

# BASIC PUPPY CARE

## Vaccinations

Many common diseases, including distemper and parvovirus, are deadly to your dog. During the initial day of nursing, puppies receive antibodies against certain diseases from their mother's milk. These protective antibodies are gradually lost between 6 and 16 weeks of age. Your puppy should be vaccinated several times during this period. Some diseases may be carried by rodents and wild animals, as well as dogs. They can also be carried into your house on your hands, shoes or clothing. Even if your dog is not in contact with other dogs, he or she is still at risk!

The Distemper vaccine (DAP), containing distemper, adenovirus, parvovirus, is given every 3 to 4 weeks, from the time the puppy is 6-8 weeks old until it is at least 16 weeks old. It is then boosted at 1 year and every 3 years thereafter.

A Bordetella vaccination is given along with the first or second DAP to protect against canine kennel cough. Annual boosters are necessary to maintain immunity.

When a puppy is 12-16 weeks of age or older, he or she will also receive a rabies vaccination. It is boosted at 1 year, then every 3 years thereafter.

Any dog in the Brainerd Lakes area should be vaccinated against Lyme disease, which is usually carried by deer ticks. This requires an initial series of two vaccinations spaced a few weeks apart and yearly boosters thereafter. The shots may be started when your puppy is 9-12 weeks of age.



**Booster vaccinate for these diseases  
as recommended by your Veterinarian!**

**Immunity is not permanent!**

# 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 now will shape his outlook and his personality for the rest of his life.

The period between 8 and 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 problem behaviors.

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

You don't need to worry that all this socialization will make your dog a poor watchdog. 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 repairman or your children's friends. Positive social interaction 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 his place in the "pack". Dogs are pack animals – they socialize in small groups and have a definite hierarchy that tells each dog his status as a pack member. A dominant dog is in charge.

Your puppy will come to see your household members, be they people or other dogs or both, as the members of his pack. The number one rule to remember is that your dog should NEVER be the dominant member of his pack! YOU are the one in charge. You have the right to tell your dog to sit or stay or come. You are the one who decides when it's time to eat, to get the nails trimmed, or to go to the veterinarian for a shot. Your puppy must learn now where its place is in your household.

**MORE ANIMALS ARE PUT TO SLEEP BECAUSE OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS THAN ANY OTHER REASON. A primary factor in behavior problems is dominance 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 his position and duties as a member of the household, and also serves as an outlet for his energy. It teaches your pet to accept frustration and attain patience, and it creates a love and bond between animal and human that is impossible to duplicate 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 play, and he will quickly learn the command. You should soon be able to forego pressing on the back end, and substitute an over-the-head motion with one hand. Your pet should follow this movement and tip his head up while starting to sit down. This over-the-head motion is the hand signal for sitting. The instant he sits, praise and pat the chest and throat.

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 dog starts to get up, repeat the word sit and use the hand motion over his head to restore the sitting position.

If your puppy starts to lie down by your side as the duration of the sit increases, do not correct him at first. It is the duration of the sitting you want to concentrate on 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 beginning to lie 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 distractions. Go to the center of the area and watch the puppy closely. The instant he takes his eyes off you, call “Spot, COME!”. Immediately crouch down, turn sideways to the puppy, clap your hands and gleefully praise: “Good dog, Good dog, Good dog.” Keep up the praise and clapping until Spot comes all the way to you. Pet sincerely but briefly. Then stand up and step away behind the puppy.



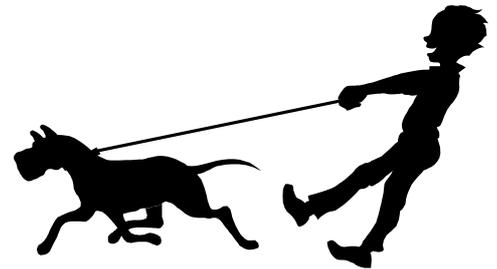
If his attention does not stay on you, instantly call “Spot, COME” again and repeat the entire procedure. If Spot get distracted, repeat the call and the praise-crouch procedure.

Continue until Spot will not leave you, no matter where you walk. Then stop that teaching session. Do not hold another for at least two-and-a-half 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 him to the collar – most puppies will scratch at it at first. Give him a few days to adjust before moving on to the leash.

You probably wouldn’t like it if someone 20 times your size suddenly slapped a collar around your neck and started dragging you around. Be gentle and patient at first with leash walking. Let the puppy drag the leash around at first. (Don’t let him get tangled or choke himself.) Once he’s not bothered by the leash, take him out in the yard and let him walk you for a few sessions, 10 minutes or so in length.



