



PUPPY RECOMMENDATIONS GUIDE



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APPOINTMENTS

Most puppies will need to be seen by a veterinarian every 3-4 weeks from the time they are adopted until 6 months of age.

During these visits, we will make sure your new family member is up to date on vaccines, staying healthy as they develop, and discuss common questions and concerns.



VACCINES

We recommend vaccinating your new puppy or kitten against some of the infectious diseases that their respective species are at risk for. The vaccines aim to help your pet's immune system be more prepared to fight these diseases should they ever be exposed to them. We follow the American Association of Feline Practitioner's recommendations for feline vaccines as well as the American Animal Hospital Association's (AAHA) recommendations for canine vaccines. We will work together during our first appointment to determine the best vaccine schedule for you and your pet. The timing and number of vaccines is going to depend on your anticipated lifestyle (e.g., hiking, boarding, grooming) and how much your animal weighs.

We recommend your puppy be vaccinated for the following during their first six months:

- Rabies
- Bordetella
- Distemper, Adeno-hepatic, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza (DAPP)
- Canine Influenza
- Leptospirosis



PARASITE PREVENTION

Puppies and kittens are often born with intestinal parasites from their parents and/or obtain parasites from outdoors. All puppies should have a fecal test performed to check for intestinal parasites. These parasites can potentially cause serious health concerns for your young puppy.

At your first visit, we will also discuss flea, tick, and heartworm prevention options.

SOCIALIZATION/TRAINING

Socialization is the process of exposing puppies to new experiences, sights, sounds, and smells. It's important to focus on exposing them to people, animals, and experiences you expect them to encounter in their adult lives. Please see the websites below for more information, tips, and tricks. In general, try to expose your new pet to five to ten new people/pets each week. When exposing your puppy to other animals, please ensure the other animal is up to date on their vaccines.

- <https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&id=8941891>
- <https://ultimatepuppy.com/>
- <https://indoorpet.osu.edu/pet-owners>
- <https://www.siriuspup.com/>



TEETHING/BITING

Why Do Puppies Bite?

Biting and mouthing are normal behaviors in young, developing dogs. Biting and mouthing may occur during times when adult teeth are replacing baby teeth (a behavioral process known as teething) and can be part of how they learn and gather information about food, toys, and their surroundings. It can be a normal part of play and can be breed- or genetically-associated, as seen with herding dog breeds. Regardless of why a youngster bites, biting should never be encouraged because it can lead to continued biting into adulthood, and adult dogs that bite can inflict serious damage and/or result in a poorer quality of life for themselves and their owners.

How to Manage Biting

There are many training methods to help with biting. Remember that this is a learning process for everyone and that some suggestions will not be as effective as others depending on the reason for biting, such as play biting vs fear/avoidance. It is important not to use punishment to train, especially for a normal behavior, as this can prevent a puppy or kitten from learning normal skills, like play biting to hone hunting skills, and can affect the bond between you and your pet. The best solution is to stay consistent with your training methods and be patient.



Use management tools that encourage better actions and provide good outlets to meet the needs of both you and your young pet. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Redirecting biting onto appropriate chew toys
- Using a command word—such as “sit”—to distract from biting then give a reward only if the biting stops
- Avoiding rough play with humans, using "timeouts"—ie removing yourself or your pet from the situation and having no contact for a set amount of time—to de-escalate the behaviors can allow them to calm down
- Providing plenty of toys and other distractions.

Veterinarians can be a valuable tool when attempts to minimize biting are unsuccessful. Discuss your concerns with your veterinarian who may refer you to a veterinary behaviorist for more help.

More information found at: <https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&id=8978091>

RECOMMENDED DOG TOYS

Dogs love to chew. Not only is it fun for them, but it also helps keep their teeth clean and their jaws strong. For puppies that are teething, chewing helps their gums feel better. But which chew toys and treats are safe for your dog? Here's a guide to choosing the right chew toy.

What Type of Chewer is Your Dog?

Watch your dog the first few times they play with a new toy to make sure it's right for how they chew. See if your dog falls into one of the categories below.

- **The Shredder**
 - Put a toy in front of them, and it's their job to destroy it. They might even attempt to eat the pieces.
- **The Inhaler**
 - These dogs are like vacuums. Now, you see the toy; now, you don't.
- **The Lover**
 - These dogs savor their treats and are gentle with their toys. There's no need to worry about the toy's innards all over your house.



