

Kettle Moraine Veterinary Clinic



Puppy Health Care

(920)892-4225

Animals enrich our lives

People who own pets live longer, happier, and fuller lives. Our pets remind us of what it is to be gentle, loyal, and to flourish and trust. For all that our pets teach us, for all the love and joy they bring to our lives, they deserve good care, and they rely on us to give it.

Why lifetime veterinary care matters

The average life span of dogs and cats in the United States is 7.4 years. The POTENTIAL life span of the average dog or cat in the United States is 15 years. Comprehensive medical care, good nutrition, and proper training allow pets to live up to their potential as long term family members. In other words, the care you provide your pet with throughout its lifetime will determine how long he or she will remain a happy, healthy member of your family.

Our goal is to maximize the lifespan and the overall health of your dog or cat through preventative medical care, nutritional counseling, and behavioral counseling. We are advocates for your pet. Our job is to advise you of the best care options available for you and your pet.

Working together as a team, we hope to help our patients and their families spend many happy years together.



Kettle Moraine Veterinary Clinic

2712 Eastern Ave · Plymouth, WI · (920)892-4225

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Puppy Wellness Program

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After-hour emergencies will be handled by
Lakeshore Veterinary Specialists

located at

207 W. Seven Hills Rd.

Port Washington, WI 53074

Phone: (262)268-7800 · Website: www.lakeshorevetspecialists.com

Directions to Lakeshore Veterinary Specialists: *Starting from Plymouth*

1. Head south on HWY 57
2. At the 4-way traffic lights in Fredonia, turn left onto Cr-H/Cr-A
3. Continue to follow Cr-H for 5.5 miles
4. Immediately after crossing the overpass of HWY 43 turn right onto W Seven Hills Road/Cr-LL
5. The Lakeshore Veterinary Specialists is located in the North Port shopping center (207 W. Seven Hills Rd)



WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

Please do not hesitate to call with your questions or concerns. We rather you call early, than have your pet suffer needlessly or worsen overnight. If calling after hours, your call will be transferred to Lakeshore Veterinary Specialists Emergency Service. Please **do not give human medications to your pet** without checking with us first. Many human drugs are toxic to pets or are dosed very differently in animals. For instance, Tylenol and Advil are toxic to dogs and cats, and even a small amount of aspirin can be fatal for your cat.

First Aid Tips

Severe Bleeding: Apply pressure with a cloth, bandage or your hand. **Call your veterinarian.**

Choking: You may use a Heimlich maneuver but be gentle. For smaller animals use the infant method. **Call your veterinarian immediately.**

Vomiting: Do not give food for 12-24 hours. 2 hours after vomiting stops you can try ice chips or very small amounts of water. If no vomiting, you can gradually increase the amounts of food and water over a 24 hour period. **Call your veterinarian if vomiting continues or if accompanied by diarrhea, fever, lethargy, or pain.**

Diarrhea: Do not give food for 12-24 hours. Save a sample of the diarrhea for testing, and keep in a cool place. **Call your veterinarian. If vomiting, lethargy, or pain call immediately.**

Fracture: Signs of a bone fracture include inability to stand on limb, limping, intense pain, and bone appearing to bend where it shouldn't. **Call your veterinarian immediately.** While moving your pet, tie a pantyhose or cloth around the muzzle (severe pain can cause even a nice dog to bite). Use a blanket, floor mat, or board as a stretcher to limit the movement of the limb. Keep your pet warm and quiet while transporting.



YOUR PUPPY'S FIRST VISIT

The way your puppy perceives his or her first visit to the veterinary hospital will *greatly* influence the way the puppy will respond here for the rest of its life. Puppies are sensitive to emotional cues from their owners. **How you react to new situations tells your puppy how to react as well. Bring treats!!!** Food helps make a positive new experience for a puppy.

You can interpret for the puppy the way he should respond in new or traumatic situations, such as, this first veterinary visit. **To do this, behave in the way you want the puppy to behave when he or she is an adult dog.**

For example, if you want a dog that tolerates veterinary visits, even enjoys them, act cheerful and upbeat before, during and especially immediately after the treatment. If the pup yips or yowls during a procedure, talk to it in a jolly tone of voice until it wags its tail.



***Do NOT** coddle, coo, make sympathetic noises, or soothingly pet the pup, or you will teach him or her to be worried or concerned instead of cheerful and matter-of-fact.

This tactic also works for other new situations, such as trips to the park for socializing with children and adults, puppy kindergarten classes or when other dogs or strangers approach.

A dog that is relaxed and confident in any situation is an ideal pet and an ideal veterinary patient as well.

Basic Puppy Care

Vaccinations

Many common diseases, including distemper, are deadly to your dog. During the initial day of nursing, puppies receive antibodies against certain diseases from their mother's milk. These protecting antibodies are gradually lost between 6-16 weeks of age. A series of vaccinations are given during this period to stimulate your puppy's immune system to produce its own antibodies. Some diseases can be carried by rodents and wild animals, as well as dogs. Many viruses are quite hardy, and can be carried into your house on your hands, shoes or clothing. Make sure your pet is protected!

DHLPP - The DHLPP vaccine containing distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza, and parvovirus, is given every 2-3 weeks, from the time the puppy is 6-8 weeks old until it is at least 16 weeks old. At around 16 weeks old it will receive its final puppy DHLPP lasting one year. After that the DHPP can last 3 years, with the Lepto portion needing to be boosted annually.

Kennel Cough - A bordetella vaccination can be given along with the first or second DHLPP, to protect against Kennel Cough. Many puppy classes and boarding kennels require this vaccination. Boosters are given every 6-12 months to keep your dog protected.

Rabies - When a puppy is 16 weeks or older, he or she will also receive a rabies vaccination. Your puppy needs a booster rabies vaccination within one year of the date given, after that it will be good for three years.

Lyme - If you take your dog hunting or camping, if you live in the country or see deer from your yard, or have seen ticks on you or your pets, your dog should be protected against Lyme disease. This requires an initial series of two vaccinations spaced 2-3 weeks apart, a 6 month booster and then yearly boosters. This series may be started anytime after 9 weeks of age.

Vaccinate For These Diseases Every Year!



Vaccinating for Kennel Cough

Kennel cough is the common name for a group of diseases similar to the human cold or flu. Symptoms of kennel cough include fever, swollen tonsils/lymph nodes, and a deep “honking” cough that takes weeks to go away. Although rarely fatal, it can lead to pneumonia in puppies, geriatric pets, or those already ill with other disease.

There are several different bacteria and viruses that can cause kennel cough. All are very contagious, especially when multiple dogs are in the same room together. When a sick dog coughs or sneezes, it sprays the infectious virus or bacteria particles into the air, where they can float around and are inhaled by other dogs across the room or in the cage next door. Also, it can be spread by touching noses, sharing food/water bowls, and sniffing around where a sick dog has been.

The most common cause of kennel cough is a bacterium named *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. *Bordetella* vaccination is either an intranasal (nose drop), oral, or injectable form. All give quick and effective immunity for 6-12 months. Parainfluenza is a viral cause of kennel cough. There are two strains of parainfluenza vaccine contained in the DHLPP vaccine that most dogs receive annually. Some *bordetella* vaccines contain extra parainfluenza vaccine as well. Also, there are some less common viral causes of kennel cough for which we have no vaccine, so even a vaccinated dog can occasionally contract the disease.

There have been numerous studies reported recently in the veterinary literature about *bordetella* infections causing upper respiratory diseases in cats as well as dogs. Unlike the cough seen in canines, cats develop sneezing and sinusitis.

All boarding kennels require that dogs be vaccinated against kennel cough. Some require the *bordetella* vaccination given within the previous 6 months to keep immunity high. Many veterinary clinics require vaccination before elective surgeries to prevent the spread of disease in the hospital. The last thing your pet needs after major surgery is a fever or a cough.

