



## Training your puppy continued...

ferent people can lead to social problems later in life.

Separation anxiety is common in puppies, and occurs when

rate room. The puppy should know you are home, but you must not pay attention to the puppy. A half hour of "down-time" is usually sufficient each day for the puppy to learn that he can survive the day without you. Don't make a fuss of the puppy for 15 minutes before you leave, and avoid direct contact for 15 minutes when you come home. Although this is very difficult for most people, fussing over leaving or coming home only heightens the anxiety when you are not there. Leave a radio or TV on at low volume when not at home, and offer an enjoyable treat for when you are gone, such as a Kong filled with peanut butter. The distraction might be enough for the puppy not to

notice you leaving.

Severe separation anxiety can also be treated with medication, but this is best used in conjunction with behavioural modification techniques.

Chewing is a normal behaviour in puppies as they explore their environment. Puppies don't know how hard their bite is initially, and must learn bite inhibition from the owner's response. A loud cry from you in response to the puppy biting your hand will often elicit a startled reaction. Next time, the puppy will often use less pressure as it learns to gauge your response. Valuable objects that the puppy finds enticing to chew on can be treated with noxious substances such as hot pepper or commercial sprays. Always reward good behaviour and offer alternate things for the puppy to chew on.

*"We do not advocate feeding raw food diets due to concern with intestinal pathogens"*

the owners leave the puppy alone in the home. Severe anxiety can lead to destructive chewing or barking when you are absent. To avoid this problem, offer your puppy time alone when you are at home, either in the crate or in a sepa-

## What to feed Fido

There are hundreds of choices for dog food available for your new puppy. Sorting through the myriad diets can be challenging, especially as so much emphasis is placed on marketing the food. Whatever resonates with us in terms of what we think good nutrition should be invariably will show up on the exterior of the food bag. Plus, myths abound about what dogs should eat, with some people advocating meat first and foremost, to vegetarian diets, to raw food diets. Fortunately, most foods available likely provide the basic needs of pets, but only a handful of companies actually conduct nutritional research to

prove the quality of their foods. While not the only companies providing excellent nutrition, there are only four companies that conduct significant research: Purina, Hill's, Iams, and Royal Canin/Medi-Cal. These companies have created diets to manage many health problems, from obesity to diabetes, from urinary tract disease to arthritis and joint disease. We now have a tremendous understanding of the role of good nutrition on health problems, and by extension, the role of good nutrition in promoting good health. While we do not advocate for any one com-



pany, premium foods from these companies are backed by years of research and can be trusted to offer great products. Safety of food sources is of paramount concern for companies making dog food, as we saw recently with the melamine scare.

We do not advocate feeding raw food diets due to concern with intestinal pathogens such as Salmonella or Campylobacter contaminating the food, and exposing the dog and

## What to feed Fido cont...

family to potentially serious disease.

How much to feed is determined by the food and by the activity level of the puppy. Most foods provide general guidelines, but the amount fed may have to be increased or decreased. We expect a puppy to produce 2 to 3 normal well-

formed bowel movements each day with a good quality food, and to have a clean, glossy coat.

Please ask us for more information regarding your puppy's nutrition.

## Parasite control for your Puppy

Many parasites have the ability to infect dogs, with puppies being most susceptible. Intestinal parasites include the common roundworms and hookworms, but puppies may also be infected with whipworms, Coccidia, and Giardia. Intestinal parasites may cause weight loss, diarrhea, blood loss, and vomiting, although many dogs may seem healthy with only intermittent gastrointestinal signs. External parasites include fleas, ear and skin mites, lice, and ticks. Heartworm disease is caused by a parasite transmitted by mosquitoes, and infects the arteries leading from the dog's heart to the lungs. Serious infections can cause exercise intolerance, a chronic cough, heart failure and death. In Ontario, over 300 cases of heartworm disease occur each year, with most in Southern and South-Western Ontario, but cases also occur in dogs who have never travelled outside the Ottawa Valley. Recently, we have seen an increase in Heartworm infections following the re-homing of abandoned Hurricane Katrina dogs all over the continent.

Roundworms have a particularly stubborn lifecycle in dogs. The microscopic eggs hatch following ingestion, and the larvae burrow through the intestinal wall and travel through body tissues for a period of time, an event known as Visceral Larval Migrants. Eventually, these tiny parasites emerge back into the intestines, grow into adult spaghetti-like worms, and breed, releasing thousands of eggs back into the environment. Dewormers only work in the gut, so we continue to administer them every 2 weeks until the puppy is 3 months of age, then once a month until the puppy is 6 months of age, as the larvae emerge back into the intestine.

