Congratulations On Your New Puppy

Please read the following information carefully. Following these recommendations will help to ensure that your puppy lives a long and healthy life.

Diet
There are many different types and quality levels of food available for dogs. Many brands are nutritionally inferior and are not recommended. We recommend feeding your dog a high-quality dog food such as Hills Science Diet, Purina Veterinary Diets, Royal Canin or Nature's Recipe. The level of quality then drops to the intermediate pet store brands, brand name foods from the grocery store, and lastly, bargain foods. With dog food, it's like the old adage says, “you get what you pay for.” Labeling can be very deceptive and often bargain pet food brands make claims that simply aren't true.

One misconception is that the premium diets are too expensive to feed. However, the cost of feeding a premium diet compared to a bargain diet is very similar. With bargain foods, your pet actually has to eat a larger amount of food to get the same nutrition level available in a smaller portion of a high quality food. The better quality diets also help with muscle and skeletal formation, hair coat quality, and internal growth. These benefits aid in preventing some health conditions and should be viewed as an investment in your pet's health.

Large breed puppies have specific nutritional requirements that differ from smaller breeds. It is very important to discuss your puppy’s nutritional requirements with your veterinarian to see if a specially formulated food for large breed puppies should be fed. These puppy foods are properly balanced to meet the special nutritional needs of large breeds. They help to fuel your puppy’s growth in a way that will help to minimize or prevent future musculoskeletal problems sometimes associated with larger breed dogs.
Should you choose to feed a home-made diet, it is important to consult with your veterinarian to ensure that the ingredients and proportions are properly balanced for your pet. Proper nutrition is vital for the development of growing puppies.

**Feeding**

We recommend that puppies be fed set meals versus free feeding in most circumstances. Generally 2-3 meals daily are best for puppies. As they transition into adulthood, feeding twice daily is recommended for optimum digestive health and metabolism.

Puppies under five pounds of body weight and less than 4-5 months of age should be fed more often. Feeding 4-5 meals daily will help to prevent hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) in “toy” breed puppies. Feeding set meals versus leaving the food down all day (free feeding) also helps to improve housebreaking success, to keep adult dogs at a healthy weight, and to make changes in appetite more quickly apparent.

**Hypoglycemia**

Puppies under ten pounds of body weight and less than 4-5 months of age are at a greater risk of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) than larger puppies. Small or toy breed puppies do not have the sugar and energy reserves that larger dogs do. Blood sugar levels can drop suddenly when puppies do not eat well or frequently enough, or if they expend a lot of energy during play time without replenishing their blood sugar. Signs of hypoglycemia can range from mild (lethargy) to severe (seizures and coma).

To help prevent this, we may recommend giving your puppy a high-caloric vitamin supplement such as Nutrical 4-6 times daily or as needed for energy supplementation. Other sugar supplements that can be used are honey or Karo Syrup; however, these should not be given regularly and are not balanced with the other necessary vitamins and minerals.

*Talk to your veterinarian before supplementing your pet’s diet with added sugars.*

**People Food**

In general, people food should be avoided, and certainly should not make up more than 5% of your pet’s diet. Dogs are accustomed to a very bland diet and foods that may not be considered toxic for/to people can cause serious medical issues in dogs.
Foods That Should Be Avoided:

**Real Bones** – this includes beef bones. There is the possibility that any bone could splinter and perforate or puncture the intestines, or can cause impaction or blockage; leading to surgery, hospitalization, and possibly death.

**Foods High in Fat** – such as chicken skins or steak trimmings. Fat may upset the pancreas, causing pancreatitis. Pancreatitis is a serious illness that may require hospitalization and, even with treatment, may result in death. Once a pet has had pancreatitis they are at a much higher risk to have future episodes.

**Spicy Foods and BBQ** – same potential for pancreatitis as food with high fat content.

**Pork Products** – have been known to cause projectile vomiting and may be a cause for pancreatitis. *Pig ear chews are usually okay for most dogs.*

![No Eat Signs]

**Toxic foods:**

- Chocolate
- Grapes & Raisins
- Sugar-Free Gum & Candy
- Macadamia Nuts
- Onions & Garlic
- Avocados
- Alcohol
- Raw Yeast Dough
- Spoiled Foods

If your pet eats any of the above listed Toxic foods please contact Claws & Paws Veterinary Hospital® or the emergency clinic immediately. Swift action can mean the difference between life and death.
Household Dangers
Puppies are very curious and use their mouth to explore the world. Puppy-proofing your home is key to keeping your new puppy happy and healthy. Keep electrical cords, house plants and household chemicals out of your puppy’s reach.

Common Household Hazards

• Human Medications (includes OTC)
• Vitamins
• Tobacco
• Detergents and Fabric Softener
• Disinfectants and Cleaners
• Bleach
• Paint Thinner
• Lighter Fluid
• Insecticides
• Mothballs
• Potpourri
• Easter Lily
• Sago Palm
• Antifreeze

For a more comprehensive list of toxic plants, food, and other items please visit CPVH.com.

Heartworm Prevention
Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal condition caused by parasitic worms living in the arteries of the lungs and occasionally in the right side of the heart. Heartworms are transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. Dogs of any age or breed are susceptible to infection. Fortunately, heartworms can be easily prevented. Heartworm prevention is safe, easy and inexpensive. While treatment for heartworm disease in dogs is possible, it is a complicated and expensive process, taking weeks for infected animals to recover.