Most groomers do not require *bordetella* vaccination, but they should. Also, your pet should be vaccinated if you go to dog parks, obedience training, hunting or hiking with other dogs, or if you encounter other pets while walking your dog. Even sitting in the waiting room of the veterinary clinic or entering the clinic for dentistry, x-rays, or other procedures puts your pet at risk for contracting this disease. Only pets confined to their own house or yard have no risk of catching kennel cough.

As with most diseases, prevention is easy and cost effective. Be sure your pet is vaccinated!



What is Lyme Disease?

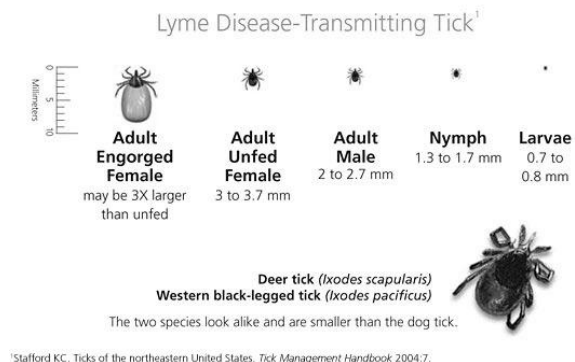
Lyme disease is an infection caused by a type of bacteria called a spirochete. Although originally discovered in Lyme, Connecticut, Lyme disease has now been reported in most states. The disease is more properly called Borreliosis after the bacterial species that causes it-Borrelia burgdorferi.

Lyme disease is a serious and life threatening disease. It can cause an array of symptoms such as kidney, heart, skin and neurological diseases, abortion and infertility. The most common symptoms in dogs are low grade fever (103-104°F), weight loss, and lameness or joint pain which may shift from leg to leg. Symptoms may occur as soon as 4 days after exposure to an infected tick, or as long as 1 year later. The average incubation period is 1 month.

How is it Spread?

The deer tick is the most common carrier of Lyme disease in Wisconsin, Minnesota and the eastern coastal states. Deer are not the only animals that harbor deer ticks. The larval deer ticks prefer to feed on small rodents that live in grassy or brush areas that are often found around the edges of woods or fields. Pets can pick up Lyme disease whether or not they are in a deer populated area.

The deer tick lives a rather complex life cycle. It develops from an egg to a larvae, larva to a nymph and finally from a nymph to an adult. The deer ticks are among the first ticks to become active in the spring, and they remain active in various stages until the first snow. All three life cycle stages of ticks can transmit Lyme disease, and all three are very small and difficult to find. They are active almost all year round.



Can Lyme Disease Be Treated?

Yes! The bacterium that causes the disease is sensitive to several antibiotics. Doxycycline is the one most commonly used to treat the disease in animals. The length of time to treat Lyme disease is typically 4 weeks and the earlier the diagnosis is made, the more successful the treatment likely is. Even with prompt treatment, however, there can be permanent damage, especially if the infection involves the brain, kidneys or heart. Preventing the disease altogether is a much better alternative than waiting for your pet to pick up the disease.

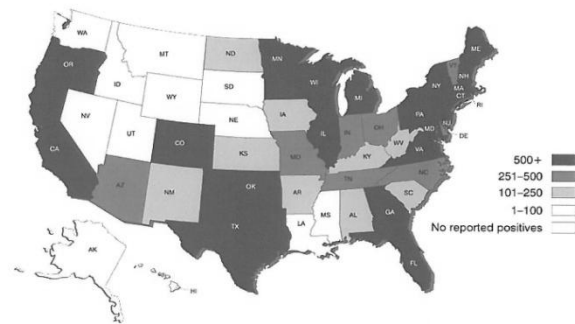
Should I Vaccinate?

We recommend vaccinating for Lyme disease if you take your dog hunting, hiking, camping, running in fields or woods, or can see deer from your house or in your yard. We also advise the use of tick control products on your pet because even though you vaccinate your dog, ticks carry other diseases besides Lyme disease and their bites can become irritated or infected. Prompt removal of any ticks you find on your dog is also recommended to help prevent exposure to the disease.

U.S. Canine Positive Lyme Results

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U.S. Canine Positive Lyme Test Results



Lyme Disease Affects People Too!

It is important to do thorough tick checks on yourself, your children and your pets after spending time outdoors. This includes time in your own backyard or garden as well as when camping, or hiking in wooded areas. Avoid grassy and marshy woodland areas, and don't walk barefoot in grassy areas. Wearing light colored clothes helps to find ticks easier. Also tuck pants into boots or socks and wear long sleeved shirts buttoned at the cuffs.

Ticks do not fly or jump onto their host; instead they wait atop grasses or other vegetation until an animal brushes against them. Then they cling to the skin, fur, or clothing and crawl for a time on their host before they embed and start to feed. Ticks must be embedded and engorged (not flat) before they transmit the Lyme disease bacteria, therefore it is important to look for and remove any ticks as soon as possible in order to prevent infection.

Protect yourself and your pets with insect/tick repellents. We have several good, long- lasting products available to help you safely protect your dog from Lyme disease.

Can I Get Lyme Disease From My Pet?

It is not known at this time whether Lyme disease can be spread directly from animals to humans. *Borrelia burgdorferi* organisms have been found in the urine of infected animals; however it is speculated that urine and feces from birds and rodents may be contributing to the spread of the disease. Certainly, infected ticks can carry the disease from animals to people in close proximity. At this time we don't believe that animal-human transmission is a significant factor in the disease transmission but caution is advised if you are exposed to an animal which has the disease. Use insect repellents conscientiously and wash your hands or wear gloves when handling animal wastes or deer carcasses.

What's Next?

Congratulations! Your puppy has completed his or her vaccination series and puppy exams. We hope that your pet is well on its way to a long and happy life as a member of your family. To keep your puppy healthy for a lifetime will require on-going care. The following list should help you to understand what health care your pet will need in the years to come.

- **The vaccines your puppy has received will provide immunity against diseases for about 1 year.** Annual boosters are needed to keep their level of immunity high enough to protect him from illness. You will receive reminders in the mail next year when his annual vaccinations are due.
- Your pet will also receive an annual physical examination with his yearly booster vaccinations. By the time we see your pet again next year he will have grown through the equivalent of his teenage years and will be a young adult. Because a pet's life span is compressed into a shorter amount of time than a human, many changes can occur in your pet's body in the course of one year. The annual physical exam is very important to detect physical problems before they become serious.
- Every year from now on, you will receive a reminder card in the mail for your pet's annual heartworm blood test. Annual testing is recommended along with giving monthly heartworm prevention. Remember heartworm disease is a deadly parasite which is easily prevented with a monthly pill.
- **Your puppy should be fed a puppy food until he is about 12 months old,** then gradually switch to an adult food by mixing the old and new foods together for about two weeks. This helps to avoid intestinal upset from the change of food. Your pet will live a longer, healthier life if it is fed a good quality diet such as Science Diet, Purina, or Iams. Dry food is better for the prevention of dental disease. Too many treats and snacks lead to fussy eating habits, obesity, and digestive upset. Give your pet praise and affection for rewards, not food and he'll love you just as much.
- **Spay or neuter your pet at 4 months old. Altered pets live longer, are healthier in their old age, have fewer behavioral problems, and don't contribute to the pet overpopulation problem.**

- If you haven't yet begun an obedience program with your pet, now is a good time to start. Pets that are well trained are much nicer to have around. You can train your pet yourself if you have the knowledge and experience, but we highly recommend a professional trainer. Obedience classes are a lot of fun and you'll learn a lot of helpful tips for making the most out of your relationship with your friend.
- Your puppy will soon have a full set of adult teeth. Good dental care is essential to your pet's wellbeing. Daily brushing will slow plaque and tartar buildup as your dog gets older. Without brushing, tartar will build up and he will need a dental cleaning by the time he is two to five years old. A dog that gets good dental care throughout its life will live an average of 15-20% longer than a dog that doesn't. he will also have fresher breath, less pain from periodontal disease, and be healthier and happier.
- **Please call us with any questions or problems with your pet.** Most medical problems are less costly to your pet's wellbeing and to your pocket book if they are dealt with early rather than later. The same is true of behavioral problems. The earlier you contact us or your trainer regarding a problem, the sooner you can resolve it. Behaviors such as barking, digging, running away, chewing, and over-aggression can almost always be changed, but you have to ask for help early.
- Enjoy your puppies boundless joy, love, and energy!



