

# animal aid



## CARING FOR YOUR NEW PUPPY OR DOG

### ō Feeding

Small puppies have small stomachs and therefore need to be fed small amounts frequently. Any changes to the diet need to be implemented gradually to avoid problems such as diarrhoea.

The frequency of feeds vary with the breed and age but as a general rule:

6 weeks - 4 months = 3-4 meals per day

4 months - 12 months = 2 meals per day

Adults = once or twice daily (the total volume of food should be the same). In deep chested dogs like Dobermans, Great Danes etc, it is recommended to feed twice daily to avoid bloat).

Quantity: Pups should be fed as much as they will eat in 15 to 20 minutes with excess food removed. Most commercial foods come with a feeding guide, but the amount needed will vary between individual dogs.

Clean, fresh water should be available at all times.

Milk is unnecessary for puppies, and cows milk can cause stomach upsets and diarrhoea. If you want to give milk, give the lactose free varieties such as soy or pet milk (available in the pet food aisle of the supermarket)

Cereals are unnecessary as a breakfast item for puppies, but do provide carbohydrates. It is often more simple to stick to canned or dry puppy food though.

Meat is an important source of protein, but on its own is very deficient in calcium, which is required for growing bones, and therefore not a balanced diet.

Tinned food formulated specifically for puppies is best for growing dogs as it provides adequate levels of phosphorus and calcium in the correct ratio for healthy bone development. It is also a complete, balanced diet.

Dry foods are also a complete and balanced diet, and come in puppy, adult, senior and light formulations. This is the most economical form of feeding and is also better for the teeth than tinned food on its own.

Vegetables are a good supplementary food fed cooked or raw. Onions should be avoided as they cause problems with the breakdown of red blood cells!

**Pups which are fed commercial puppy food (tinned or dry) WILL NOT NEED ADDITIONAL CALCIUM OR VITAMINS!!!**

Bones help to clean and exercise teeth and gums. Dogs should be fed RAW bones two to three times a week. The best bones are the large marrow bones, or raw chicken wings or necks for pups and smaller dogs.

## õ Vaccinations

Puppies and dogs should be vaccinated against:

- Parvovirus
- Distemper
- Hepatitis
- Kennel Cough (Parainfluenza (C4) and Bordetella bronchiseptica (C5))

Our recommendations are:

6 - 8 weeks old = C3 vaccination

10 -12 weeks old = C4 or C5 vaccination

14 - 16 weeks old = C4 or C5 vaccination

Annual booster for all dogs (C4 or C5)

Generally it is recommended that a puppy should not mix with other dogs in parks and public areas until after the third vaccination when immunity is complete.

## õ Intestinal Worms

There are 4 major kinds of intestinal worms affecting dogs:

1. Tapeworms
2. Roundworms
3. Whipworms
4. Hookworms

We recommend using an allwormer such as Drontal, and adhering to the following regime:

Pups up to 12 weeks of age should be wormed every 2 weeks

Pups from 3 months to 6 months of age should be wormed monthly

Dogs over 6 months of age should be wormed every 3 months for life.

## õ Heartworm

Heartworm is a worm, which lives in the chambers of the heart, and also in the blood vessels of the heart and lungs. Mosquitoes transmit the larvae of the heartworm, and therefore heartworm is a condition, which is impossible to prevent without regular treatment with a heartworm preventative.

Heartworm preventatives should be administered to puppies as early as possible and can be started from 6 weeks of age. There are many different brands and formulations so you should ask your vet for a product, which suits you. Here at the Animal Aid Vet Clinic we recommend starting a preventative by the 3<sup>rd</sup> (last puppy) vaccination.

If you have a dog, which is older than about 6 months and has not previously been on a heartworm preventative, he/she will need to have a heartworm test prior to initiation of a control program. Starting a dog which has a heartworm infestation on a preventative can be FATAL! We do see a couple of cases of heartworm at our clinic each year so it is important to administer a preventative!

## õ Flea Control

Fleas are a common cause of skin problems in dogs, and with the newer forms of flea control products available, it should never be necessary for your puppy to have any fleas!

Flea collars, shampoos and rinses all have a low efficacy at maintaining a flea-free environment and can be harmful to young animals, so ask your vet for some information on the newer forms of top-spot and tablet-form medication available.