Safe Chew Toys for Dogs

When buying treats and toys, if you can't indent it with your thumbnail or can't easily break it, it's probably too hard for your dog's teeth. Choose toys that are an appropriate size for your canine companion—choose a size that your dog can not easily swallow. It is best to always supervise your dog when they are playing with a toy. These toys are typically safe for dogs:

- **Firm Rubber Toys**
 - The hollow ones (which are great for holding treats) usually work well for all types of chewers. Just choose the size that matches your dog's mouth.
- **Rope Toys**
 - If your dog is a Shredder, make sure they aren't pulling out the strings and swallowing them. Otherwise, these are considered safe.
- **Durable Stuffed Toys**
 - These usually aren't tough enough for a Shredder. If you have an Inhaler or a Lover, avoid toys with parts that could easily come off, like eyes, bells, or ribbons.
- **Tennis Balls**
 - These are okay for most chewers but keep an extra-close eye on Shredders who might destroy and swallow pieces of the tennis ball. Over-chewing of the ball fuzz can wear down their teeth, too.

We do not recommend bones, rawhide, or hard nylon toys, as their hard surfaces can cause dental fractures and, if swallowed, potential intestinal blockages.

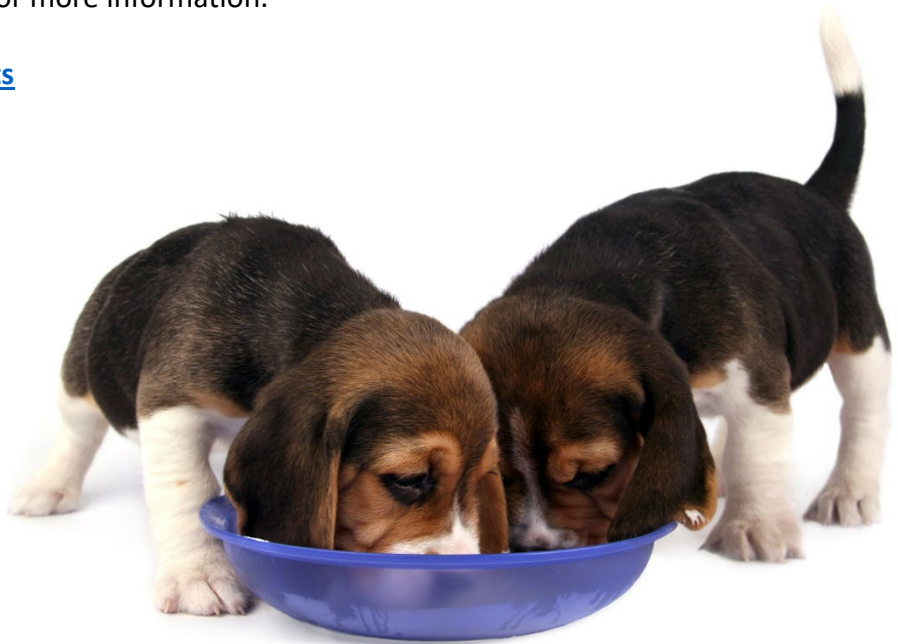


DIET

Choosing a pet's food can be an overwhelming process due to the number of diets on the market. Puppies should be fed a puppy-formulated food initially. Large breed puppies have special nutrient requirements and should be fed a diet specifically formulated for large breeds. Outlined below are our general guidelines:

1. The pet food should be certified by AAFCO to be "complete and balanced" using either (1) an AAFCO Nutrient Profile or (2) AAFCO Feeding Trial. AAFCO stands for the Association of American Feed Control Officials.
 - <https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&catId=102898&id=8808771&ind=319&objTypeID=1007>
2. We strongly recommend against feeding grain-free as studies have linked grain-free diets to heart disease in canines. We also do not recommend raw food and home-cooked diets as these diets can spread food-borne pathogens to you and your pets, and they are nutritionally incomplete. Please see the websites listed below for more information.
 - [Grain Free](#)
 - [Homecooked/Raw Diets](#)

3. Brands commonly recommended by veterinarians include Hill's, Royal Canin, and Purina ProPlan. These companies are established, employ board-certified nutritionists, and conduct safety testing on their products. This list is by no means exhaustive, it is simply a place to start.