Work gradually up to leading the puppy, with lots of praise and encouragement when he follows you and gentle tugging to get him 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 owner. 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 you are the leader makes sure that as you go about your business at home, you are ahead of your dog. With dogs, the leader of the pack goes 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 up this routine until the dog follows you, or waits for your invitation to follow you.

The most difficult place to practice this exercise is at the front door, so start with the easier room-to-room times first. This exercise of turning away also works as you begin to train your pup 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

Use your pet's name only to give him a command. Use a nickname or code word when talking about, instead of directly to, your dog. This way he will not learn to ignore his name because it is used in casual conversation, but will know he needs to respond whenever you say it. Once your pet is well trained, this can be discontinued.

Also 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 he'll get, what rooms he's allowed in, etc. If everyone is doing something different, he'll get confused and stressed by the mixed messages he's getting.

## Training your family to train your pet

Starting your puppy on this simple training program at a young age will prepare him well for more advanced obedience work as he becomes older, and his attention span lengthens. Six months is a good age to begin more formal training. If you have not trained dogs before, or even if you have, we recommend an obedience class for you and your dog, and also for the children in your household. Children need to understand the proper way to train their dog, and they often derive a great deal of pride and satisfaction from participating in their dog's training program.



## In summary:

Starting on an obedience program early is the quickest way toward a lifetime of pleasure with a happy, well-behaved pet. Integrate obedience into your dog's day, such that it becomes part of life to him. Simply ask the puppy or 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 your dog interested and occupied constructively.

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

## Puppy Class:

Puppy class is recommended for all puppies during the critical socialization period. This is a great first step to having a well-behaved puppy that will be an integral part of your family. Ask us who we would recommend for puppy class in the Brainerd area.

# THE ADVANTAGES TO KENNEL TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

There are many advantages to kennel training your puppy. For instance, housebreaking is accomplished much faster with a minimum of hassle for you and your puppy. Generally, a puppy does not want to mess in the area in which he sleeps and eats. If you follow the general guidelines of housebreaking, your puppy should be housebroken within a week or less, with a minimum of 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 longer to accomplish housebreaking your pup, 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 to the kennel 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, wallboard, furniture, chewing electrical cords, etc. You can return home relaxed, knowing your puppy is safe and so are your possessions. The advantages of the kennel trained dog are many, as you will experience as time goes by.

When training a new puppy to “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 pen. This should help to prevent the chewing and shredding of his bedding.

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

Find a location in your home where the kennel is out of the way, yet not totally secluded from household activities. Never use the kennel as punishment. Do not banish the 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, relax or eat his meals in a place that he actually likes to be.

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

# PUPPY WELLNESS CHECK LIST

1. Vaccinate with a series of boosters to give your puppy immunity against contagious diseases.
2. Sound nutrition is the foundation on which your puppy's health is built. Please feed the highest quality food available to you. We recommend Hill's Healthy Advantage Puppy.
3. Protect your puppy against internal parasites. Follow CDC recommendations by deworming as a puppy, then repeat monthly. Have a stool exam at least once a year, more often if parasites have been a problem.
4. Protect against external parasites as well. Apply **Parastar Plus** from early spring until November at 1-2 month intervals, or apply a **Seresto Collar**.
5. Provide your pet with the following items:
  - Food and water bowls
  - Bed
  - Portable kennel
  - Collar and leash
  - I.D. Tag
  - Brush
  - Nail clippers
6. Invest in obedience training to keep your pet a happy and problem-free member of your family.
7. Spend time while your puppy is young, getting him accustomed to different people and experiences:
  - Car rides
  - Socializing with other dogs
  - Interaction with children and strangers
  - Handle his feet, ears, mouth daily
  - Grooming & brushing
  - Leash walking



# House training your puppy

All it requires are a few basic rules to house-train puppies within a few days. This does not mean that the puppy will be able to be trusted to wander throughout the home without eliminating. What the puppy should quickly learn is where it should eliminate, and the consequences of eliminating indoors when the owner is supervising.