Fleas can be a problem at any time of the year if your puppy meets another animal with fleas. Adult fleas spend their entire life cycle on the animal, but will lay 20 to 30 eggs a day following a blood meal. The eggs fall off the dog and lodge in cracks and crevices, around baseboards and outdoors. Within several weeks, if the conditions are right, the eggs will hatch into larvae, transform into pupae, and eventually emerge as young adult fleas looking for a warm



pet to call their own. Fleas can cause intense itching, skin diseases and can even transmit diseases. In our region, most flea problems peak in late summer and fall as the number of eggs builds up in the environment.

Currently, we can prevent many intestinal parasites, fleas, and heartworm with safe and effective medications administered once a month. Having a stool sample checked once to twice yearly allows us to identify parasites before they become a problem.

Some parasites can also infect people, especially children and those with lowered immune systems. For a great resource on parasites, pets and pet ownership, see the University of Guelph's [www.wormsandgermsblog.com](http://www.wormsandgermsblog.com).

We will recommend a parasite control program for your dog that matches your pet's lifestyle and circumstances.

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# Vaccines for Puppies

All puppies need vaccination to protect them against infectious diseases. Our recommendations for vaccination are based on the North American AAHA Vaccination Guidelines, available to the public at:

[www.aahanet.org/  
PublicDocuments/  
VaccineGuidelines06Re-  
vised.pdf](http://www.aahanet.org/PublicDocuments/VaccineGuidelines06Revised.pdf).

These guidelines recommend that all puppies be vaccinated against distemper, parvovirus, hepatitis, and rabies. These diseases are either highly contagious, fatal or serious, or, in the case of rabies, of public health concern. In addition, we recommend Bordetella, (kennel cough) for most puppies, and Leptospirosis to those at risk. Bordetella is similar to

Whooping Cough in children; it is highly contagious and can lead to pneumonia in severe cases. We like all puppies to receive basic immunity to this disease. Adult dogs continue to receive the vaccine only if they are considered at risk. Leptospirosis causes liver and kidney disease. It is spread through the urine of raccoons and skunks, and can also infect people. The organism proliferates in damp soil and following heavy rainfalls. Ontario has seen the number of annual cases increase from 250 to over 1200 in the last 10 years.

To determine which vaccines to recommend for your puppy, we review your puppy's lifestyle, previous vaccines, and consider his age, breed, and health status. Most puppies receive vaccines between 2 and 4 months of age, again a year later, and then

through life at an interval determined by the vaccine. For instance, rabies and distemper/parvovirus/hepatitis are given every three years to adult dogs, whereas those dogs receiving Leptospirosis or Bordetella require annual revaccination. For pets spending time in tick endemic areas, we may also recommend Lyme vaccination and tick control.

For those owners wishing to use titers in lieu of vaccination, we provide this service also. While becoming more popular, reliance on titers has some limitations that we will discuss with owners. We can accommodate specific vaccine schedules if requested by the owner or breeder, as long as the owner understands the risks and benefits associated with changes to currently accepted schedules.

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# Spay and Neuter

If you do not plan to breed your dog, you should seriously consider spaying her or neutering him. Ottawa has an overabundance of dogs that need homes, so adding to the numbers doesn't help. We discourage the breeding of dogs just to experience the “joys of birth”, as interesting as it is. Serious breeders invest a significant amount of money and time on breeding to reduce genetic problems and to promote positive conformational and behavioural traits. Unless you intend to make a career from breeding, you should consider the risks of not having your pet spayed or neutered.

Female dogs will go into heat two to three times a year on average, during which time

they will attract any males in the vicinity. Unexpected breedings account for many of the dogs surrendered to shelters and humane societies. Intact female dogs are at a significantly higher risk for infections of the uterus called pyometra, which can be life-threatening, and also for mammary cancer.

Intact male dogs may have a greater urge to “wander”, particularly if they sense a female in heat. Aggression between male dogs can be a problem, as can excessive urine marking behaviour. Male dogs also have a greater risk of prostatic infections, and testicular disease.

Spaying is usually performed after 6 months of age. Owners

who intend to have dogs in sporting events such as Agility, Herding, or Tracking, should consider delaying the surgery until the full physical maturity of the dog, the age of which depends on the breed. For most dogs, however, 6 months of age is the accepted standard.

Spaying a female dog involves an abdominal surgery to remove her uterus and ovaries. She will not have any more heats and cannot develop infections of the uterus afterwards.

