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Puppy Care Information

Feeding

Puppies should be fed a puppy diet until 6 months of age unless obesity begins earlier. Large breed dogs should eat a large breed puppy food and small breeds should eat a small breed puppy food. Puppies can be fed free choice or meal feeding can be used to aid in teaching proper elimination habits and monitoring the amount of food consumed. Do not feed generic foods as they are not made of quality ingredients. There are many quality products and home cooked, fresh ingredient recipes available as well. Please consult the veterinarian for help in choosing a puppy food if you have questions.

Vaccination

Puppies (like human babies) do not have a mature immune system and are more susceptible to diseases than adult dogs. Combination vaccines should be given to puppies starting at 5-6 weeks of age and then given every 4 weeks thereafter until 16 weeks of age. At about 16 weeks of age their immune system matures and can produce year long immunity, but not until then. Vaccination is then recommended annually. The combination vaccine should at least vaccinate for distemper, parvo and hepatitis. Rabies vaccination is performed at 16 weeks of age and does not need the monthly booster like the combination vaccine. Rabies vaccine is boosted at one year and then every three years at Mobile Veterinary Care.

Deworming

Most puppies have at least roundworms. Other possible intestinal parasites are hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworms. Because of the prevalence of worms in puppies and the safety of Drontal, I like to deworm every puppy at the first visit. A fecal exam is then performed at the second visit to make sure the dewormer was effective. Further deworming is accomplished each month when Iverhart Plus is given.

Heartworm Prevention

Every puppy is started on Iverhart Plus at the second visit to prevent heartworm infection. Dogs need to stay on heartworm preventative once a month year round and have a heartworm check performed every 2 years to remain free of heartworms.

Spaying and Neutering

Female dogs are spayed and male dogs are neutered. Both surgeries can be done anytime, but the ideal age is 4-6 months of age. This age choice is to ensure they are healthy before performing surgery, yet still performing the surgery before they experience puberty.

Flea Control

Frontline Plus is the product of choice for treating and preventing fleas and ticks on puppies and adult dogs. It is used monthly for tick control, monthly for treatment of fleas, or every 60 days for prevention of fleas.

Puppy Training

Chewing: Puppies will chew and they should chew as a means for exercise, entertainment, and stress reduction. They should be given plenty of proper chew toys such as raw-hides, non-destructible toys, etc. They should be encouraged to chew on these things and discouraged from chewing on improper things such as furniture and humans by offering them the appropriate chew toy whenever they are trying to chew on something else.

Crates: Crate training usually works best for most puppies because it keeps them away from trouble whenever they are not able to be supervised. The crate is comparable to a den for a dog and they usually enjoy being in their crate as long their primary needs are taken care of (hunger, elimination, play time). The crate should not be used as punishment.

Socialization: It is recommended that all puppies go through puppy class. Please call Dr. Herrmann if you need information on puppy classes in your area. Puppies should have contact with other healthy dogs even during their puppy vaccination series. They need to learn socialization skills during the critical learning weeks of puppyhood.

Potty Training: The key is consistently rewarding elimination in the proper place. Do not punish for eliminating inside the house– the puppy thinks you are punishing them for eliminating in your presence whether inside or out and it only accomplishes making the puppy scared to eliminate in front of you. Simply clap your hands when the puppy is eliminating inside and promptly take it outside and reward it outside for eliminating. Also, do not let the puppy roam inside unattended as this sets the puppy up for failure when in fact it is the owners fault for not supervising the puppy well enough.

This is only brief information on training a puppy. Much, much more information is available upon request. Please call Dr. Herrmann with any questions in regard to training your puppy for success!!