



EASTGATE VETERINARY CENTRE

133 Eastgate
Pickering
N. Yorkshire
YO18 7DW

PUPPY CARE

Vaccinations

It is very important that your puppy is vaccinated. Although infectious diseases are less common nowadays we do still see them regularly even in rural areas and most of them can be fatal.

First vaccinations are usually given from **8 weeks old** with the second vaccination **2 weeks later** (a 6 week start is also available, ask for details). Your puppy can mix with dogs and go for walks 7-10 days after the second vaccination. As well as vaccinating your puppy we will also check that there are no congenital problems such as heart murmurs, hernias and cleft palates. We can also give advice on feeding, worming, insurance and any other matters you wish to discuss.

The vaccination course covers

- **Canine distemper** 'hard pad' - A highly contagious viral disease causing flu like symptoms and neurological signs. This disease can be fatal.
- **Parvovirus** - A virus causing severe often fatal haemorrhagic diarrhoea.
- **Leptospirosis** - A bacteria carried by rats and found in some rivers. There are 2 different types covered in the vaccinations one causes liver failure and the other kidney failure. The immunity to leptospirosis wanes with time and this is the main reason that we give dogs an annual booster. This is the most common infectious disease we see in the Pickering area.
- **Canine Infectious hepatitis** - A virus which causes liver failure.
- **Parainfluenza** - A virus, which is one of the agents responsible for kennel cough.

Kennel cough vaccination is also advisable especially if the dog is going into kennels. It is given directly up the nose and lasts for 12 months.

Diet

It is very important that puppies are fed a suitable diet when they are growing. These diets contain more protein and calcium. Adult and home-made diets are not always suitable. Complete puppy foods are the best thing to feed your puppy on, either tinned, dry or a combination. Feeding a dry complete food alone without soaking is perfectly acceptable as long as a clean water supply is also provided. Puppies do not need to be fed milk, eggs, bones, weetabix and rice pudding and many of these things are not easily digestible. Feeding a variety of foods can seem like a nice thing to do for your puppy but actually chopping and changing the diet can lead to problems such as vomiting, diarrhoea and the development of a fussy appetite. Puppies should be fed 4 meals a day until they are around 3-4 months old when you can gradually decrease to twice daily feeding. Many pet food manufacturers now produce special foods for larger breed dogs, which may help avoid growth abnormalities in bones and joints.

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Neutering

Females ideally should be spayed at 6 months old before the 1st season, or at 3 months after their first season.

- The earlier a bitch is spayed the less chance there is of her developing mammary tumours in later life. If she is spayed at 6 months there is virtually no chance of her developing mammary tumours but if she is left until 2 years old then the benefit is much reduced. This is main reason why vets recommend early spaying.
- Prevention of seasons and unwanted pregnancies. Although hormonal injections can be given both to prevent seasons and prevent pregnancy after mating these drugs have potential side effects if used often and can also be more expensive than surgery in the long term.
- Prevention of womb infections (pyometra), which occur commonly in older entire bitches. This disease is often life threatening.

Male dogs can also be castrated from 6 months onwards. Castration prevents unwanted sexual behaviour, roaming, reduces aggression and prevents prostatic disease and testicular tumours.

Neutered animals may have a tendency to gain extra weight, but this is easily avoidable by correct feeding.

Worming

Puppies should be wormed against roundworms **every 2 weeks** until they are 12 weeks old, then **every month** until they are 6 months old. Most puppies are infected with roundworms from the mother while they are in the womb or through the milk. Toxocara roundworms can potentially infect humans and are a known cause of blindness in children. Puppy wormers are available in liquid form, and older dogs are given tablets.

Pet insurance

Many pedigree puppies come with some free insurance. We recommend that you choose a reputable company that specialises in pet insurance. Always read the small-print carefully. Some of the cheap insurance policies exclude problems from year to year e.g. if your puppy gets diarrhoea and you make a claim in year 1 then diarrhoea problems will be excluding from your policy in following years. Some companies also offer discounts for multiple pets and for old age pensioners. Make sure you take your policy out early on or carry on your preliminary insurance. If the pup is healthy when you take out the policy you will have no exclusions. Insurance does not cover vaccinations, worming, neutering, special diets and some dental treatments. Insurance is good for accidents and unexpected illnesses. Please ask for a leaflet on *Petplan*, one of the market leaders.

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Flea and tick treatments

There are many products available for the treatment of fleas in dogs. Most pet shop and supermarket products are not effective enough to kill 21st century fleas. Spot on preparations are the easiest way to administer flea treatments.

Frontline Spot-on can be used from 8 weeks old, each application lasts for 2 months against fleas and 1 month against ticks. **Frontline spray** can be used from 2 days old and lasts for 3 months.

Frontline Combo is available on prescription and also acts to treat the environment by preventing eggs from hatching.

Vetra is a new spot on product that not only kills fleas, ticks and many mites, but also has a repellent effect against ticks and fleas.

There are several other flea preparations available most of which we have in stock.

Microchipping

A microchip can be implanted at any age and can be done at the same time as a vaccination or at neutering. If an animal is lost and taken to any vets, dog warden or re-homing centre it will be scanned for a microchip. A national database associates the unique animal number with the owner's details. It will soon be law in the UK for all dogs to be microchipped. To help with this the Dogs Trust charity is offering free microchipping for all dogs, although we do recommend an optional £5 donation to the charity at the time of chipping

Pet Health Plans

We offer these as a way to spread the cost of your pet's routine veterinary needs. For a small monthly fee you can cover your dog's annual vaccinations, flea and worming treatments, routine checks, nail clippings and anal gland emptying, as well as other discounts. Also handy reminders are sent so you do not miss anything! Ask in practice or see our website for more details.

Puppy Parties

We run puppy parties most months to help with early socialisation and habituation. These are for vaccinated puppies and are by invitation only as places are limited. Please enquire when you bring your puppy for vaccination.

Please ask at the desk for information on local puppy training and socialisation classes.

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