Deworming

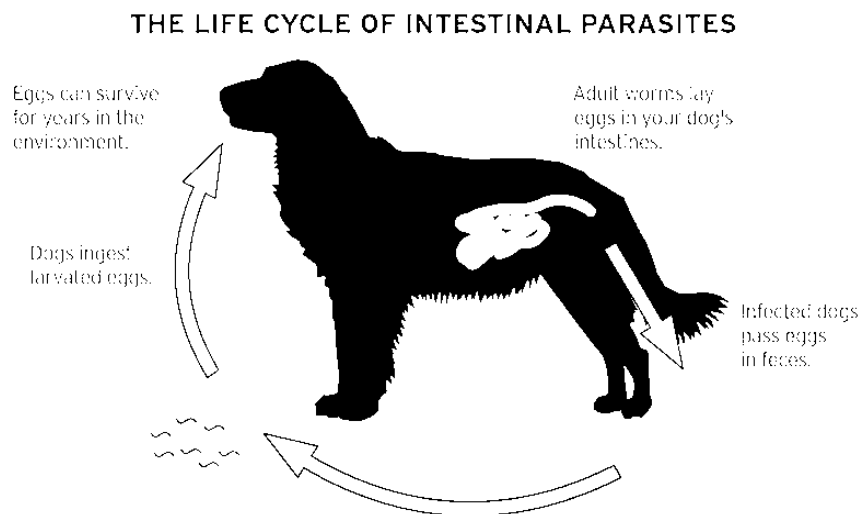
Intestinal parasites can cause vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, or even death. Some intestinal parasites are transmittable to humans. *Over 10,000 cases of animal roundworms cause illness in children every year in the United States.*

Intestinal parasites are diagnosed by having a fresh stool sample examined under a microscope by someone here at the veterinary hospital. This should be done as part of a health exam when you obtain a cat or dog. Also, it should be done on a yearly basis as part of your pet's annual health exam.

Stool samples should be collected when they are fresh and stored in the refrigerator until they can be brought to the hospital. DO NOT freeze them. One to two teaspoons is all that is necessary to run a fecal exam.

If a stool sample from your pet is found to be positive for worms, the veterinarian will prescribe an effective dewormer. Most parasites require deworming twice, two weeks apart. Please weigh your pet before picking up dewormer to ensure a proper dosage. Stool samples should be checked again in 4 weeks and 8 weeks after the final deworming to ensure your pet is not re-infested by his or her environment. For prevention of intestinal parasites, remove fecal matter from your yard regularly and dispose of it.

So that you may better understand the problems intestinal parasites may cause and what signs to look for, we have included a short description of the six most common types of intestinal parasites.



Roundworms

Roundworms, the most common type of intestinal worm, are 2-4 inches long and resemble strands of spaghetti. They live in the small intestine and may cause vomiting, diarrhea, or weight loss. The larval worms can damage the liver and lungs while migrating through these organs on their way to the small intestine. Roundworms are transmitted via stool of other infected dogs and cats, or through the uterus of the mother dog/cat to her unborn babies. Entire worms can sometimes be seen in the stool or vomit of infested animals.

Hookworms

Hookworms are half inch long worms which attach to the lining of the small intestine, causing blood loss and diarrhea. Puppies and kittens can become infested through the mother's uterus before birth or via her milk after birth. Older animals acquire hookworms through skin contact with the stool of other dogs or cats.

Whipworms

Whipworms live within the large intestine. They are not as common as the other intestinal parasites, but the disease they cause can be very serious. Bloody diarrhea and weight loss are the symptoms seen. These worms are transmitted by ingestion of the stool of infested animals.

Tapeworms

Tapeworms live within the small intestine, where the head attaches to the intestinal wall and produces a chain of segments. Mature segments containing eggs are passed with the stool, or may be seen around the rectum. They resemble small grains of rice. They may be acquired by the ingestion of rodents or birds, or most commonly through the ingestion of fleas. Flea control is essential to control tapeworm infestation.

Coccidia

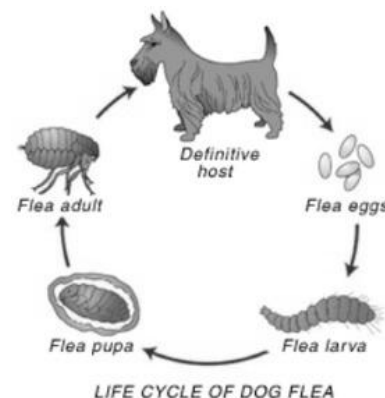
Coccidia are a one-celled protozoan parasite, more like bacteria rather than a worm. Puppies and kittens can pick these up from their mother and they can be acquired by eating rabbit or other wildlife droppings. They are treated with antibiotics.

Giardia

Giardia is also a protozoan. They are very difficult to pick up on a regular stool check. Antibiotics or special dewormers kill them, but they are difficult to eradicate completely and often flare up with stress or other intestinal problems. They are contagious to humans and cause vomiting and diarrhea in both people and pets.

Preventing Fleas and Ticks

Fleas are among one of the most common health problems in dogs and cats. It is much easier and more cost effective to prevent fleas on your pets than to have to treat a major flea infestation in your house. Regular use of flea products will take care of the occasional flea that your pet may encounter in the yard and should prevent you from having to spend a large sum of money on foggers and exterminators. Treating a bad flea infestation in your house usually costs upwards of \$150.



Fleas will bite your pets causing an itchy allergic reaction which can become very severe. They also carry viral and bacterial diseases. Puppies and kittens can become anemic, which can be fatal. Fleas also carry tapeworms and tapeworm segments can be seen in the stool or around the rectal area of your pet. They look like small rice segments and chances are if they have tapeworms, they have fleas or vice versa.

Other animals bring fleas into your yard. Pets and people can then bring fleas into the house. Birds nesting in the attic or mice seeking shelter can also bring fleas into your home. Fleas can travel and will hop inside through an open door or window. They are often small enough that they can come through a window screen. Once inside your home there is no place a flea cannot get to. Adult fleas spend most of their time on your pet but the remainder of the time they are roaming your house and laying thousands of eggs!

If you've never been lucky enough to see a flea, they are about 1/8 inch long, reddish brown and shaped like a sesame seed with legs. They are usually found on your pet's head, belly or lower back. If you ripple the hair backwards and look at the skin they can be seen scurrying through the base of the hair coat. The droppings they leave behind can be seen in clusters and look like grains of pepper. If you place some of these on a white paper towel, wet it and mush it around it will turn the towel red. This happens because the flea droppings contain digested blood. Plain dirt stays black or gray when it is wet.

Prevention

Many flea products sold in the stores are wasting your time and money, and some are even harmful to your pet. Most compounds that are strong enough to be effective are sold only through licensed veterinarians and exterminators, who are properly trained in their use and are regulated by the state and EPA. Insecticides should only be used according to the label directions. Care is needed to ensure that toxicity does not develop due to the concurrent use of other drugs, pesticides, or because the compound used is not safe for a particular age or type of animal.

Many insecticidal flea collars that are available in stores are not as effective and often cause dermatitis on the pet's neck. Flea shampoos and soaps are great for cleaning your pet but they have no residual effect.

