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## HEALTHCARE ADVICE FOR YOUR PUPPY

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### Vaccinations and Socialisation

It is very important to vaccinate your puppy to prevent them from contracting some potentially life threatening diseases. The diseases routinely vaccinated against are:

- Parainfluenza
- Leptospirosis
- Distemper
- Hepatitis
- Parvovirus

The 'socialisation window' of puppies is between 6-12 weeks of age. This is the main learning period so it is important that puppies encounter as many new experiences as early as possible if they are to develop into friendly, confident dogs. It is often advisable to start introducing your puppy to other healthy, vaccinated dogs after your puppy's first vaccination, so that maximum socialisation can take place. Routinely puppies are given their first vaccination between 6-8 weeks of age and then their second at 10 weeks.

### Feeding

All commercial puppy feeds are well balanced and contain higher levels of protein and calcium for your growing puppy. If you need to change your puppy's diet, do so gradually, slowly introducing the new feeding regime. At 8-10 weeks, your pup should be receiving 4 feeds a day. This can be reduced to 3 feeds a day at 12 weeks and by 6 months 2 meals a day should be sufficient.

### Fleas

Preventative treatment against fleas will stop your puppy from getting a potential infestation. If your puppy has fleas they may show signs of being very itchy and irritable, suddenly turning around and biting themselves. When searching through the coat of your puppy, you may be able to spot the fleas, but more likely you will notice small black specks (flea dirt). When placed on white paper and dampened with water, these flea dirt will create a red spot, as they are composed of dried blood.





## **Worming**

Roundworms, tapeworms, hookworms and whipworms are all internal parasites that could potentially cause clinical signs in your puppy.

Round worms such as *Toxacara canis* can cause disease in young puppies. They are acquired from the mother at around day 40-42 of pregnancy and after birth; pups are infected via milk and the environment. Round worms can cause diarrhoea, pot belly and general poor growth. In addition, round worm infections are zoonotic (can spread to humans) and the migration of larvae can cause serious disease. Therefore a rigorous worming protocol is advised.

## **Neutering**

Unless you are considering breeding from your puppy at a later stage, there are many advantages to having your pet neutered:

### ***Females***

- Social reasons (prevention of pregnancy, preventing seasons)
- Prevention of mammary tumours (spaying reduces the incidence of mammary tumours if performed early in the bitch's life).
- Ovarian disease
- Uterine disease (e.g. pyometra – uterine infection)
- Hormonally responsive vaginal disease

### ***Males***

- Social reasons (prevention of pregnancy, undesirable sexual behaviour, dominance)
- Scrotal/testicular neoplasia
- Hormonally responsive conditions (prostatic disease, perianal adenoma)

Please contact the surgery for more information on any of the topics above or to book a free health check for your new puppy.



The Downs Veterinary Practice provides animal healthcare to the highest possible standards for pet owners in the Bristol area. If you need help or advice regarding your pet's health, or if you are considering buying a pet and would just like some friendly advice, please visit our web site at [www.downsvets.co.uk](http://www.downsvets.co.uk) or call us on 0117 962 2828.