

PUPPY GUIDE

Age:

Ideally, puppies should go to their new home at about 7 to 10 weeks of age. If puppies are taken on when over 10 weeks of age, ensure they have been properly socialised with human company.

Feeding:

- Puppies should have been introduced to solid foods well before being weaned and passed on to their new owners. Sudden changes to new food types will result in digestive problems, so be sure to find what has previously been fed. Change feed types by slow transition.
- 6-8 week old puppies will need 3 to 4 small meals daily. The number of meals daily may be steadily reduced until they reach adulthood, then only one daily feed is required.
- Meal size should be determined by simply assessing the puppy's condition and the amount of food left (if any).
- The common concept of WeetBix and milk for breakfast followed by different meals through the day is unnecessary. Each meal may be identical, as long as it is of a moist consistency and balanced in its nutrients. Variety from time to time is good as it prevents fussiness.
- Calcium is the most common deficiency in home based diets. Many believe that milk will provide essential calcium, but it takes over 100 litres of milk to balance 1kg of meat. Calcium may be supplied by simply adding 1 teaspoon of calcium carbonate powder per 500 grams of meat/vegetable fed.
- If proprietary dog foods are fed, the essential nutrients will be in balance. Home prepared foods are unlikely to be properly balanced no matter how wholesome they may appear to you. A wide variety of ingredients may compensate for this.
- Premium diets available at our clinic are based on the highest quality and consistent protein sources rather than the cheapest meat available on the day, which is common to supermarket brands. All pups should be fed on a puppy diet until they reach their adult weight.

Premium puppy food products available at our clinic are:

Hills Puppy Original or Small Bites: Diet suitable for pups of small to medium sized breeds up to 6 months. A great diet for weaning pups.

Hills Puppy Large Breed diet: Suitable for large and giant breeds up to 6 months and smaller breeds up to 12 months. Slightly larger kibble than the puppy food for all growing dogs. This diet has a carefully controlled calcium to phosphorous ratio to ensure proper bone development and minimise growth disorders.

Please ask our staff to recommend a diet suitable to the needs of your new pup.

Housing:

Housing for your puppy should be warm and secure. Remember that the puppy has probably come from a litter, with plenty of company. A puppy cannot be expected to settle by itself for some days. A ticking clock or similar object is often all it takes for them to feel content.

Training / Discipline:

Dogs are pack animals, the ruler of the pack being the toughest, most aggressive dog. The ruler makes and enforces the rules. The aim of dog training is to walk the fine line of being the boss without intimidating them.

Toilet training etc is performed by repetition – over and over again – but with a firm hand. In the instance of toilet training, the young puppy should be taken regularly to the

'desired' toilet area and verbally rewarded for a good performance. In moments of disgrace, the puppy should be taken to that spot ASAP to build a relationship between the action and the location. Stubborn puppies need a more forceful lesson – ejection to the back yard is needed. (Some people question the ability of a puppy to relate such things, but you will rapidly notice how a pup will avoid an old puddle it has left)

Health Matters:

BASIC HYGIENE

Put very simply, dogs have terrible hygiene. After handling any dog, wash your hands. Never, Ever let dogs lick your face. All manners of bacteria, protozoa, fungi and certain worms may cross infect to humans.

WORMS

The common puppy roundworm *Toxocara canis* is capable of crossing the placenta into the unborn puppy. This means that puppies are born with worms. Puppies should be wormed with a reliable roundwormer as soon as you take possession of them and every two weeks to twelve weeks of age. At twelve weeks of age an 'allwormer', capable of killing round and tapeworms should be given. Adult worming is every three months for life with a wormer capable of killing round and tapeworms.

The hydatid tapeworm will only be carried by dogs exposed to raw offal or sheep carcasses. If your dog has such exposure, treatment for hydatids must be carefully carried out every six weeks. Note rabbits DO NOT carry hydatids – they do carry the false hydatids, which is harmless to dogs and humans.

Note that some roundworms and the hydatid tapeworm are extremely dangerous to humans – permanent damage can result from cross infection especially in children.

What to use:-

Roundworms: Most preparations are satisfactory for most roundworms, with the following exceptions. Droncit is solely a tapeworm treatment. Any product that has piperazine as its active ingredient is not effective. Whipworms, while rare, will only be killed by the expensive allwormers listed below. Be sure to use an 'expensive' wormer at least once yearly.

Tapeworms: Only Droncit, Drontal (also sold under licence by Exelpet in supermarket), Popantel, Pyraquantel and Paragard can kill the hydatid tapeworm *Echinococcus granulosus*. Look for the ingredient called praziquantel.

