

PUPPY 411

Vaccinations

Puppies are born with a weak immune system. They are born with their mother's antibodies that provide partial protection from viruses and bacteria. These antibodies gradually disappear as they develop their own immune system. It is important that during this time the puppy gets a series of vaccinations starting at 8 weeks old until it is 16 weeks old. After the final vaccination your puppy must wait 2 weeks for the immune system to be fully effective against the bacteria and viruses. The vaccinations given at each series are different.

- **First series:** Parvovirus vaccination
- **Second series:** Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza, Leptospirosis (DHLPP)
- **Third series:** DHLPP and Bordetella

Parvovirus

Parvovirus is a virus that affects unvaccinated dogs and puppies. **It is a severe illness that can't be cured and must be supported until the illness passes.** Dogs do not always recover from this illness and it can be expensive to treat. It infects the heart in younger puppies and infects the intestinal cells in all affected puppies and dogs. This virus causes lethargy, fever, vomiting, and severe diarrhea with or without blood. Parvovirus is very common in Hawaii. Parvovirus is spread when an infected dog defecates on a surface and an uninfected dog comes in contact with that area. It remains on surfaces and it can live in soil, sand, concrete, grass etc. **It is important that that your dog is not placed on the ground outdoors until fully vaccinated.** Your puppy should only be outside in areas that are secluded to your property which other infected dogs have not come in contact, such as your fenced in back yard. The front yard (unless fenced in) is not appropriate because other dogs can access the lawn. **If you see any symptoms associated with parvovirus please call us ahead of time and wait in the car outside.** Parvovirus is highly contagious, please help us keep our clinic clean!

Socialization

Your puppy needs proper socialization. From the period of 3-16 weeks your puppy is taking in the environment and learning if things are good or bad. It is important that in this window that you expose your puppy to new experiences in a POSITIVE light. Use treats with each new introduction to people, new activities, and new sights and sounds. This learning period can go both ways so it is important that your dog has many positive experiences and you minimize the negative. If your puppy is scared, do not force the experience, use treats and go slowly. The impressions that are made on your puppy during this time will last a long time. The learning still continues past this age but it can take longer or be more difficult. **Take the time to touch your dog's feet, ears, and mouth (use treats) so that health care is easier when your dog is older.**

Potty training

Whether using potty pads or using the backyard, you should use positive reinforcement to train your puppy. When your puppy goes to the bathroom appropriately praise him or her and reward the correct behavior. **If your puppy goes to the bathroom inappropriately in the house, do not scold them.** Take them promptly outside or to the pee pad. Scolding your dog for this behavior leads them to believe that the act of going to the bathroom is bad and they will start to hide the urine and feces in the house. At this time they do not know that they shouldn't be going in the house. To avoid accidents take your puppy outside or to the pee pad frequently. Your puppy has a small bladder and will need to go often. **Please remember that your dog should only be walking in private and parvo free areas such as your fenced in backyard.** You may also be interested in using crate training as a form of potty training and can find resources online.

Crate Training

Crate training will make your pet's stay at boarding facilities, pet clinics, and airline travel more comfortable. It is also a great for avoiding unwanted damage to household items, managing separation anxiety, and potty training. There are many resources online for crate training. **Be sure you are using only positive reinforcement associated with the crate.** The crate should be a positive place, this can be affirmed by feeding them in their crate and giving them treats when they go in their crate. Do not use the crate for punishment! Throw treats into the crate to encourage them to go into the crate on their own.

Teething

Just like humans, puppies have a first set of baby teeth that will fall out and be replaced with adult teeth. Typically by 6 months of age your puppy should have lost all the baby teeth. Some puppies retain a few of their teeth that may need to be removed to prevent complications. To ease the irritation caused by teething you can purchase teething puppy toys or feed frozen carrots. Do not allow your puppy to chew old socks, slippers, or other household items as this behavior can carry over to your new shoes and new socks. Do not allow your puppy to gnaw on your fingers or hands as this will be a very difficult habit to break as adults and it will hurt more with their adult teeth! If they play rough or are biting your hands, yelp in pain, or stop playing with them every time they do it. They will learn that it is not how to get what they want.

Spay and Neuter

Spaying and neutering your dog can be the most important decision you will make for your pet. This does not only prevent unwanted pregnancy and potential behavioral problems, it can prevent many types of cancers and life threatening diseases that are caused by the hormones such as breast cancer, pyometra, prostate cancer, etc. If you are not breeding your dog we strongly recommend you neuter/spay to give your dog the best chance at a long, healthy life! Most pets are spayed/neutered at around 6 months old. Females should ideally be spayed before their first heat. Males can vary from 6 months to 1 1/2 years old depending on breed. Large breed males (great danes, dobermans, pit bulls) should be done at 1 year to have more time to develop their bones properly, although 6 months of age is still acceptable. While spaying and neutering can increase the chance of weight gain, diet and exercise can help control this. Please do not let this hinder you from preventing serious illness for your new family member.

Microchip

Microchips are small devices that are injected under the skin using a needle. This device stores a number unique to your dog. This ID number will be registered with the humane society which will have your corresponding contact information. This is not a tracking device. In the event your pet has been lost and then FOUND, we can scan your dog for the number. This will then allow us to get in contact with you to let you know your dog has been found. If you get your dog microchipped at our clinic, you will automatically be registered in the state of Hawaii. If you move, you will need to register your pet nationally online.