To see what flea/tick treatment Kettle Moraine Veterinary Clinic offers, visit the "Flea Products on the Market" page.

Flea/Tick Products on the Market

Frontline Gold- a vial of liquid that is applied to the back of the neck in cats, and down the backs of dogs. Protects against fleas and ticks for 1 month.

Approved for use on cats, including breeding, pregnant, and lactating queens and kittens 8 weeks or older weighing 1.5 lbs or more.

Approved for use on breeding, pregnant, and lactating bitches and puppies 8 weeks or older weighing 5 lbs or more.

Nexgard- available in four sizes of beef-flavored, soft chewable tablets for oral administration to dogs and puppies according to their weight. Approved for use in dogs and puppies 8 weeks or older weighing 4lbs or more. Nexgard is not available for cats of any age. Not recommended for dogs with food allergies.

Revolution- a vial of liquid that is applied to the back of the neck. Protects against fleas, heartworm disease and also treats and controls hookworms, roundworms, and ear mites. Product is applied once a month and should not be used on kittens less than 8 weeks of age.

Sentinel Spectrum- available in four sizes for oral administration to dogs and puppies according to their weight. Protects against, fleas, ticks, heartworm, roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tape worms. Approved for the use in dogs and puppies 6 weeks or older weighing 2 lbs or more. Safe to give dogs with food allergies.

Seresto Collar- for 8-month prevention and treatment of ticks, fleas, and lice on dogs and puppies 7 weeks or older weighing above 18lbs. 8 month prevention and treatment of ticks and fleas on cats and kittens 10 weeks of age or older.

Heartworm Disease

Heartworm Disease...

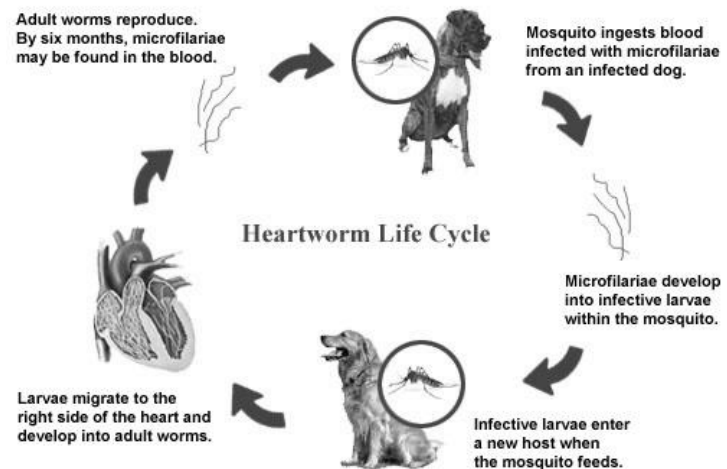
It is a deadly disease wherever mosquitoes are present. Each year thousands of dogs become permanently debilitated or die from lung, heart or circulatory problems caused by heartworms. Your dog can have heartworms for several months before symptoms are obvious. By then the disease may be difficult or impossible to treat successfully.

Symptoms...

An infected dog becomes less active and tires easily. Coughing, weight loss, chronic fatigue and fainting may appear in advanced stages of the disease. Adult heartworms are found in the heart, lungs, and major blood vessels and secondary liver and kidney disease may result. Heartworms can grow from 5-14 inches long and in advanced cases a hundred or more worms can be found in a single heart.

Prevention...

Year round monthly heartworm prevention is recommended along with annual heartworm blood testing. It is easy and inexpensive to test for and prevent heartworm disease. We are happy to say that most of our clients who own dogs do have them tested for heartworm disease and put them on a monthly preventative medication. Heartworm preventatives come in both a chewable beef flavored form or in non-chewable pill that is given once a month year round.



Not only are heartworm medications reasonably priced but many of them also prevent roundworms, whipworms, and hookworms. These parasites live in the intestines and over 95% of puppies are born with one or more of these parasites. They are also common in adult dogs, especially those that spend a lot of time outdoors. Roundworms and hookworms can also cause problems for people, especially children who may be outside barefoot in the yard or toddlers who may put soiled fingers in their mouth. There are 10,000 cases of animal parasites that cause diseases in children every year in the United States.

Why Risk Problems for Your Pet or for Your Family?

We recommend having a stool sample checked for intestinal parasites at the time the heartworm test is done. If the stool sample is positive for intestinal parasites, your pet will need deworming to kill the adult intestinal worms. The heartworm preventatives given after that will prevent your dog from becoming re-infested with the intestinal parasites. Eggs of intestinal parasites do survive on grass for long periods of time. Without the heartworm preventative, it is common for dogs to pick up intestinal parasites repeatedly in the yard.

Untreated Animals Spread Diseases. Please Don't Let Yours Be the One!

Unfortunately heartworm disease is here to stay due to untreated pets and wild animals. There will always be dog owners who choose to not put their pets on heartworm prevention. These unprotected animals serve as a reservoir, spreading the disease to other dogs. Please don't let your dog become a victim of this deadly disease. Call for an appointment to get your pet started on a parasite prevention program today.

➡ **Fact** All dogs, regardless of age, sex, size or breed are at risk wherever mosquitoes are present. It takes only ONE infected mosquito to infect your dog.

➡ **Fact** Heartworm disease can kill your dog.

➡ **Fact** Effective, easy-to-use preventative medication can save your dog's life!



Puppy Learning and Socialization

The first months are the most important months in your new puppy's life. During this time your puppy is growing at a phenomenal rate, both mentally and physically. The experiences he has will now shape his outlook and personality for the rest of his life.

The period between 8-12 weeks of age is called the Socialization period. Your puppy learns during this time how to relate to people and to other animals. Good experiences with people and other dogs will help foster a lifetime of positive interactions and minimize the risks of problems with fighting, biting, and other behavioral problems.

Take your puppy with you to busy places and introduce them to lots of strangers, children, and other pets. (Be sure you know that any other dogs your puppy interacts with are current on vaccinations!) Give them a lot of praise and petting when they are friendly and interested. Frequent short trips in the car will accustom your pup to traveling. Also, you can bring them in to the veterinary office on a weekly basis for treats and attention, and they will be happier to visit here the rest of their life.

You don't need to worry that all this socialization will make your puppy a poor watch dog. Most older puppies learn on their own to bark at the doorbell or a knock from a stranger. What you don't want is a dog that bites the furnace repair man or your children's friends. Positive social interacting leads to positive relations with people later in life. So spend the extra time now while he's young and reap a lifetime of reward in good behavior.

The other important lesson to teach your puppy at this age is their place in the "pack." Dogs are pack animals and socialize in small groups, and they have a definite hierarchy that tells each dog their status as a pack member. A dominant dog is in charge.

Your puppy will come to see your household members, whether people or other animals, as the members of their pack. The number one rule to remember is that your dog should NEVER be the dominant member of their pack. YOU are the one in charge. You have the right to tell your dog to sit, stay, or come. Your puppy must learn now where its place is in your household.

MORE ANIMALS ARE PUT TO SLEEP BECAUSE OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS THAN ANY OTHER REASON. A primary factor in behavioral problems is dominant behavior.

So what do you need to do to avoid these problems?

Whether you own your dog as a pet, to show, to hunt or for protection, your dog requires formal training. An unruly pet is not a pleasure to live with. Proper training teaches your dog their position and duties as a member of the household, and serves as an outlet for their energy. It teaches your pet to accept frustration and attain patience, and it creates a bond between animal and human that is impossible to duplicate in any other way.

Obedience is simply a repetition of exercises for both dog and handler resulting in a unified team. The owner will learn to control the dog both by voice and on leash. Training can start when your puppy is very young, by teaching the basic commands of “sit” and “come.”

Sit is the simplest thing to teach!