Heartworm prevention should be started at eight weeks of age and continued monthly throughout your dog’s life. There are a variety of monthly preventative medications available, including products that, in addition to preventing heartworms, offer flea and intestinal parasite control. We can help you decide which product is best for your pet.
Flea Control
With many safe and effective flea products now available, the use of flea dips are not necessarily recommended. Topical flea products are available through your veterinarian. Trusted brands such as Revolution, Advantix and Advantage Multi are recommended. There is also a good flea/tick collar (Seresto) available. Over-the-counter, low-cost brands may appear to offer the same control at a lower price, but often contain ingredients that are unsafe and/or ineffective. Please call our office at 281.997.1426 if you are unsure of a product's safety and we will be happy to help. Our office also offers a monthly flea control tablet (Nexgard) that can be given by mouth.

Intestinal Parasites
It is common for up to 70% of puppies to have intestinal parasites. Some of these parasites can be very dangerous, leading to serious medical issues, up to and including death. In addition to being a health concern for your pet, some intestinal parasites may be transmitted to people, especially young children. During your puppy's first visit, a fecal exam will be completed to determine if your puppy has intestinal parasites. Pets may not exhibit signs of intestinal parasites, such as diarrhea, even though they may indeed have an infection. In accordance with CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines, we strongly recommend annual intestinal parasite examinations for the health of your pet and family.

Vaccinations and Healthy Pet Exams
Many diseases can threaten your puppy but are preventable with regular vaccinations. Beginning at 6-8 weeks of age, puppies should receive vaccinations to prevent common puppy diseases. Generally these vaccinations should be given every 3-4 weeks until your puppy is 16 weeks of age. During your first puppy visit at Claws & Paws, your veterinarian will determine what vaccinations are needed and a timeline to provide your puppy with proper immunization.

Vaccinations will need to be given throughout your pet’s life to keep them healthy in adulthood as well.

Regular physical exams are a very important part of of your pet’s health care. Physical exams should be completed every six months for early detection of disease and hidden health problems, such as heart murmurs, dental disease, and infections. Early detection is important and can aid in treating your pet before a more serious condition develops.
Spay/Neuter
If you are not planning to breed your pet, talk with one of our veterinarians about when is the best time for your pet to be spayed/neutered. This is recommended for a number of health reasons. There is a very high correlation between the incidence of breast cancer and the number of heat cycles that female dogs have. If your dog is spayed before she goes into her first heat cycle, then she has less than 5% chance of developing breast cancer. The risk increases to 25% by the time she has her second heat cycle. Males are at risk for prostate cancer and other related tumors after about five years of age.

Recently, it has been speculated that large breed dogs who are spayed/neutered at an early age may have an increased incidence of cruciate ligament (CCL) injuries along with other health issues later on. This has not yet been proven to be true because CCL injuries are so common in large breed dogs. Because of the high risk of breast cancer, we recommend that females be spayed at six months of age. Males can be neutered at a later date.

Please talk to your veterinarian should you have more questions about this. We also have a handout that goes over details of the spay/neuter operation and also the specific health benefits.

Dental Care
Preventative dental care is one of the most important steps you can take to ensure the health of your new puppy. Just like brushing your own teeth helps decrease plaque/tartar build-up in your own mouth, daily brushing of your pet’s teeth will meet those same needs. Periodontal (gum) disease is caused by a build-up of plaque and calculus below the gum line. Plaque, a sticky, colorless, bacteria-laden film, forms continuously on teeth. Gums recede as calculus builds up, forming bacteria filled pockets. Left untreated, this can lead to severe infection and eventually the loss of teeth. Bacteria infect gum tissue, the roots of teeth, and erode bone that secures the teeth. The bacteria can then enter through the large network of blood vessels near gums and teeth and cause infection throughout the rest of the body.
To begin training your puppy to allow you to brush his/her teeth, we recommend starting with a finger-brush. The fluoride in human toothpaste is toxic to pets, so we recommend CET toothpaste. CET toothpaste is formulated for dogs and cats and contains an enzyme to help break up plaque. It is available in pet-friendly flavors such as poultry, malt, and vanilla mint. You can use the time spent brushing your puppy’s teeth to bond with your baby and make it a special “treat” time while providing him with the best protection against periodontal disease.

Socialization and Training
The most important time for puppy socialization is in the first three months of life. It is essential to begin socializing your puppy early so that they are acclimated to other dogs, cats, children, and people. This can be a challenge since your puppy isn’t fully protected from disease until their vaccinations are completed at 16-weeks of age. Well-vaccinated adult pets are a great resource for acclimating puppies. Be sure that any pets introduced to your puppy are adult, healthy pets that are up-to-date on vaccinations. While taking your new puppy to the dog park or pet store might be tempting, these areas can be dangerous for puppies that aren’t fully vaccinated. Many serious, even fatal, viruses can be transmitted from dog to dog, and may also live in the environment (grass and dirt) for up to six months or longer. We recommend waiting to take your puppy in public areas or beginning any formal obedience training until your puppy is fully vaccinated. We know this may sound strict, but you do not want to take any chances with your puppy’s health.
**Houstraining**

We recommend using a crate to help your puppy with house-training because most dogs are less likely to urinate and defecate in their eating and sleeping area. There is a ‘gastro-colic’ reflex where your puppy usually will need to defecate within 5-15 minutes of eating. Be sure to take your puppy outside immediately after meals. Your puppy should be taken outside first thing in the morning, last thing at night, and every 30-60 minutes in between, if possible, until training is complete.

For more information on housebreaking, please ask one of our staff members for additional information, or visit our website at CPVH.com.

Consider getting your pet microchipped when he/she is spayed/neutered and we can do this while he/she is under anesthesia.

We also have an on-line pharmacy, a retail supply center (Clawds Corner), text reminders and a Free Mobile App.

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Links To All Social Media Sites Can Be Found On Our Website CPVH.com/Social

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