



# Important Information for New Puppies

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to North Waterloo Veterinary Hospital! We appreciate that you have chosen our hospital for your puppy's veterinary care. We strive to provide the best veterinary care possible, with an attentive and sensitive hospital staff to serve you.

Our mission is to provide excellence in preventive health care, diagnostic care and treatments for your pet. We deliver high-quality customer service for our patients and their human companions. Our qualified team members treat pets as if they were their own. The well-being of your pet always comes first.

We wanted to provide you with information on some of the topics we will discuss during your puppy's appointments.

## **Vaccinations**

- One of the best ways to keep your dog healthy is by ensuring they receive all the recommended vaccinations.
- Puppy vaccines are given as a series at specific intervals beginning around 7-8 weeks old until they have developed sufficient immunity, typically around 16 weeks old.
- During this time, your puppy will become protected against the "core" group of diseases, Distemper, Adenovirus (infectious canine hepatitis), Parvovirus, Parainfluenza, Coronavirus, Leptospirosis, and Rabies.
- Non "core" vaccines such as Bordetella or Lyme can also be given depending on your puppy's circumstances and exposure risk.
- We will evaluate your dog's individual needs in order to discuss which vaccines are necessary and how often they should be given to provide the best protection for your dog.

## **Deworming and Fecal Testing**

- A less obvious point of wellness care is parasite prevention.
- Unfortunately, many parasites go undetected since young puppies can be infected without showing any clinical signs and are susceptible to re-infection.
- To make sure your puppy does not have intestinal parasites, be sure to bring a stool sample to your first veterinary checkup.

- Fecal testing detects the eggs of mature parasites that live inside the body and pass their eggs to the outside by shedding them into the host's stool. Some of these parasites are worm-like, while others are tiny single-celled organisms called protozoa. Most of the parasites live in the intestine, but a few live elsewhere in the body.
- If a pet is found to have parasites, follow-up fecal flotations may be recommended to monitor the response to treatment.
- We will also recommend routine de-worming for your puppy at each visit since puppies do not always shed parasite eggs in their stool.
- Depending on your puppy's lifestyle risk, we may also recommend flea or tick prevention.

### **Pet Insurance**

- Pet health insurance policies are primarily designed to cover your pet for accidents and illness.
- Some companies will also offer additional coverage for routine vaccinations and other routine care such as dental cleanings for an added fee.
- We recommend OVMA Pet Insurance, but there are many other companies available.
- Ask us about signing up your kitten for a free, four-week accident and illness trial!

### **Handling Your Puppy**

- Getting your puppy use to routine handling is a very important step in their puppy care.
- We recommend touching and handling your puppy's feet, ears and mouth as they are growing.
- Rewarding with treats afterwards is a great way to help encourage good behaviour for future nail trims, ear cleaning, teeth brushing and routine veterinary appointments.

### **Play Biting**

- Although often thought to be a teething behavior, nipping, mouthing and biting in young dogs is generally a form of social play.
- Puppies need to learn to limit the force and strength of their bite so if mouth contact is utilized, the message is communicated with minimal damage, commonly known as bite inhibition.
- If your puppy begins to bite or chew and tug on clothing, immediately stopping play (negative punishment) is the preferred response or walk away if the puppy persists. The message is that all social interactions with you will stop as soon as biting begins. Sometimes a sharp "off" command can be helpful to indicate that social interactions will cease if the biting continues.
- Provide your puppy with toys for oral stimulation; soft toys, food toys and tug of war can help satisfy these puppies' oral and exploratory needs.

## Dental Care

- It is best to teach your pet to accept teeth brushing while they are still young.
- Choose a quiet time and place to begin. Select a small room where you can place your puppy on a surface such as a counter or tabletop (on a blanket or towel) or sit with them in your lap.
- Gently rub a soft toothbrush, or your finger along the area where the gum tissue touches the tooth surface (the gingival margin). This is the region where plaque accumulates, and gingivitis is initiated. Only the outside surfaces of the teeth need to be rubbed.
- For the first few lessons, it is a good idea to rub along only a few teeth rather than the whole mouth, especially if your kitten is unsure or nervous about the process.
- Rewarding with treats after is a good way to help encourage future good behaviour.
- Avoid brushing when your puppy is teething, which roughly occurs at 5 months, or 20 weeks of age.

## Spaying or Neutering Your Puppy

- It is recommended that all non-breeding dogs be spayed or neutered.
- Small breed dogs are usually sterilized between four and six months of age
- Large breed dogs are now recommended to wait until full adult growth is reached, while still being done prior to first heat in females.

## Body Condition Score and Feeding

- The pet version of BMI is called **BCS (Body Condition Score)** which is a quantitative yet subjective method for evaluating body fat.
- Assigning a score to your pet requires visualization and palpation. You must look at **and** feel your pet. Start by looking at your cat or dog from above. Does she have a waistline that curves in behind the rib cage giving her an hourglass figure? Next, sit on the floor and look at your pet from the side. Does he have a tummy tuck? Does his abdomen slant upwards between the ribcage and the hind legs? Or does he have a saggy belly?
- Now for palpation. If your pet is a healthy weight, you should easily feel his ribs. Place your thumbs on the backbone and spread your fingers across his rib cage. You should feel a thin layer of fat with the ribs right underneath. To know how much fat is acceptable, make a fist with one hand and feel your knuckles with the other. That is what your pet's ribs should feel like.
- Consider switching to an adult formula after spay/neuter to keep your pet fit.