The difficult thing is to teach when to quit sitting. The goal is to teach that sit means to sit until you give permission to get up. Say your pet’s name and then the command “sit” while tilting his chin up and at the same time pressing gently down on the rump. Do this whenever your puppy wants attention or to play, and he will quickly learn the command. You should soon be able to forego pressing on the back end. The instant he sits, praise and pet.

After about 5 seconds of sit, say “OK” and step away to communicate that your pup can now move out of the sitting position. Crouch down and praise and then keep repeating the entire procedure until sitting is achieved on the first command. Do short sessions, gradually lengthening the time of sitting.

If your puppy starts to lie down by your side as the duration of the sit increases, do not correct them at first. Once five minutes of sitting has been achieved you may then stop the lying down behavior by using your hand motion to correct it the instant the puppy shows a sign of lying down. **Be patient and consistent. Weeks are necessary to build up to a consistent sit.**



To Teach “Come”

To teach “come” take your pup to an area that is fairly open and free of distraction. Go to the center of the area and watch the puppy closely. The instant that he takes his eyes off of you, call “Spot, come!” immediately crouch down, turn sideways to the puppy, clap your hands and gleefully praise “Good dog.” Keep up the praise and clapping until your dog comes all the way to you. Praise your puppy, then stand up and step away behind the puppy.

If his attention does not stay on you instantly call his name and “come” again and repeat the entire procedure. If your dog gets distracted, repeat the call and the praise/crouch procedure.

Continue until your dog will not leave you no matter where you walk. Then stop that teaching session. Do not hold another for at least 2 ½ hours. Hold three daily sessions at the most for six weeks, varying the location and increasing the amount of noise and distractions as you progress.

Leash Training

Leash training is another skill your puppy can start learning early on. Start by introducing them to the collar. Most puppies will scratch at the collar at first. Give them a few days to adjust before moving on to the leash.

Be gentle and patient at first with leash walking. Let the puppy drag the leash around (without getting tangled.) Once they aren't bothered by the leash, take them out in the yard and let them walk you for a few sessions around 10 minutes or so in length.

Work gradually up to leading the puppy, with lots of praise and encouragement when they follow you and gently tug to get them moving. Don't expect a great deal of success at first, but with time and patience most dogs soon come to love their outings with their owners.

Beginning leash sessions should be short and fun. Don't walk on sidewalks or pavement at first, as this is hard on a little puppy's soft bones and joints. Do your first leash walking on the grass.

To Teach Your Dog YOU Are The Leader

To teach your dog that you are the leader, make sure that as you go about your business at home you are ahead of your dog. With dogs, the leader of the pack is typically in front. To avoid teaching your dog that it is the leader of your household pack, you must be the one in front. Each time the opportunity comes up, such as when the doorbell rings, mealtimes, going outdoors or when you leave the room, try this exercise: Whenever the dog starts to go ahead of you, abruptly back up, then turn around and walk in the opposite direction. The instant the dog starts to turn around toward you say "Good dog," and keep moving until it reaches you. Then praise again and pet for a few seconds. Then start in the original direction and repeat the process the instant your dog starts to get ahead of you. Keep this up until the dog follows or waits for your invitation to follow you.

The most difficult place to practice this exercise is at the front door, so start with an easier room-to-room session first. This exercise of turning away also works as you begin to train your dog on a leash. Turning abruptly and heading in a new direction corrects tugging forward and lagging behind, and teaches your pet to follow your movements.

Handy Tips for Obedience

Be sure that every member of your household is using the same commands and is consistent in their training. Everyone needs to agree on whether your puppy will be allowed on the furniture or beds, how many treats they get, what room they're allowed in, etc. If every one is doing something different the puppy will get confused and stressed by the mixed signals.

Training Your Family to Train Your Pet

Starting your puppy on this simple training program at a young age will prepare them well for more advanced obedience work as they become older and their attention spans lengthen. Six months is a good age to begin more formal training. If you have not trained dogs before, we recommend an obedience class for you and your dog. Children are welcome to attend as well. Children need to understand the proper way to train their dog, and they often derive a great deal of pride and satisfaction from participating.

However, children unintentionally be cruel to small pets. Children must be taught how to be gentle and patient with their animal. Children should not be allowed to hit, drag, or yell at their puppy. Toddlers should never be left unsupervised with a pet.

In Summary

Starting on an obedience program early is the quickest way toward a lifetime of pleasure with a happy, well behaved pet. Incorporate obedience into your dog's day, so it becomes part of life to him. Simply ask your dog to perform some action whenever it wants something (to open the door, play ball, get dinner, etc.) Dogs will work to get something they want, which keeps you in charge and keeps them interested and constructive.

We want to encourage you to devote the necessary time and energy to this project while your dog is still young, to ensure you have many wonder, problem free years with your pet. A good trainer and training program will solve, or avoid all together many behavioral problems that fill our nation's humane societies and rescues with unwanted pets. Your dog needs help to learn to become a good canine citizen!



What You Need To Know Before Your Dog's Upcoming Surgery

Many people have questions about various aspects of their pet's surgery and we hope this will help. It also explains the decisions you will need to make before your pet's surgery.

Is the Anesthetic Safe?

Today's modern anesthetics and anesthetic monitors have made surgery much safer than in the past. We do a thorough physical exam on your pet before administering anesthetics to ensure that a fever or other illnesses won't be a problem. We also adjust the amount and type of anesthetic used depending on the health of your pet.

Pre-anesthetic Blood Testing

Pre-anesthetic blood testing is important in reducing the risk of anesthesia. It is recommended for every pet to do blood testing prior to surgery to ensure that the liver and kidneys can handle the anesthesia. Even apparently healthy animals can have serious organ system problems that cannot be detected without blood testing. If there is a problem it is much better to find it before it causes anesthetic or surgical complications. Animals that have minor dysfunctions will handle the anesthetic better if they get IV fluids during surgery. If serious problems are detected, surgery can be postponed until the problem is corrected.

It is important that surgery be done on an empty stomach, to reduce the risk of vomiting under and after anesthesia. You will need to withhold food for at least 8 hours prior to surgery. Water can be left out until the morning of the surgery.

Will My Dog Have Stitches?

For most surgeries we use absorbable sutures underneath the skin. These will dissolve on their own and do not need to be removed later. You will only need to keep a watch on the incision for any swelling or discharge.



Elective Surgeries

The average life span of a neutered pet is 40% longer than an unneutered one. Almost all unspayed female dogs will eventually develop either mammary tumors (breast cancer) or a severe uterine infection called pyometra, by the time they are 8-10 years old. Female dogs also go through a messy heat cycle two to three times each year.

Male dogs commonly develop prostate disease, perianal tumors and testicular tumors in their old age. Even more sadly, the most common reason for euthanasia of pets in the U.S. is behavioral problems. These are usually aggression, running away or urinating in the house by intact male dogs. Male dogs also have more of a tendency to roam, which leads to car injuries, dog fights and contagious diseases.

Keep in mind also that millions of puppies are put to death in the United States each year because there are not enough homes for them all. Spaying and neutering your pet is the responsible thing to do.

We recommend spaying (surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus) of female dogs and castration (surgical removal of the testicles) of male dogs who will not be used for purebred breeding. This should be done when your animal reaches 4 months of age. Your pet will be a healthier and happier pet, and you will have done your part to reduce the pet overpopulation.

While your pet is anesthetized for surgery, we can also remove any retained baby teeth, clean ears, trim nails and implant a microchip.



Anesthesia and Your Pet

Many pet owners worry unnecessarily about anesthesia in their pets. Although anesthesia can never be completely free of risk, today's modern anesthetics make that risk very small.

The same anesthetics that allow complicated surgeries such as heart and kidney transplants to be done on humans are also used in pets as well. Even very frail pets can usually be anesthetized safely. In general, the risks from NOT performing a needed procedure such as dental cleanings or tumor removals are higher than the risk of anesthesia.

