



Puppy and Adult Dog Care

A guide to lifetime care for your best friend!

We know your dog is a member of your family. We know you want to take care of him or her to the best of your ability. With all of the information available on the internet and social media, it can be confusing! *“What vaccinations should my dog be given to stay healthy and protected? Is grain really bad for my dog? Will spaying cause my dog to get fat?”* These are just a few of the questions that you might ask yourself after reading an online article or talking to your neighbor. Our veterinarians can help you separate the misconceptions and marketing tactics from the evidence based recommendations that we make every day. We want your best friend to live a long and healthy life. Here’s how:

Vaccinations:

There are vaccinations that every puppy and dog should get, unless they have a proven medical condition that would cause them to be exempt. These vaccinations are called the “Core Vaccinations”.

“Distemper” - This multivalent vaccine protects against five primary canine diseases. It is recommended for puppies at 6, 9, 12 and 16 weeks, again at one and two years of age, and then every three years.

1. Distemper – a virus that affects the nervous system, causing seizures and “chewing gum fits.” It can also affect the lungs causing pneumonia. A highly fatal virus; if the dog survives it can leave long-lasting effects.
2. Infectious Hepatitis – caused by a virus which leads to liver inflammation and failure, may also cause ocular (eye) changes.
3. Infectious Respiratory adenovirus type 2 – is the same family as the hepatitis virus. This virus is part of the complex of pathogens causing respiratory disease.
4. Parainfluenza – an upper respiratory virus that causes coughing and sneezing.
5. Parvo virus – (probably the most important one) a highly contagious virus that causes profuse vomiting, bloody diarrhea, and fever. Most commonly affects young puppies and unvaccinated dogs. If untreated, it can be fatal.

Rabies – All warm blooded animals are susceptible to this deadly disease if bitten by or exposed to any animal that has the rabies virus in their saliva. Pennsylvania mandates every dog (beginning at 12 weeks of age) must be vaccinated for Rabies. The Rabies vaccine is good for one year the first time it is given, and then it is given every three years for the lifetime of your pet.

Now let’s discuss some vaccinations that are recommended based on *your dog’s* lifestyle. This means we will only vaccinate if it is determined that your dog is actually *at risk* for the following health threats:

Bordetella – Recommended for dogs that are kenneled, groomed, attend doggie day care and/or weigh less than 20 pounds. *Bordetella bronchisepticum* is the bacterium that causes kennel cough, which is transmitted by coughing, sneezing, and breathing. This vaccination is often required by kennels and groomers to prevent the spread of this infectious cough.

Lyme –A tick-borne disease, Lyme is endemic in the Mt. Gretna, Cornwall, Colebrook areas and ticks are prevalent along the rail trails in our area. The Lyme vaccination is recommended for dogs who go hunting, hiking, are in “woody” areas or tend to be exposed to ticks, even in their own back yard. The Lyme vaccine is initially two injections given 2 to 3 weeks apart in dogs older than 9 weeks and then an annual or semi-annual vaccine if at high risk. We recommend testing for exposure prior to vaccinating for Lyme. Lyme disease usually causes a fever and lameness but it can also cause fatal kidney failure, arrhythmias, neurological disease, a painful syndrome and eye changes.

Leptosporosis - an uncommon bacterium, shaped like a spiral, which also has the ability to infect people. Sources are contaminated water (such as streams, ponds, lakes and marshy areas) by urine from infected animals, including wildlife and livestock, and the direct ingestion of infected rodents. Dogs that live in suburban areas are at risk from wildlife in their yards. Dogs that live in urban areas are also at risk from rodent urine. Lepto causes liver and kidney failure and can be fatal. Vaccination against lepto is initially two injections, 3 to 4 weeks apart in dogs older than 12 weeks, and then annually.

Canine Flu – (H3N8) –The Flu vaccine is recommended for dogs that are kenneled and/or attend doggie day care. Canine Flu originated as an equine influenza that mutated to infect dogs. It is highly contagious – 8 out of 10 infected dogs will have clinical signs of sneezing, lethargy, fever, and poor appetite. For most it will be self-limiting, but for some it can require hospitalization, and for the immunocompromised, it can be fatal. Vaccination against Canine Flu is initially two injections given 2 to 4 weeks apart in dogs older than 9 weeks, and then annually.

Intestinal Parasites and Fecal Samples:

All new puppies and “new to you” pets should have a stool sample checked at the first visit with the veterinarian. Yearly fecal exams are recommended throughout your dog’s lifetime. A microscopic examination is performed to detect the eggs of multiple dangerous parasites, including roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and coccidia. Roundworms and hookworms are zoonotic - meaning they can infect people - so it is important to be sure your dog is parasite-free.

