary gland tumors developing later in life. Neutering eliminates the risk of testicular cancer and reduces problems with the prostate. We recommend all puppies be spayed or neutered after 4 months of age.

**4. House Training** - The ideal age to start house training is 2 months. The key to successful house training is to be persistent and consistent. Establish a routine. Crate training is an excellent way to house train your puppy.

**5. Obedience Training** - All dogs, regardless of age or size, may benefit from learning basic obedience commands such as come and sit. A well-mannered dog is a welcome part of the family. Recommended reading is the book The Art of Raising a Puppy by The Monks of New Skete.

**6. Nutrition** - Most puppies should be fed a premium brand puppy food twice daily. Small breed puppies, like chihuahuas, may need to be fed three to four times a day. Meal feeding is preferred to free-choice, as obesity and excessive weight gain is a common problem among dogs.

**7. Microchip ID** - We recommend all puppies have a microchip placed, in addition to having ID tags. This is a permanent means of identification as well as an excellent way to prove ownership.

**8. Flea and Tick control** - There are many products available for both preventing and for treating infestations with fleas and ticks. We can help you decide which one will work best for your dog.

**9. Intestinal Parasites** - We recommend all puppies be dewormed, and then tested to ensure all worms are gone. Many of the intestinal worms are eliminated with the monthly heartworm prevention as well.

**10. Dental Care** - Teach your puppy to let you brush his teeth to help prevent dental disease later in life. This is the time to learn good habits.

\*If you would like more information about a specific topic please feel free to ask us!