- Puppies have a strong urge to eliminate after sleeping, playing, feeding and drinking. Prepare to take your puppy to its selected elimination area within 30 minutes of each of these activities. In addition, although some puppies can control themselves through the entire night, most puppies need to eliminate every 3 to 4 hours during the daytime. With each passing month, you can expect your puppy to control itself a little longer between elimination times. The puppy should be taken to its elimination area, given a word or two of verbal encouragement (e.g. "Hurry up") and as soon as elimination is completed, lavishly praised and patted. A few tasty food treats can also be given the first few times the puppy eliminates in the right spot, and then intermittently thereafter. This teaches the puppy the proper place to eliminate, and that elimination in that location is associated with rewards. Some puppies may learn to eliminate when they hear the cue words ("Hurry up"). Always go outdoors with your puppy to ensure that it has eliminated and so that rewards can be given immediately upon completion, and not when the dog comes back indoors (too late!).
- When indoors, the puppy must be supervised so that you can see when it needs to eliminate and immediately take it outdoors to its elimination area. Should pre-elimination signs (circling, squatting, sneaking-off, heading to the door) occur, immediately take the dog to its elimination site, give the cue words, and reward the puppy for elimination. If the puppy begins to eliminate indoors, use a verbal reprimand or shaker can (place a few pennies or pebbles in a can, with both ends sealed), and immediately take the puppy outdoors to its proper site, so that it can complete the act. Rather than using punishment, it is best to always supervise your puppy. One of the best techniques is to leave a remote lead attached.
- When you are not available to supervise, the puppy should be confined to its confinement area or crate (see crate training). Be certain that your puppy has had a chance to eliminate, and has had sufficient play and exercise before any lengthy confinement. If the area is small enough, such as a pen or crate, many puppies will have sufficient control to keep this area clean. This means that when you come to release the puppy from confinement, it must be taken directly to its elimination area. If the area is too large for the puppy to keep clean, or the puppy is left alone too long for it to control itself, the entire area, except for the puppy's bed and feeding spot, should be covered with paper for elimination. Once the puppy starts to limit its elimination to some selected areas, unused areas of the paper can be taken up. For owners that intend to continue to use paper for training, even when home, the puppy should be supervised when released from confinement, and then returned to this area when pre-elimination signs are seen.



### ***Why does my puppy refuse to eliminate in my presence, even when outdoors?***

Puppies that are not supervised and rewarded for outdoor elimination, but are constantly being disciplined and punished for indoor elimination, may soon begin to fear to eliminate in all locations in your presence. These puppies do not associate the punishment with indoor elimination; they associate the punishment with the presence of the owners.

### ***What do I do if I find some stool or urine in an inappropriate spot?***

There is no point in punishing or even pointing out the problem to the puppy. Only if the puppy is in the act of elimination will it understand the consequences (rewards or punishment). In fact, it is not the puppy who has erred, it is the owner who has erred by not properly supervising.

### ***How can I teach my puppy to signal that it needs to go out to eliminate?***

By regularly taking the dog outdoors, through the same door, to the same site, and providing rewards for proper elimination, the puppy should soon learn to head for the door each time it has to eliminate. If you recognize the signs of impending elimination and praise the puppy whenever it heads for the doorway, the behavior can be further encouraged. Puppies that have been interrupted or reprimanded on one or more occasions as they begin to eliminate indoors, may begin to try to sneak away, whine or show some form of anxiety, when they feel the urge to eliminate, but cannot escape from the owner's sight. If you can pick up on these cues, and take the puppy directly to the outdoors for elimination and reward, the puppy may consistently begin to show these signals when he or she needs to eliminate, and may even begin to take you to the exit door.

### ***When will I be able to trust my puppy to wander loose throughout the home?***

Generally you will want your dog to have been error free around the house for about a month before you can begin to decrease your confinement and supervision. The first time you leave the puppy unsupervised should be just after taking the dog outdoors for elimination. Gradually increase the length of time that your dog is allowed to roam through the home without supervision. If the dog has been able to go unsupervised for a couple of hours without an "accident", it might then be possible to begin going out for short periods of time. Of course, if the dog still investigates and chews, then confinement and supervision may still be necessary.



# EXERCISE

## And Your Puppy

All puppies need to exercise. Usually a small amount of encouragement is all they need to be active. Playing ball or running freely with your puppy on grass is the recommended way to exercise.

Daily walks on concrete are not recommended for your puppies because you may create a problem with their skeletal development. Walking or playing on a concrete surface is tough on soft, young joints and can lead to early arthritis.

Once your puppy has reached the age of one year, you can begin to take him for walks on concrete sidewalks. Even then, build gradually. Begin with a one-block walk and increase each week until you are walking the desired distance. Jogging is okay if the dog's bone structure has developed properly. Check with your veterinarian about your pet's hip development before you jog long distances with him.