Diets:

Dry food is usually better at promoting dental health than canned food. The most important thing is to purchase a food from a company who has a PhD nutritionist on staff, its own R&D department and have their own manufacturing plants. Foods that are evaluated by AAFCO standards such as “animal feeding tests” rather than “formulated to meet” are superior. Foods that list a specific protein source such as chicken or chicken meal are better than “meat” or “meat meal.” As far as the FDA is concerned, the terms “human grade,” “premium,” “gourmet,” and “holistic” are not regulated. If a food is “natural,” by FDA standards, it may not have any chemically synthesized ingredients. If a food is “organic,” certain parameters have to be met. Foods that are listed to satisfy all stages of the pet’s life are required to be nutritious for puppies and nursing mothers and may have more protein and calcium than an adult or senior dog requires. “Grain-free” foods usually substitute tapioca, lentils, peas or potatoes which have higher carbohydrates than grains such as corn, wheat rice and oats. Grains actually have less sugar, more fiber and are lower in carbohydrates and are more nutritious than other carbohydrate sources. “By-products” are fine for pets - and humans! “By-products” include the organs, skin, and fat. They DO NOT contain hooves, horns, feathers, hair, or teeth. Raw food diets and homemade diets usually do not meet all of the canine dietary needs.



Fleas and Ticks:

In addition to causing some serious health threats in animals, flea and tick infestations are some of the most challenging and bothersome issues that dog owners are plagued with. The market is inundated with flea and tick products – some are good and some are not. We carry what we feel are the safest, most effective and economical products for you and your dog. In addition to full flea and tick treatment and prevention education by our veterinarians and our staff, we have manufacturer coupons and promotions that are not available to OTC and on-line pharmacy purchases. Our staff will be happy to review the safest and most cost effective options for your dog.

Dental Care:

Oral health problems are very common in dogs. By age 2, 80% of dogs have some sign of dental disease. Plaque, gingivitis, inflamed gums, and periodontal disease may develop and can eventually affect other organs of your dog’s body. Our veterinarians recommend twice weekly brushing. You may use a “finger” brush, a soft child’s toothbrush, or specially made dog toothbrushes. You can also use your finger wrapped in gauze or a nylon stocking. We have enzymatic pet toothpaste in chicken, mint and malt flavors. There are many products to help keep teeth clean and stimulate the gums – additives to water, Greenies, rawhides, and “dental/oral care” diets.

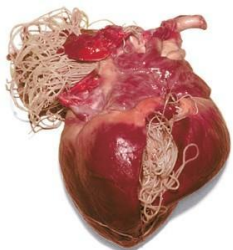


Spaying and Neutering:

The primary reason to spay and neuter your dog is to prevent unwanted litters. We recommend neutering at 6 months of age, but there is no upper age limit. In addition to population control, there are many health benefits for neutered dogs. In females, early spaying greatly reduces the risk of breast cancer, which has a 50% chance of being malignant. It also eliminates the risk of a uterine infection (a pyometra which requires an emergency surgery), endometriosis and ovarian cysts and tumors. *There are no health benefits for a female to have one litter of puppies or experience one heat cycle – these are myths.* In males, neutering eliminates the risk for testicular tumors and decreases the risk of prostatic problems as well as tumors around the anus which are testosterone dependent. Neutering will not change your dog’s personality or ability to guard the house. It may decrease aggressive tendencies. Another myth debunked - spaying/neutering does not make a pet fat. With proper diet and exercise, a normal weight animal is expected.

Heartworm Disease:

Heartworm is blood borne parasite that dogs get from mosquito bites. Adult heartworms can grow 10 to 12 inches in length and make their home in your dog’s heart and lung arteries. Heartworms damage pulmonary (lung) arteries and cause cough, exercise intolerance, fatigue, decreased appetite, and weight loss, and eventually lead to heart failure. Here in Lancaster County, we consider “heartworm season” (or when your dog is most at risk) to be from late May to December. High risk dogs are those that live outside, are near sources of water such as pools, ponds, streams, marshy and wooded areas, and dogs travelling south or east. Heartworm prevention is recommended for all dogs and consists of a monthly chewable tablet or topical liquid, depending on the owner’s preference. For dogs that are on the preventative year-round, a heartworm blood test is recommended every three



years. A yearly heartworm test is recommended for dogs taking the preventative seasonally, dogs that skip doses and those that are not on the preventative at all.