An effective flea control program treats not only the pet, but also the environment.

### õ Grooming & Bathing

It is important when bathing your puppy to use shampoos and conditions specially formulated for dogs, because dog's skin has a different pH to that of people. It is also important not to bath your dog too regularly as you risk stripping the natural oils from the coat and drying the skin. As a general rule we usually say not more than once every 2 weeks for bathing, and make sure you use a mild dog shampoo.

Brushing and even clipping is important to maintain the coats of the longer-haired breeds such as Maltese, Shih Tzus etc. You should get your puppy used to handling and brushing from an early age so as to ensure you will be able to keep the coat matt-free!

### õ Desexing

Pets not intended for breeding or showing should be desexed.

In females, spaying eliminates the inconvenience of the dog coming in to heat and false or unwanted pregnancies. It also greatly reduces the risk of mammary tumours and uterine tumours or infections later in life.

In males, castration often leads to a reduction in aggression and the tendency to roam. It also prevents sexual urges (ie leg mounting etc) and greatly reduces or eliminates the risk of testicular or prostatic cancer.

Council registration fees are also greatly reduced for desexed dogs. Dogs can be desexed any time after their 3<sup>rd</sup> puppy vaccination (or even at the same time), and ideally should be done around 6 months of age. The desexing fees at the Vets are usually cheaper for animals under 6 months old too! After surgery your pet will have a tattoo of a crossed out circle in it's left ear, symbolizing that the animal has been desexed.

### õ Microchipping

Microchipping involves the implantation of a chip (about the same size of a grain of rice) under the skin between your pet's shoulder blades. The chip carries a 15-digit number, which is linked via a computer database to your details. This means that if your dog were lost and taken to a vet or a pound, the dog could be scanned and identified as belonging to you and returned quickly to you.

Microchipping is a safe and cheap way to ensure that your dog is always identifiable, even without a collar on.

### õ Training

House Training should start as early as possible. Encourage your puppy to go to the toilet in the same spot (preferable outside). Make regular times to take the pup outside to the toilet (first thing in the morning, after meals, before bed) and go outside with the pup each time. Allow him to go to the toilet and then praise him each time he performs correctly. Do not punish him for accidents inside unless you catch him in the act; instead take him outside to the designated spot immediately.

Basic Training such as 'come, sit and stay' can start from 8-10 weeks. Keep lessons short and fun and use food rewards and cuddles for when the pup does the right thing. You can usually start training at an Obedience Club once your dog is fully vaccinated, or puppy classes usually accept pups a week after their 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccination. A Puppy Class starts about every 3 weeks at the Animal Aid Canine Coaching (ph Karen Blizzard on 9739 0300).

### õ Registration

All dogs over 6 months must be registered with your local council and wear the registration tag on a collar.

### ō Separation Anxiety

Most dogs settle into their new environment very well; however some dogs do become anxious. Remember that you are a stranger to your new dog and they are in unfamiliar territory.

Take time to introduce your dog quietly to all members of the family and walk around the property with the dog. Avoid leaving the dog on it's own for the first few days.

### ō Kennel cough

Kennel Cough is an infection of the upper airways.

It is very contagious and is common when many dogs are together such as kennels. It is not usually serious.

The signs are usually a dry hacking cough, with gagging or retching as if something is stuck in the throat. The cough may be present for 2-3 weeks or longer.

As long as the dog is bright and eating, do not worry. Benadryl cough mixture 2-3 times a day may help. If there is a nasal discharge or the dog is coughing up a lot of phlegm or the dog is not eating and is lethargic, then medication by a vet may be required.

If possible restrict exercise, avoid excitement and try to give soft food.

### ō Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is most commonly seen in the first 48 hours after an animal is rehomed. Stress and dietary changes are often the cause.

As long as there is no vomiting and the dog is bright and eating, a bland diet (boiled chicken and rice) for 2-3 days may help.

If the diarrhea appears to be more severe, if vomiting occurs or blood is present in the motions, ring the Shelter immediately for a Veterinary consultation.

There is no charge for treatment of kennel related diseases in the first two weeks as long as the dog is returned to Animal Aid (VAAT) for treatment.