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## ***Congratulations on your new puppy!***

This is such an exciting time for you and your family! We know that the amount of information regarding the care of a new puppy can also be overwhelming. Hopefully this handout will be a helpful reference as we go through your puppy's first veterinary visits. We are always available if you have any questions or concerns regarding your new furry family member's health and wellness. As a mobile veterinarian, we love being able to offer the highest quality of care for your new puppy in the comfort of your home!

### ***Wellness Exams***

At each visit, the veterinarian will perform a thorough examination of your new puppy. This is important to ensure that they are healthy and free of any congenital diseases. We examine each puppy from nose to tail! We will discuss what to expect as they grow and become a loving part of your family. This also is a great time to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your puppy with the veterinarian.

### ***Vaccinations***

All puppies require core vaccinations starting around 6-8 weeks of age. Until this point, they have been protected by acquired immunity from their mother's milk. This immunity begins to diminish as their own immune systems begin to develop. Puppies are at the highest risk between 8 and 12 weeks of age. We recommend all puppies are kept home and away from high traffic dog areas until they have completed their puppy vaccine series. Socialization with healthy & vaccinated dogs in a safe environment (such as your home) is encouraged!

When your puppy receives their vaccines, please monitor them closely for a few hours for any potential (yet rare!) vaccine reactions. If you notice any facial swelling, difficulty breathing, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea or pain at the injection site please call us immediately.

- **DA2P** [*Distemper/Adenovirus Type 2/Parvovirus/Parainfluenza*]

This combination vaccine is considered one of the core vaccines for your puppy. Distemper is a virus that can be transmitted among puppies that causes neurologic disease and is almost always fatal. Parvovirus is a virus found in the soil that causes severe diarrhea and vomiting. This vaccine is boosted every 3-4 weeks until 16 weeks of age. Most puppies will receive three sets of DA2P puppy vaccines. Their final vaccine will provide immunity for 1 year.

- **Kennel Cough** [*Bordetella*] This is an oral vaccine that protects puppies against the most common infectious agent for kennel cough. Kennel cough is an infectious upper airway disease that is easily transmitted between dogs. We recommend this for all puppies, and it is required for any dog that will visit a grooming or boarding facility. This vaccine is given once during their puppy series and provides immunity for 1 year.
- **Leptospirosis** [*L. canicola*, *L. icterohaemorrhagiae*, *L. pomona* and *L. grippityphosa*] This vaccine protects against the four most common bacterial serovars of Leptospirosis. Pets that live in an environment with possible access or exposure to wildlife should be vaccinated. Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection that can infect the liver and kidneys and is almost always fatal. This infection can also be easily transmitted to humans. The bacteria is shed in the urine of infected wildlife and is transmitted when dogs drink from contaminated water sources (even as small as puddles) lakes and ponds. Pets that step in contaminated standing water and lick their paws could infect themselves. Vaccination requires an initial vaccine, followed by a booster 3-4 weeks later which provides immunity for 1 year.
- **Rabies** This is considered a core vaccine and is legally required for all cats and dogs. Rabies is a fatal virus transmitted by the saliva of an infected animal bite. The first vaccine is administered typically at their last visit at 16 weeks of age and provides immunity for 1 year.

Other vaccines such as Lyme's Disease, Canine Influenza and the Rattlesnake vaccine can be discussed as well, however they are not considered core for most dogs. We believe all vaccine programs should be tailored to your dog's unique and individual lifestyle.

## **Parasite Prevention**

Fleas, ticks, heartworm, intestinal parasites... oh my! All pets are at potential risk of parasites, both internal and external. Regardless of lifestyle, these risks should be discussed with your veterinarian. Each pet is unique, and an individual plan can be tailored to their lifestyle.

- **Heartworm Disease**

Heartworms are a nasty internal parasite that are transmitted by mosquitoes. A single mosquito bite can lead to a life-threatening heartworm infection. Every dog should be on monthly heartworm prevention year-round, even if they only spend their time indoors.

- **Fleas & Ticks**

Fleas and ticks are nasty external parasites. Flea and tick prevention recommendations will be tailored to your pet's lifestyle. Both fleas and ticks can carry a variety of infectious diseases, as well as cause painful bites and skin conditions. Fleas cause intestinal tapeworm infections. Some infectious diseases transmitted by external parasites can be life threatening. Fleas and ticks can also create massive infestations in your home, affecting not only your furry family members.

- **Intestinal Parasites**

Intestinal parasites (roundworms, whipworms, hookworms, and tapeworms) are very common in puppies and kittens. This is because they do not have a fully developed immune system. Puppies are most commonly infected when they are nursing, as their mother's milk can transmit parasite eggs. All puppies should go through routine deworming protocols starting around 2-3 weeks of age. We recommend testing a fecal sample to ensure there are no parasites present. Unfortunately, even negative fecal tests do not ensure your pet is parasite free as some of these pesky worms will only periodically shed eggs than can be detected in a fecal sample. This is why we recommend deworming puppies at each of their vaccination appointments.

Our recommended parasite preventative products have been carefully selected based on their safety and effectiveness, they include Interceptor Plus, Simparica Trio, and Bravecto. These products are oral chewable tablets, and most pets love them! They are much more effective than most topical products, and no greasy mess! These products are dosed based on your pet's weight, so we will often start with single monthly doses until your puppy reaches their adult weight.

## **Microchipping**

A microchip is the only permanent way to legally identify a pet as your own. A microchip is placed between their shoulders. The unique number associated with this microchip is then registered to you via an online database. If your puppy is ever lost or stolen, a microchip can help them return safely to you.

## **Spaying & Neutering**

We recommend discussing spaying and neutering your pet with your veterinarian. A spay surgery involves removing the female reproductive organs - the uterus and ovaries. A neuter surgery involves removing the male reproductive organs - the testicles. Most dogs are spayed or neutered between 6 - 8 months of age, however new research shows that spaying and neutering at an older age can be beneficial in certain breeds. We would love to discuss the best plan for your pet.

## **Diet**

We recommend all puppies be fed a complete and balanced diet formulated for growth and development. The AAFCO is an organization that oversees the pet food industry, and has created requirements for diet formulations. We always recommend a diet that has been formulated by a veterinary nutritionist. We know that pet food choices can be overwhelming, and often many companies unfortunately focus on marketing and sales strategies over what is best for your pet's health. We are happy to discuss your pet's individual nutrition requirements, as well as help you choose a food your pet will love and will provide them with the best possible nutrition.

## **Pet Insurance**

We encourage all owners to consider pet insurance for their new puppy. The best time to insure your puppy is before they have developed any pre-existing conditions. There are many options for coverage, accident only versus an all-encompassing plan. We encourage you to research each company before purchasing to ensure you understand what is included in each plan. We recommend companies such as Healthy Paws, Trupanion, Nationwide, and Embrace. We also recommend checking with your employer to see if they offer plans in conjunction with your other benefits. We would love to discuss any questions you might have regarding pet insurance!

As a new client of Pet Care Professionals we will be there every step of the way as your family welcomes your new furry family member! A mobile vet is a great way to have all of your pet's healthcare right at your doorstep! We look forward to being a trusted part of your puppy's healthy start!