

PRIORY VETERINARY SURGEONS PUPPY ADVICE

Congratulations on the arrival of your new family member! Here at Priory Veterinary Surgery we are committed to providing your dog with everything they need to live a long and healthy life.

1. **Vaccinations** - in order to gain maximum immunity, but with the fewest visits to the surgery we advise to vaccinate puppies at 8, 10 and 12 weeks of age, and to give the first annual booster within 12 months of the second vaccination. This will give your puppy the strongest immunity possible against Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza, four types of Leptospirosis and Kennel Cough. Following the first year booster, your puppy will only receive the Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvovirus parts of the vaccination every third year.
2. **Worming** – Pregnant bitches can transmit some types of worm through the placenta, and then later through the milk, so worm burdens in puppies can be very variable even if they have not been outside, and depend on their mother's worming schedule and living conditions. High worm burdens can cause intestinal blockages and lead to death in puppies. We recommend that puppies are wormed every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks old. We recommend monthly worming of dogs throughout their lives to try and reduce roundworm (*Toxocara*) levels in the environment which is a worm that can cause blindness in children. Another reason we recommend monthly worming is for the prevention of lungworm which is prevalent in this area and can be deadly to dogs. Only certain types of wormers will prevent this, and we recommend monthly Advocate spot-on pipettes. We also recommend that all adult dogs are given a tapeworming tablet twice a year.
3. **Flea treatment** - Fleas can be transmitted from the puppy's mother, other pets, or from the environment. There are a number of different options for flea treatment and prevention which we can discuss with you, and if the flea burden is large then environmental treatment may be required as well. Monthly Advocate spot-on pipettes are convenient as they have a flea control component as well as being a wormer.
4. **Microchipping** – New legislation means that all dogs have to be microchipped. This involves implanting a small silicone chip under the skin at the back of the neck. This chip contains a number that can be read by a special scanner. When it is implanted we will take all your contact details, which get sent to a central online database. If your dog goes missing and is handed in to a vet, dog warden or rescue centre, they will be able to scan the chip, check the database, and then contact you and reunite you with your dog. Getting a microchip is also the first step

towards getting a passport for your dog. It is your responsibility that if you move house or your details change, that you must contact the microchip company to get these updated

5. **Nutrition** - If a puppy is going to grow into a healthy adult dog, it needs to be given the right balance of nutrients for this crucial stage of life and this can vary depending on the breed. We recommend the Royal Canin puppy food. The range is extensive so if you want more information please speak to one of our friendly nurses who can devise a nutrition plan for your growing puppy. If your puppy has come from a breeder, start by giving them the same food that they are used to. If you want to switch to another food, do it gradually over a week or so, mixing the old with the new but adjusting the quantities over time to avoid any stomach upsets

6. **Neutering** – If you are not intending to breed from your dog then we recommend neutering. Generally we spay female dogs (ovariohysterectomy) at 6 months if their adult weight is <25kg, or 2-3 months after their first season if their adult weight is >25kg. Spaying your female will have medical benefits: it can prevent mammary tumours later in life, pyometra (a potentially life-threatening infection of the womb), ovarian and uterine cancer. At Priory Veterinary Surgery we are able to offer you either a traditional spay or a laparoscopy (keyhole) spay which is less invasive and therefore allows for faster post operative healing. Please speak to one of our staff if you would like to discuss this further. For male dogs, castration prevents testicular cancer, and reduces the incidence of prostatic disease and anal tumours. We generally recommend castration once your dog is fully grown so please discuss with one of our nurses if you would like to know the best time for your dog. Please see our separate neutering advice sheet for more details.

7. **Socialisation** – There is a crucial time in puppy development between 7 and 12 weeks called the socialisation period where they are most responsive to new experiences and stimuli. Good experiences during this period give your puppy the best chance of maturing into a socially balanced dog. We run a Puppy Playschool with a qualified behaviourist and one of our nurses which you can find out more information about on our website, or by speaking to one of our receptionists.