We use pre-anesthetic blood screening to help determine whether a procedure will be safe for your pet before it is performed. We recommend pre-anesthetic blood screening for all pets before anesthesia is administered. Even young and apparently healthy animals can have serious organ dysfunctions which are not evident without blood screening.

IV fluids are also recommended to help maintain blood pressure during the procedure. They also replace blood loss, speed recovery and allow for quick administration of life-saving drugs in case of an emergency. IV fluids can be elected for any procedure, but it is especially encouraged for intra-abdominal surgeries (spays) or any procedure where pre-anesthetic blood screening indicates.



During anesthesia your pet will be monitored closely for blood oxygen levels, body temperature, heart rate and heart beat intensity. The anesthesia is always administered by veterinary technicians and doctors to ensure safety and proper dosing.

If you have any further concerns about anesthesia and your pet, we would be happy to discuss the risks and benefits of any procedure with you and explain the exact protocol that will be used. Please let us know!

The Advantages of Kennel Training Your Puppy

There are many advantages to kennel training your puppy. For instance, housebreaking is accomplished much faster with minimal hassles for you and your puppy. Generally a puppy does not want to mess in the area in which he sleeps or eats. If you follow the general guidelines of housebreaking, your puppy should be housebroken within a week or less and with minimal cleanups for you. If you are a working pet owner, the job of housebreaking your puppy is more difficult, but not impossible. It will take a little longer to accomplish housebreaking your puppy because essentially you will have to wait until the puppy gets a little older and can hold his bladder and bowels for extended periods of time. However, the advantage of kenneling in this situation is the fact that all you have to clean up upon returning home is the kennel pan instead of the entire kitchen floor. Also, your furnishings, woodwork and belongings are still in one piece! The kennel provides a safe, secure area for your puppy, away from household hazards and prohibits the puppy from destroying woodwork, wallboards, and furniture. You can return home relaxed knowing your puppy is safe and so is your house. The advantages of a kennel trained dog are many as you will experience as time goes by.

When training a new puppy to the kennel you may want to line the bottom of the kennel pan with newspapers until he is housebroken. However, do provide a large towel or small blanket that you can place in one corner of the kennel for the puppy to use as a bedding area. If the puppy shreds the towel or blanket, remove it until he accepts the idea that chewing his bedding is unacceptable. To prevent boredom, provide the puppy with a chew rope or other sturdy toy in his kennel. This should help prevent the chewing or shredding of his bedding.



If you are only gone for short periods of time there is no reason to leave food or water bowls in your puppy's kennel. If you will be gone for more than 8 hours during the day then you will need to keep water in the crate. Fasten the bowl to the side of the kennel or use a non-spill bowl to prevent messes. It is best to not feed your puppy in its kennel, as they usually have a bowel movement after eating. Meals should be fed only when you are home and can take your puppy outside afterwards.

Find a location in your house where the kennel is out of the way yet not totally secluded from household activities. Never use the kennel as punishment. Do not banish your puppy to the kennel for improper behavior. The kennel should always be associated with happy, comfortable, secure feelings for the puppy. Once you put the puppy in the kennel, do not take him out if he starts to whine and cry. If you are sure that he doesn't have to go outside, allow him to have his tantrum. Eventually he will lie down and sleep. Once you start to take the puppy out of the kennel because of his insistence, he will insist louder and longer each time. As your puppy grows older, you will notice that the kennel becomes his private retreat, a place to sleep, and relax.

When purchasing a kennel for your puppy, determine the puppy's height and weight when fully grown, then purchase the size kennel that will provide your dog with the most comfortable amount of space, yet not oversized. Kennels are available online and at pet stores.

How to Choose a Pet Food

One of the most common questions we are asked is “What should I feed my pet?” Since the most important contribution you can make to your pet’s health and well being is his or her diet, it’s a good question that deserves a good answer.

Think Quality!

First of all, with pet foods, as with most things, you get what you pay for. Cheap dog and cat foods use cheap ingredients, have poor quality control, are not well digested and may have excesses or deficiencies in vital nutrients, which can harm your pet. When analyzed in a laboratory many generic or store brand foods do not actually contain the level of nutrition stated on the label. So, to get the nutrition you are paying for, choose a well known name brand such as Science Diet, Purina or Iams. Premium foods contain superior nutrition over grocery store and department store brands. They are extensively tested and meet rigid standards with no ingredient substitutions. The finest pet foods are formulated with controlled levels of key nutrients like fat, protein, phosphorus, and magnesium to help reduce the risk of kidney disease. That is why, even though grocery store brands provide adequate nutrition for many pets, we still recommend that you feed your pet the best you can buy.

Don’t switch foods

Animals do not need variety in their diets. Dogs are prone to digestive upsets such as diarrhea on varied diets or table scraps. These problems usually appear in middle aged dogs, which may then be difficult to accustom to a more healthy diet. If you do need to change from one product to another, do so gradually by mixing a small amount of the new food with the old food and gradually increase the new food amount over about two weeks time. This will prevent vomiting and/or diarrhea from too sudden a change in food. Your pet will do best if you pick one complete food that is appropriate for his or her age and activity level, and stick with it. For a puppy or kitten this means a puppy or kitten food. Young, rapidly growing animals need more nutrition than adult food can provide.

Don’t base your food choices on what you would like to eat

Many food manufacturers would like you to do this. Dogs and cats are color blind, so they don’t care whether their food is red or brown. They also don’t care if it looks like beef stew or pork chops! The fancier the food looks, the more you are paying for unnecessary artificial coloring, flavoring and preservatives. Some pets can be sensitive to these.

Dry food is best for teeth and gums

The majority of your dog or cat’s nutrition needs should be met with a chow type food. Canned foods are much more expensive to feed, as you are paying for more water and extra packaging. Many people like to supplement their pet’s diet with canned food, and this is fine as long as you pick a high quality one, and don’t overdo it.

Value

Better foods may cost more per bag, but the superior nutrition and better digestibility of these foods means you feed less per day, you clean up fewer stools later, and your veterinary bills for nutritionally related diseases will be less as well.

What about treats?

Most dog owners and an increasing number of cat owners feed treats to their pets, as well as regular food. Treats are rarely “complete and balanced”, and are often loaded with salt, fat, artificial colorings and preservatives, all of which comprise “junk food” for animals. It’s easy to forget treats contain extra calories and can lead to weight issues, so it is recommended to give these items in moderation. Some of them, such as the Hill’s line of life stage biscuits, are better than others. Read the labels before you buy. These biscuits can help slow the build-up of dental tartar, but cannot remove tartar once it’s present. Your pet will still need dental care even if you feed this type of snack. If a diet restriction is recommended for your pet only use recommended treats.

Supplements

Do not give any vitamin or mineral supplements to your dog or cat without your veterinarian’s advice. These types of supplements can easily cause harmful nutrient excesses.

Frequency

Puppies and kittens need a lot of calories to grow on, and plenty of fresh water. Until they are 4 months of age, feed at least three meals a day, giving as much as the animal will consume in 10-15 minute feedings. If your puppy seems to be gaining too much weight, consult your veterinarian to adjust the feedings.

It is much easier to housebreak a puppy if you feed him or her at set meal times.

Once your young dog is 4 months old, you can cut back to two meals per day, and at 6 months (longer for large breed dogs) you can reduce to 1 meal a day if desired. Cats are nibblers and need at least two meals a day throughout their lives. Continue to feed a diet made for puppies or kittens until your dog or cat is 1 year old.



How to Avoid and Treat Behavioral Problems

Dogs and people have lived together for many years, but that doesn't mean we always understand each other. Living with pets can sometimes be as frustrating and confusing as living with people. The following program will help you make the most of your relationship with your dog.