Unfortunately, most puppies who have a keen play drive do not know enough to slow down or quit and, therefore, risk heat stroke during the summer season. Never over-exercise your puppy in extreme temperatures, be they hot or cold. If your puppy begins to slow down or lag behind you, it is usually an indication he is finished and needs to be taken home immediately.



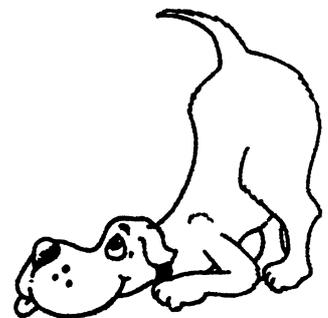
# WHAT'S NEXT?

*Congratulations! Your puppy has completed his or her vaccination series and well-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 needs your pet will have in the years to come.*

- 1.** The vaccines your puppy has received will provide immunity against disease for about one year. Periodic boosters are needed to keep his level of immunity high enough to protect him from illness. You will receive reminders via email or mail next year when his vaccinations are due.
- 2.** 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 lifespan is compressed into a shorter amount of time than that of a human, many changes can occur in your pet's body in the course of a year. The annual physical exam is very important to detect physical problems before they become serious. After seven years of age, twice yearly examinations are recommended as problems associated with aging become more frequent.

For early detection of disease, we recommend periodic blood screening. A routine blood screen is a window into the body that determines internal organ function that cannot be determined by physical examinations alone. For pets older than seven years, annual testing is recommended.

- 3.** Heartworm is a deadly parasite which is easily prevented by taking monthly medication. Although nearly 100% effective, annual testing is advised because of the risk that a dose could be vomited up without our being aware or the rare breakthrough. Early detection and treatment is preferable to discovering the disease after severe damage has been done. Be sure to test your dog annually.
- 4.** We will also be asking you to bring in a sample of your dog's stool each year, to test for intestinal parasites which may have been picked up over the course of the year. Heartworm/parasite preventative medication can control many types of intestinal parasites, but not all, so it is best to check for these annually. We need about 1 teaspoon of feces. A fresh sample will keep about 24 hours if refrigerated.



- 5.** Your puppy should be fed a puppy food until he or she is about 12 months old, longer for large breed dogs. Then switch gradually to an adult food by mixing the old and new foods together for several days. This helps avoid intestinal upset from changing foods.

Your pet will have a longer, healthier life on a good quality diet, such as Science Diet, Iams, Eukanuba or Purina One. Dry food is better for the prevention of dental disease. Too many treats and snacks lead to fussy eating habits, obesity and digestive upsets. Give your pet praise and affection for rewards, not food! He'll love you just as much. For puppies that are likely to grow to 70 pounds or more, a special large-breed puppy food is recommended

- 6.** Spay or neuter your pet at between 5-7 months of age. Altered pets live longer, remain healthier throughout their lives, have fewer behavior problems and don't contribute to the pet overpopulation problem.

- 7.** 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 some training 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 pet.

- 8.** Your puppy will soon have a full set of adult teeth. Good dental care is essential to your pet's well being. Regular brushing will slow plaque and tartar build-up as your dog gets older. By the time he is two to five years old, however, he will probably have enough tartar build-up to begin needing annual dental cleanings here at the veterinary clinic. A dog that gets good dental care throughout its life will live an average of 15-20% longer than one that doesn't. He will also have fresher breath, less pain from periodontal disease, be healthier and more energetic. We offer a wide variety of food, chews, and oral care products to help prevent tartar. Ask us which one is best for your dog.

- 9.** Please call us with any questions or problems with your pet. Most medical problems are less costly to your pet's well being and to your pocketbook if they are dealt with early.

- 10.** The same is true of behavioral problems. The earlier you contact us or your trainer regarding a problem behavior, the sooner you can solve it. Behaviors such as barking, digging, running away, chewing and over-aggression can almost always be changed, but you have to ask for help.

- 11.** Pet health insurance is available to help you in the event your pet incurs a serious illness or injury. It is heartbreaking to put a pet to sleep simply because the treatment was unaffordable. Veterinary Pet Insurance Co. has affordable policies that can be used at any veterinary facility in the country. Several policy choices are available including a wellness plan. Please ask us for a brochure.

- 12.** Enjoy! Your puppy's boundless joy, love and energy are a precious thing to have.

