



During your visits we will discuss.....

Your puppy's vaccine plan: During puppy's first wellness visit, we will give him/her a **DHPP** (or "distemper-parvo") vaccine. The DHPP is a combination vaccine that helps to protect puppies from the most serious and potentially fatal canine viruses. Puppies need a DHPP booster every 3 weeks until they have reached 4 months of age. The rabies vaccine (RV) can be given after 3 months of age. DHPP and RV are considered "**core**" vaccines because nearly all dogs are at some risk for contracting these diseases. We also recommend certain "**non core**" vaccines for dogs whose daily activities may put them at risk for other diseases. Dogs who regularly go to a grooming facility, a dog day care, dog park or boarding facility need to be vaccinated for **Influenza H3N2** and for **Bordetella** (also called "kennel cough"). Both of these diseases are highly contagious. Dogs who go on wilderness walks, go camping, swim in lakes and rivers or visit farms are at increased risk of contracting **Leptospirosis** (or "Lepto"). These dogs need to be vaccinated not only for their own protection but also for the safety of their family as Leptospirosis can be transmitted to humans. Until your puppy has had his/her full round of vaccinations, he/she should not be exposed to other dogs or common areas such as a park or playground.

Intestinal parasites: **Roundworms**, **hookworms** and **whipworms** are the most common intestinal parasites of dogs. All healthy puppies are given a **dewormer** on their first visit to the hospital. We will also test your puppy's stool sample for worms and other parasites. After the puppy series, we test a stool sample every 6 months. Our protocol is designed to protect your puppy and your family as well. Intestinal parasites can be transmitted to humans. Children, the elderly and immune compromised individuals are at greatest risk. Intestinal parasite eggs are shed in the feces, so be sure to clean up after your puppy.

Training: As puppy settles into your home, it's important for him/her to learn good manners. Generally, we discuss **crate training** at puppy's first visit. The crate is a great tool for getting your puppy into the habit of eliminating appropriately. This process is commonly referred to as "**house breaking**".



Fleas: We recommend starting flea prevention as soon as you bring your puppy home. Not only are flea bites very itchy, they also can transmit tapeworms and other parasites to your puppy. We recommend **Parastar**® for *topical* flea and tick prevention. Depending on your pet's needs, we may recommend an *oral* flea preventative such as **Capstar**® or **Comfortis**® or **Trifexis**® which combines flea and heartworm prevention in one chewable pill.

Heartworm disease: Heartworms are a blood borne parasite transmitted by mosquito bites. Heartworm disease is characterized by coughing, lethargy and weight loss. If left untreated, heartworm disease can result in lung disease, heart failure and sudden death. For this reason, your puppy needs to take a heartworm preventative. Although mosquitoes are considered a summertime pest, in the Southeast they live year round, so we recommend giving heartworm preventatives all year. **Trifexis**® is a monthly chewable tablet that prevents heartworms, controls common intestinal parasites and also kills fleas. **Interceptor**® is a monthly chewable tablet that prevents heartworms and controls common intestinal parasites. **Heartgard**® is a monthly chewable treat that prevents heartworms and controls common intestinal parasites. We'll help you decide which one is right for your puppy.

Behavior issues: Certain behaviors that are natural to dogs are not acceptable if your puppy is to become a member of the family. Now is the time to teach your puppy "good manners". We encourage you to use the "learn to earn" method of training in which the puppy is rewarded for good behavior. **Jumping up** on people is a common attention seeking behavior of puppies. Discourage this behavior by turning your back and ignoring the puppy until he/she stops jumping up. While playing, it's common for puppies to bite. Teach your puppy that **biting** people is not acceptable by discontinuing play until the biting stops. **Chewing** is a common puppy behavior. Puppy-proof your home and provide appropriate chew toys.

Diet: Good nutrition is important during all phases of life. We recommend you feed your puppy a balanced diet appropriate for his/her age and size. In order to determine how many calories your puppy needs in a day, we can do a "**diet calculation**" and provide you with an accurate measuring cup.



Pet insurance: Health insurance is available for pets. If you decide to purchase insurance for your pet, we recommend you research carefully and find a plan that is right for you and your puppy. Although we do not endorse any particular insurance company, we can provide you with some brochures and websites.

Crate training: At your puppy's first visit, we talked briefly about crate training. The crate aids in house breaking and offers the puppy a safe place to sleep or take a break from playing.

Puppy classes: A puppy group class is a great opportunity to expose your puppy to other dogs and people in a relatively controlled setting. Generally, puppy classes focus on good manners and basic obedience. It's a great way to have fun and bond with your puppy.

Breed specific information: If your puppy is a purebred dog, we may be able to anticipate certain medical conditions that could arise over the life of your pet. With this knowledge, we can take precautions early on and be quick to act if signs develop. We also want you to be informed about your puppy's breed so you can recognize potential concerns at an early stage.

Hip radiographs: If your puppy is a medium or large breed, we may recommend having hip radiographs ("x-rays") to check for any abnormalities that could put your pet at risk for developing arthritis or hip dysplasia. Hip radiographs can be taken while your pet is under anesthesia for spay or neuter.

Leptospirosis: At this age, we can evaluate your puppy's lifestyle and determine if he/she is at risk for contracting Leptospirosis. Campsites, lakes, rivers, farms and wilderness trails are locations of potential exposure. Puppies at risk for exposure will be given one vaccine now and a booster in 3 weeks. If your puppy is not considered at risk we will not vaccinate, but if you decide later on to take your puppy to any of these places, please let us know, and we can vaccinate at that time. As we discussed earlier, Leptospirosis can be transmitted from dogs to people, so by protecting your puppy, we're also protecting you.



Spay and neuter: We recommend having your puppy spayed or neutered if you're not planning on breeding. Although there are risks inherent with general **anesthesia** and surgery, there are many benefits to your puppy's health and well-being. Having your female puppy spayed eliminates the risk of ovarian or uterine cancer and greatly decreases the risk of mammary cancer. Your puppy also will not have heat cycles or unexpected puppies. Having your male puppy neutered eliminates the risk of testicular cancer and reduces the risk of prostatitis. Neutered males tend to be less territorial than intact males and male aggression is greatly decreased. Before your puppy undergoes surgery, he/she will be examined thoroughly by your doctor. We will also run blood work in order to make sure your puppy is a good candidate for anesthesia (i.e. all major organs are functioning properly).

Microchipping: A microchip is a permanent identification device that can be implanted under your puppy's skin. We will register your information with the microchip company initially. All you need to do is confirm your registration. If at any time you change your address or phone number, be sure to inform the microchip company so they can keep your information current. Microchip implantation can be done at the time of spay/neuter surgery, and your puppy won't feel a thing.

Dental care: Your puppy will benefit greatly from good dental care. You can start now by brushing your puppy's teeth daily. Even though your puppy still has baby teeth, it's good to get him/her accustomed to tooth brushing.

Hip radiographs: While your puppy is under general anesthesia we can take radiographs to assess the condition of your puppy's hips. For large or medium sized dogs, radiographs taken while a pet is under anesthesia can be helpful to identify any developmental abnormalities. At this point, we may be able to identify individuals who will be prone to hip dysplasia or arthritis.

Preventatives: Please remember to refill your puppy's **heartworm and flea preventatives**. Here in the Southeast we recommend giving heartworm preventatives all year. Remember, too, that your puppy needs protection from pesky fleas and ticks. Because of our warm climate, we recommend flea prevention year round. We will help you choose the preventatives that work best for you and your puppy.