Dogs are pack animals. They are social and like to interact with people and other dogs. You can use this to your benefit; your dog will do what it wants if it earns him praise and petting, and considers you a pack leader.

This is a key point! All dog packs have a leader dog that makes decisions for the rest of the group. Other dogs are subordinate to the leader. Your dog should never think he is the leader in your house. You are the one who should decide when to eat, when to go outside, when to go to the veterinarian for a checkup or when to get a nail trim. As with children, dogs that have rules to follow and respect from their parents are well behaved. Many behavioral problems arise as a direct result of lack of leadership on the part of their owners.

Dogs behave as though they prefer knowing that you are in charge, and often seem much happier when they understand that you have taken charge. Following the advice below may be harder on you than on your dog! It's lonely at the top so give your dog a break and take over. He'll love you just as much.

Also keep in mind that dogs are very sensitive to body language and visual cues. Behaviors that you don't think much about may have meaning to your dog in a way that may not be what you intended to say! For instance, two people talking face to face is confrontational in a dog's body language where as standing side by side is not. You can learn to take advantage of these nonverbal cues.

The following suggestions are an effective and humane way to let your dog know that he is safe, well loved and NOT the leader of the pack. Keep in mind that love is not related to social status, and that most dogs live in relaxed harmony when the social hierarchy is clear, no matter where they stand.

Deference: Teaching Appropriate Behavior through Leadership

The intent of establishing a rule structure of deference is to set a baseline of good behavioral interaction between the owner and the pet and to **teach** the dog that he must consistently defer to people in order to receive attention and other resources (e.g. food, treats, toys). This is done in a safe, kind and consistent manner by simply asking the dog to sit and stay **for anything and everything that he wants**. What this means is that the dog must sit/stay for all people before:

- Receiving food or treats
- Receiving love
- Being groomed
- Being let outside or inside
- Having a leash, halter or harness put on
- Having feet towed
- Being invited onto the bed or sofa
- Playing games or with toys
- Being petted or receiving attention or anything else your dog wants

This is true from the first day that you bring home your new dog and continues throughout the rest of their life. This type of teaching program is often referred to as "Learn to Earn". It can be more difficult than one might expect. Consider this scenario: you are talking, reading, or watching television and your dog comes up to you and rubs,

paws, leans against you or places his head on your lap and looks to you with those adorable eyes; your natural reaction is to passively reach out and touch or pet your dog. The **dog** controlled the entire interaction and the people do not even know that they were conveying any signals other than affection to the dog.

Having your dog sit/stay for everything that he wants is a way of life. It will help your dog to behave better because he trusts and accepts you as the leader and is confident knowing his place in your family. Because children are small and can get down on the dog's level to play, dogs often consider them to be playmate, rather than superiors. With the supervision of an adult, it's a good idea to encourage children in the household (age five and over) to also practice "Learn to Earn" with your dog.

All You Have to Do Is Sit

To have the dog defer to you, all he must do is sit, be quiet, look at you, and await your cue. This involves four steps: (1) the command (2) the response (3) the reward and (4) the releaser (this is the cue that the dog is off duty and can get up and do as he pleases).

This takes only seconds, but its value is immeasurable. All dogs should learn this and no dog is too old or too young to learn. This will not take away a dog's spunk, fire or individuality. It will allow you to have a far better relationship with your dog because you will consistently be providing him with leadership and guidance.



If your dog refuses to comply, simply walk away. Come back a few minutes later and try again. Outlast the dog, eventually he will follow your request to get what he wants. And remember, make sure your dog knows the sit/stay command well and understands what you want before you begin practicing "Learn to Earn".

Why This Sit/Stay and Deference Works

-It reinforces the innate social structure of the dog and teaches the dog to look to his people for cues about the appropriateness of his behavior. By asking your dog to sit/stay before you feed him, give him treats or let him outside, think of how many times a day you will be naturally reinforcing your role as the leader.

-Deference behaviors can act as a form of "time out". If you think about it, what kind of trouble can a dog get into if he is in sit/stay?

-Deference behavior allows your dog to calm down. Sitting or lying down is a much more relaxed position than standing or jumping.

-Most importantly, it allows your dog to anticipate what is expected and to be able to earn your attention.

Catch Them in the Act of Doing Something Right!

The above applies to anything that your dog wants. Rewarding spontaneously good behavior is always encouraged. Reward your dog for behaving well during situations that he is not specifically asked to do so. For example, if your dog is lying down quietly while there is a lot of activity in the household, verbally praise your dog with "good boy" or an affectionate pat. In this situation, the dog has already earned the praise. Look for as many opportunities as possible to reward spontaneously good behavior as these opportunities become more frequent, you will soon come to the conclusion that you truly have a good dog.

How To Choose A Chew Toy

Dogs love to chew! Giving your dog appropriate things to chew on is good for their teeth and gums, keeps them occupied, and decreases the tendency to chew on things they shouldn't. But did you know that some chews you can buy for your pet are actually harmful? Unlike toys for children, there are no rules or regulations regarding toys or treats for pets. Just because you can buy an item in a store doesn't mean it's good for your pet! So what should you watch for and what should you avoid?



Toys with small parts that your dog could swallow or choke on are common. Avoid toys that have googly eyes, feathers or any other parts that could come off. Also avoid items that are too hard. The most common items on which dogs break their teeth are cow hooves and ice cubes. Biting down just right on an object that is too hard causes a flake of the tooth to shear off. If the tooth breaks in such a way that the tooth root is exposed, then the tooth will be very painful and subsequently become infected. Because this usually happens to the large premolar tooth that is difficult to see, your dog may be in pain for many months before you even notice there is a problem. If your dog likes ice cubes, switch to shaved ice instead.

Another popular item is rawhide chews. Rawhides come in all different sizes and shapes and sometimes even in flavors. Unfortunately, many of them are preserved in formalin or formaldehyde, which are carcinogens and can be toxic to the liver. Most of the rawhides that contain these toxic preservatives are from foreign countries. Their use is restricted in the U.S. so rawhides made here in the states are usually safer. Keep searching until you find ones made here and don't buy any made in other countries. If your dog swallows large pieces of a rawhide it could cause choking; switch to a smaller or larger form that prevents this. Do not give your dog rawhides if it gives him diarrhea or an upset stomach. The same guidelines also apply to pig ears, turkey feet and other preserved animal parts.

Raw meat or bones are not safe for dogs or people. Not only can uncooked bones break teeth but they can also give your dog Salmonella, Toxoplasmosis, E. coli or other food poisoning. Chicken, turkey, or other small bones can cause splinters and cause punctures in the mouth, esophagus or intestines so these also should never be fed to pets.

Pieces of rope with a knot at each end are popular now. These are a good choice as they are soft and gentle on teeth and gums but throw them away when they start to unravel. Soft plush toys usually don't last long and if the stuffing is swallowed it can cause an intestinal blockage. Take these away as soon as they start to come apart, which in large dogs may be a matter of minutes.

Nylabones and other nylon bones are also good, although some of these are hard enough to fracture teeth. Pick one on a softer side. If your puppy is teething, try placing a nylon toy in the freezer for a few hours. A chilled bone helps numb the gums. Squeaky toys are also good as long as the squeaker can't come loose and be swallowed and there are no parts that can be chewed off. Make sure any plastic or vinyl toys you choose are sturdy, heavy-weight and large enough that the pet can't choke on it. The same goes for balls. Balls should be larger than the back of the dog's mouth.



Kong toys are highly recommended. They are heavy-weight, come in several sizes and have a hollow center into which you can put a little peanut butter or other food treat in it. Your dog will spend hours working at getting the food out with his tongue. A dog thus occupied is much less likely to be getting into trouble chewing on other things especially if the Kong toy is brought out only as a special treat whenever you leave the house.