Allwormers: Only Drontal (and its Exelpet copies), Popantel and Pyraquantel and Paragard are true allwormers. Other tablets eg Ambex, Closasole etc kill all but the hydatid tapeworm, and so are suitable only for dogs not exposed to offal or carcasses.

Whatever worm medication you choose for your pet should be occasionally varied. Continuous use of a single product will result in resistant worms taking over. This is especially true of the cheaper products.

Viral Disease & Vaccination

Dogs are susceptible to a number of preventable viral diseases, some of them both common and deadly, all of them extremely contagious. The terrible hygiene of dogs assures all viruses are spread rapidly.

Parvovirus: common and deadly, especially old dogs and puppies. 'Parvo' kills by attacking the bowel, the dog dying of shock through blood loss and diarrhoea. Treatment is possible, but is VERY expensive and not always successful. Vaccination is almost totally effective.

Distemper: quite rare nowadays, but still lurking. Distemper initially causes fever and pneumonia, leaving patients with a lifelong nerve defect from brain damage.

Canine Viral Hepatitis – common, occasionally serious (puppies or very old dogs), but usually mild or no signs at all. Hepatitis causes the 'blue eyes' seen in some litters of pups.

Kennel cough: actually is not one particular virus, but is caused by a number of different viruses and bacteria. Kennel cough is usually a nuisance disease only, but is frustrating to treat, as it is both persistent and contagious. We recommend vaccination for two types of Kennel Cough, Bordatella & Parainfluenza. Kennel cough vaccination is variable in it's effect, but does improve resistance to KC.

Vaccinations:

Provide protection to the various diseases by 'teaching' the dog's body (immune system) to be able to 'recognise' the virus. In future, the immune system is able to attack that virus before it can cause disease. This 'teaching' takes some time so at least 10 days must pass before the vaccine takes any effect. In the first year, the 'teaching' must be repeated to ensure 'recognition' ie multiple vaccinations are required in the first year.

Our recommendations

- At 6-8 weeks – Parvovirus, Distemper and Hepatitis (we call it DHP or C3)
- At 12-14 weeks – DHP and Kennel Cough
- At 16-18 weeks (4 weeks after the last one) DHP + KC

If an older dog commences its vaccinations for the first time, two DHP (plus KC if required) shots 4 weeks apart are necessary.

Then repeat DHP (plus KC) annually.

Heartworm is a developing problem in this district. Heartworm is a disease of dogs and occasionally cats, spread by mosquito. Immature worms live in the bloodstream where they are picked up by mosquito and moved to a new host. The worm grows into an adult that lives in the chambers of the heart and blood vessels to the lungs. Not surprisingly, signs of heart failure follow. Treatment is difficult and expensive. Heartworm was traditionally a disease of the tropics and subtropics, but it is now common in Melbourne (which is not very tropical!) It WILL reach this district sometime.

Two forms of prevention are available: (the old daily treatment has passed from practical use due to ineffectiveness and poor compliance with daily tablets)

1. Monthly – chewable tablets is not as costly but inconvenient.
2. Yearly – injection, very convenient and cost effective.

Heartworm prevention may be commenced from 3 months of age. If injectable prevention is commenced after 6 months of age a Heartworm test should be run prior to commencement. Monthly Heartgard® may be commenced without testing.

Fleas

There are so many different flea treatment methods available it requires talking to us directly. DO NOT use adult flea treatments on puppies without consulting us first.

Note that there are no effective shampoo, rinse, collar, or powder flea treatments available. Fleas have become resistant to all of these products.

Bathing

Once again there are so many forms of treatment available, talk to us about it. There is NO set frequency to bathe dogs, but note that weekly is FAR TOO OFTEN.

The Puppy Timetable

Age in weeks

2	Roundwormer
3	Commence supplementary feeding puppies eg Farex and milk or Hills puppy Small Bites
4	Roundwormer
6	Roundwormer and consider first vaccination
8	Roundwormer and consider second vaccine, off to new home
10	Roundwormer
12	Allwormer, Vaccination, Commence Heartworm prevention
16-18	Vaccination

Thereafter

Frequency	Procedure
Monthly	Heartworm treatment if used
3 Months	Allwormer
4 Months	Allwormer
5 Months	Allwormer
6 Months	Allwormer
then every 3 months	Allwormer
6 Weeks	Hydatid treatment if exposed to offal or carcasses
Annually	Vaccination