4. Roughly, animals should be offered about 1 cup per 20 lbs. Since diets vary considerably in their calories, we recommend using the below website to help determine estimated feeding amounts based on the type of food and weight of your pet.
 - [Calorie Calculator](#)

SPAY & NEUTER

We recommend that every dog and cat be spayed/neutered to prevent unplanned litters and reproductive disease. The recommended age to perform this surgery depends on the specific patient, breed, and family circumstance. Once most puppies are over 6 months of age, they reach sexual maturity and can reproduce. If you wait until over 6 months of age to spay/neuter, PLEASE be vigilant and prevent unwanted pregnancies. There is some evidence that waiting to spay/neuter large breed dogs until closer to 12-18 months of age can be helpful for joint development. However, there is also some evidence that waiting to spay female dogs can increase their likelihood of developing mammary cancer.

Overall, there are no guarantees or hard-and-fast rules for the best time to spay/neuter dogs. We encourage having an open conversation about what's best for you and your pet.

General Spay/Neuter Guidelines:

- Small/medium breed dogs should be spayed after 6 months of age
- Large breed dogs should be spayed at 12+ months of age

RECOMMENDED PUPPY LAB TESTS

1. Fecal test during 1st or 2nd visits
2. Preoperative blood tests prior to spay/neuter
3. Heartworm test (blood test) after 7 months of age



DENTAL CARE

Just like us, dental health is very important for dogs and cats. At-home care includes brushing their teeth, dental treats/chews, prescription diets, and water additives. Even with diligent at-home care, dogs and cats require professional dental cleanings by veterinarians to prevent severe periodontal disease. These professional cleanings are performed under general anesthesia and may require diseased teeth to be removed to stop infection.



How to Brush Your Pet's Teeth

Brushing your pet's teeth is an important part of keeping his or her mouth clean and healthy. Most pets do not like having their teeth brushed at first, but by introducing toothbrushing gradually and keeping it positive, your pet can learn to enjoy it.

Keep the sessions short, do not overly restrain your pet, and always end on a positive note with praise or play.

The first step is to get your pet used to you putting things in his mouth. Dip your finger in a liquid he might like, such as chicken broth, and let him lick it off. After a few sessions, begin rubbing your finger gently over his gums and teeth.

Once your pet enjoys this, introduce the toothpaste in the same way. Never use human toothpaste as this can cause gastrointestinal problems in pets.

When your pet is used to the toothpaste, introduce the cleaning item you are going to use, like a toothbrush or fingerbrush. Let them lick the toothpaste off of the cleaning item for a few sessions to get used to it.

Gradually introduce brushing, starting with the large canine teeth in the front of the mouth. These are the easiest to get to and are good to practice on. Once your pet accepts this, you can gradually increase the number of teeth you are brushing.

This process takes patience—for some pets it may take days, and for some, it may take weeks or more—but most pets can learn to accept toothbrushing. For those who can not, there are special foods available which can create a "brushing" action, oral rinses (ask us about these), and dental chews.

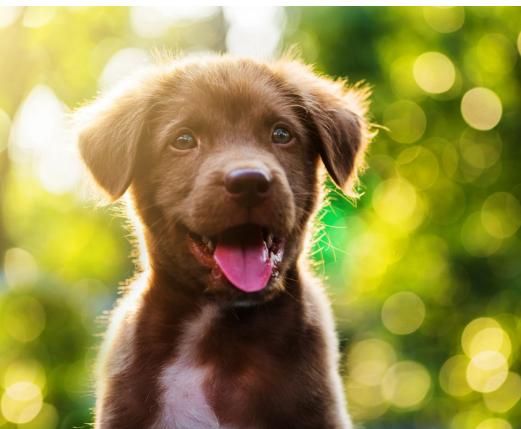
- [More information on dental health](#)
- [Products that have undergone testing and have been shown to decrease plaque and tartar buildup](#)

PET INSURANCE & BUDGETING

The below websites have more information on pet insurance. Unlike human medical insurance, most pet insurance plans provide coverage only for accident, illness, and emergency care. Some plans do cover wellness visits, routine dental cleanings, and vaccines. I strongly encourage you to do your research and compare monthly premiums, co-pays/deductibles, coverages, and exclusions. It's important to determine what type of coverage you anticipate will work best for you and your pet.

As an alternative to pet insurance, some owners elect to budget and routinely set aside money, so they have reserves for when their furry family member falls ill.

- [Pet Insurance Fact Sheet](#)
- [Pet Insurance – Learn the basics and compare quotes](#)



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