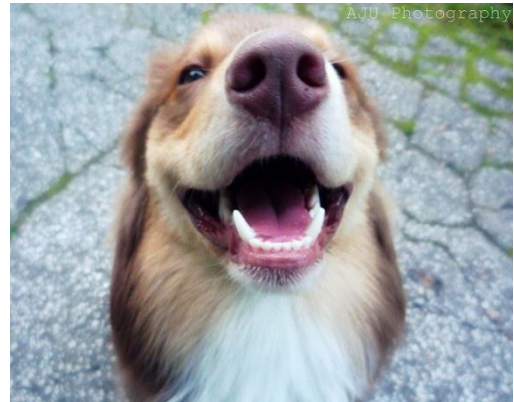
Old, well-washed and rinsed plastic milk or soda bottles make good chew toys. Frisbees are always a popular and good choice, especially for large dogs. Old socks or shoes are NOT a good choice and your dog can't be expected to understand the difference between old shoes and your good shoes.

Whatever toys you choose, use common sense and look for tough, long-lasting and durable toys. If your dog likes what you have chosen, he'll be sure to put it to the test!



Pets and Their Teeth

Professional teeth cleaning is perhaps the most important preventative health care measure that can be done for dogs and cats over four years of age. Pets rarely communicate to their owners the pain and discomfort of oral and periodontal diseases. For middle aged or older pets, oral disease is the most common health problem. Hard mineralized tartar loaded with bacteria is the culprit. Tartar becomes a reservoir for disease causing bacteria which constantly stresses your pet's immune system. Problems caused by this bacteria-loaded tartar are not limited to periodontal disease and premature tooth loss, but can also spread infection to the heart, lungs, and kidneys. Bad breath (halitosis) is a primary symptom of tartar and oral infection.



The best solution to rid your pet of this health hazard is professional dental cleanings, also commonly referred to as a "dental." This involves a multiple step procedure similar to that done for human teeth cleanings with a few very important differences. The need for general anesthesia is the most obvious.

The safety of your beloved pet under anesthesia is a major concern. There is always a certain risk involved with anesthesia, but the safety of anesthesia has improved remarkably with the advent of superior anesthetic drugs and inhalation gases over the past 10-15 years. We use the safest anesthetics available. Also, pre-anesthetic blood screening is available to further assess your pet's health prior to anesthesia use. Additional protection and safety is afforded by the use of intravenous catheter and IV fluids. This enables us to provide a higher level of quality care for your pet while under anesthesia.

Another area of concern is the spread of infection by the bloodstream to other areas of the body during the teeth cleaning procedure. Antibiotic treatment given prophylactically is the best method to prevent the spread of bacteria and treat concurrent infection problems. Typically, severe cases of periodontal disease are started on antibiotics 2-3 days in advance of the scheduled procedure, whereas milder cases can be started the morning of the procedure or need no antibiotics at all.

The dental procedure itself involves three separate steps: 1. Ultrasonic scaling of each tooth to remove heavy tartar deposits. 2. Hand scaling to remove tartar and plaque under the gum line and hard to reach surfaces. 3. Polishing to remove microscopic deposits and smooth the tooth enamel. This step is critical to remove the mineral crystalline base that can act as a catalyst and foundation for tartar to quickly rebuild. Occasionally, seriously diseased teeth are discovered upon removal of tartar and on close inspection of your pet's teeth. At this time dental x-rays, oral surgery, extractions, follow up exams or cleanings may be recommended to improve your pet's oral health.

Professional dental health care provides your pet with a healthy, disease-free and odor-free mouth. Often, aging pets act more lively and happy than they have in years after proper oral care. Eliminating sources of chronic pain and consistent stress to the immune system are key contributors to a longer and healthier life for your pet.

Traveling With Your Pet



Traveling with pets can be traumatic for all concerned, especially if preparations are not made beforehand. Here are a few suggestions for a safe and comfortable journey.

If you are flying with your pet...contact the airline and us ahead of time. The airlines have special rules and regulations for pets and you will need health papers filled out ahead of time. If you are traveling or moving overseas, contact us at least 6 months ahead because the paperwork can take time to be completed.

If you are crossing state lines...whether you are traveling by air or car, you will need a health certificate, from us, filled out within 10 days of your trip. Health certificates are required by law to help stop the spread of rabies and other diseases from state to state. Different states have different rules about the frequency of rabies vaccine administration, so your pet may need a booster shot before you leave. You should also carry a copy of your pet's rabies certificate with you. Without these papers, if you are stopped by police during your trip, you can be fined and your animal quarantined for 10-14 days at your expense.

Be sure your pet is wearing a collar with ID tags...while traveling, in case he gets lost. An extra tag with the name and phone number of a friend or relative is also a good idea. Remember, you won't be home to take the call if your pet is found again. Consider having a microchip or tattoo applied for permanent identification.

Always leash your pet...when he is not in the car. Do not let your dog become a pest or a hazard at gas stations or rest stops. Unless you are on private property and have permission to let your dog run loose, keep him on a leash at all times.

Take along plastic bags...to clean up any mess, and some towels in case your pet has an accident or illness in the car. Also bring your pet's bowls and own supply of regular food and water. Sudden changes of food and water coupled with the stress of traveling can lead to diarrhea.

A crate is the best investment you can make... for safe traveling. Ask us how to accustom your pet to the crate ahead of time if your pet hasn't used one before. If you have recently gotten your puppy and plan on traveling, now is the time to introduce him to traveling in a crate. Your pet can relax and nap there without any nuisance and he will be better protected in case of an accident. You can also keep your pet crated at motels that allow pets.

Be sure your pet's crate is big enough for him to stand up, turn around and lay stretched out comfortably. Bed the crate with towels so your pet isn't sliding around on bare plastic. Keeping your dog confined to a tiny crate for hours on end is cruel. Be sure to let out your pet every 3-4 hours for exercise. Be sure the leash is on before opening the car door!

Never leave your pet unattended...in the car for long periods of time. Heat and cold can kill an animal left alone. Don't park in direct sunlight. If you are traveling in the summer and your car is not air

conditioned, think twice before taking your pet along. Health problems or fear of strangers and unfamiliar things may also be a reason to leave your pet at home. Short nosed breeds such as Pekingese, Chow Chow, Pugs, or Boston Terriers are especially prone to heat stroke and suffocation while traveling.

It's best to feed your pet lightly...or not at all before traveling. Feed your pet once you arrive at your destination or stop for the night. It's better to eat lightly for a day or two than to spend the trip carsick!

Your pet may need vaccines or medications...at your destination that he might not need at home. For instance, fleas and heartworms are year-round problems in the south, not just the summer. If you will be hiking in the woods with your dog, then you may need the Lyme disease vaccination. Some pets also require sedative or anti-nausea medications to travel comfortably. Check with us well ahead of time about these requirements. Call us with any questions about traveling with your pet.



Microchipping Your Pet

What is a microchip?

A microchip is a rice-sized chip placed underneath the skin between the shoulder blades of your pet. The microchip is used for identification purposes. Vet clinics, police, humane societies, and rescues have scanners that are able to read these microchips. Once a microchip is scanned, a number specific to your pet will pop up. This number will trace to your information such as; your name, address, telephone number, email address, and an alternate contact.

How does my pet get micro-chipped?

Bring your pet into the clinic to be micro-chipped. The injection of the chip is much like giving your pet a vaccine.

Does a microchip act as a GPS for my pet?

Contrary to popular belief, microchips DO NOT track your pet. Its sole purpose is to carry the number that traces to your information.



It is VERY important to keep your pet's microchip information up to date as you move or change phone numbers.

If your pet's microchip information is not kept up to date and your pet is brought to a shelter, there is a chance they won't be able to connect you to the chip. Failure to find the owners of a lost pet may lead to re-homing. **You are able to update your information by calling the microchip company or accessing their website.**

Microchip →