Neutering the male dog involves removal of both testicles. Both procedures are performed under full anesthesia, but the pets go home the same day as the surgery. We strongly recommend a pre-

anesthetic blood test in the week prior to surgery to assess the kidney and liver function, the blood volume and sugar and protein levels, all of which are important for safe anesthesia. Pets are placed on intravenous fluids through a catheter in their front leg during the surgery to help maintain their

blood pressure. With constant monitoring of their heart rate and rhythm, blood pressure, and oxygen levels, we help to ensure a safe anesthetic procedure.

Following surgery, we advise pet owners to keep the dogs from free-running, jumping, and climbing up stairs or on furni-

ture for the following week. The sutures are absorbable, and buried below the skin, so there is no need for them to be removed once the healing has occurred.

Please ask if you have further questions regarding anesthesia or surgery for your puppy.

## Microchip Identification

While most pet owners will hopefully never have to worry about a missing pet, the reality is that many pets go astray every year in Ottawa. Even the least expected wanderer may suddenly disappear. We know of a small toy poodle who ran away one July 1st after being scared by loud fireworks, although he was eventually reunited with his family 6 weeks later. My own dog wandered away from our house into the surrounding woods for the first time at 12 years of age, eventually turning up at a neighbor's house 3 days later. And I consider myself careful! Identification in any form is essential to help re-unite lost pets with their owners. Tags on collars remain the first and most visible method to provide a contact number or name, but unfortunately, once the collar has come off, only the pet can tell you where she came from, and most can't talk! Since the introduc-

tion of microchip technology for pet identification, many pets that would have previously become lost have been reunited quickly and efficiently with their owners. Microchips, with rare exceptions, work throughout the life of the pet, do not fade with time, and do not fall off.

The microchip is the size of a grain of rice, and is inserted over the shoulders of the puppy at any age by a needle, only slightly larger than that used for vaccines. To "read" the microchip, a scanner is waved over the dog and the number encoded to that particular chip is displayed on the scanner's screen. Each chip is registered to an owner, so once the microchip number is found, all we need to do is call up the database to find the owner. The databases are maintained 24/7 and microchips placed in British Columbia can be read by scanners in

Newfoundland, or the US, thanks to standardization of chip technologies.

We highly recommend a microchip for any household dog, even those whose risk of wandering seems low. You never know when your pet may stray!

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# Pet Insurance: peace of mind for those unexpected accidents

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Currently, three companies offer comprehensive pet insurance in Canada: Petsecure, Pet Care, and Vet Insurance. In addition, the Canadian Automobile Association, HBC, President's Choice Financial, and Purina offer Petsecure insurance under their own branding. Pet insurance provides coverage for accidents and illnesses to dogs of all ages and breeds. Some policies also provide coverage for routine health care, such as vaccination, dental care, and parasite control.

How much you can expect to pay for monthly premiums for your new puppy depends on how comprehensive the cover-

age is. Insurance premiums can also vary based on the level of co-insurance provided. For example, a company may require the owner to pay 20% of veterinary fees, while the insurance will cover the remaining 80%.

All companies provide free insurance for a month, and we strongly recommend taking advantage of this offer while you decide whether to use pet insurance long term.

Generally speaking, insurance is of great value in the first year or two of a dog's life, when they are most likely to have accidents or ingest things they are not supposed to. In addi-

tion, a dog with genetic susceptibilities to bone development problems such as hip dysplasia, to allergies, and to congenital problems may have life-long health problems for which insurance can be of great benefit. While not immune to health problems, middle-aged dogs will likely need less insurance, but there is increased need for veterinary care with advancing age. Having insurance in place before problems such as cancer, heart disease, or arthritis develop can provide peace of mind for both short- and long-term care.

While Cedarview Animal Hospital opened its Barrhaven location in July 2009, Dr. Nigel Gumley has been practising in the region for 20 years, and Dr. Lianna Titcombe for 10 years. Dr. Gumley holds a board specialization in Canine and Feline Practice, as well as certification in Canine Rehabilitation. Dr. Titcombe is the director of the Pet Loss Support Group of Ottawa. Sarah Baker is a Registered Veterinary Technician and is certified as a Canine Rehabilitation Assistant and a Veterinary Dental Technician. Tracy Radbourne and Laura Orr provide reception and animal care assistance for your pets. The practice offers comprehensive medical and surgical care to dogs and cats, with a special interest also in reproductive work.

We support various pet-related charities and organizations, including the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Farley Foundation, the Ottawa Humane Society, St. John's Ambulance Dog Therapy Program, and various pet and breed rescue groups. For more information about Cedarview Animal Hospital, visit our web site at [www.cedarviewanimalhospital.com](http://www.cedarviewanimalhospital.com).