

**Acton Veterinary Clinic**

**PUPPY  
INFORMATION  
PACKAGE**





## **Congratulations on the new addition to your family!**

At the Acton Veterinary Clinic, we look forward to assisting you through your new puppy's life. Enclosed in this digital package are materials that cover a wide range of information, which will help guide you and your pet to lead a happy healthy life together. These materials include information regarding:

- Vaccinations
- Spay/Neutering
- Deworming
- Heartworm
- Fleas/Ticks
- Nutrition
- Dental Care
- Pet Insurance
- Behaviour/Training

We also have various brochures available at the clinic if you are looking for further information on anything. For any further questions or concerns about our animal hospital or your new pet please feel free to contact us and we will be happy to assist you.

# Vaccinations

## Core Vaccines

### DA2PP (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus)

The DA2PP vaccination is a core vaccination for all puppies and dogs. This vaccination prevents against canine distemper, hepatitis, para-influenza and parvovirus (see below). All the viruses that DA2PP prevents against can be fatal if acquired by your dog. DA2PP is an injection given subcutaneous under the skin and can be given as early as 6 weeks of age. DA2PP requires a booster(s) to gain full immunity of the vaccination. It is recommended to be given first at 8, 12 and 16 week of age to complete the series to acquire full immunity against the viruses. Then DA2PP should be administered annually to keep immunity at appropriate levels.

#### *Parvovirus*

Parvovirus is highly contagious and the most common viral disease that causes mortality in young dogs. Clinical signs may include vomiting, foul smelling bloody diarrhea, fever, severe dehydration, anorexia and lethargy. Individuals are also easily susceptible to acquiring secondary infection. Parvovirus is spread through the feces of an infected animal or through fomites. Viral particles are very resilient in the environment and are not easily removed with general cleaning products. Treatment of parvovirus is symptomatic and supportive, however this is often unsuccessful if not started early after infection. Vaccination is the best course of action for prevention against the virus.

#### *Canine Distemper*

Canine distemper is a systemic, highly contagious virus that is not easily treatable once acquired. Clinical signs of canine distemper can include fever, ocular/nasal discharge, coughing, pneumonia, dehydration, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, inflammation of the chorion and retina of the eye and neurological complications. Individuals are also easily susceptible to acquiring secondary infection. Canine distemper is spread through secretions from an infected animal. Treatment of canine distemper is symptomatic and supportive, however it is often unsuccessful. Vaccination is the best course of action for prevention.

#### *Infectious Canine Hepatitis (Adenovirus – Type 2)*

Infectious canine hepatitis is a worldwide, contagious virus. Clinical signs vary based on the individual, but can include fever, congestion, severe depression, decreased white blood cells, vomiting, diarrhea, and coagulation disorders. Individuals are also easily susceptible to acquiring secondary infection. Infectious canine hepatitis is spread through ingestion of feces, urine or saliva of an infected animal. Treatment of infectious canine hepatitis is symptomatic and supportive, however it is often unsuccessful. Vaccination is the best course of action for prevention.

## *Parainfluenza*

Parainfluenza is a highly contagious respiratory virus. Clinical signs can include coughing (dry or moist), fever, lethargy, loss of appetite and nasal discharge. Individuals are also easily susceptible to acquiring secondary infection. Parainfluenza is spread through nasal secretions from an infected animal. Treatment of parainfluenza is symptomatic and supportive, however infected individuals can spread the virus to other for a long period of time. Vaccination is the best course of action for prevention of the virus and spreading to other individuals.

## Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a disease caused by the infection with any pathogenic serovars of *Leptospira*. **Leptospirosis is commonly found in wildlife (such as rodents, raccoons, opossums and skunks) and is spread through direct contact with an infected individual's urine.** Leptospirosis is also a zoonotic disease and can be spread to humans who come in contact with an infected individual's urine. Clinical signs are variable, but can include kidney and liver issues, anemia, pancreatitis, fever, vomiting, and lethargy. Treatment is supportive and usually includes fluid therapy and antibiotics; however treatment is more successful the sooner the disease is diagnosed. Vaccination is given through a subcutaneous injection under the skin. Leptospirosis can be given any time after 8 weeks of age and requires a booster 4 weeks after the initial vaccination to gain full immunity to the disease. Annual vaccination for Leptospirosis is required to keep immunity at appropriate levels.

For more information please visit Real Time Pet Disease Reporting's Leptospirosis page at: <https://www.petdiseasereport.com/content/content5.aspx?pview=public>

## Rabies

Rabies is a progressive, acute encephalomyelitis virus that is fatal when acquired. It is spread through contact with an infected individual's saliva, usually through a bite. Any mammal (cats, dogs, bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes etc.) can be infected with rabies **including humans**. Clinical signs can include, acute behavioural changes (anorexia, sudden nervousness, seeking solitude, irritability, and hyper excitability) progressive unexplained paralysis, sudden aggressiveness, foaming at the mouth, and excessive thirst that can't be satisfied. Vaccination is an injection subcutaneously under the skin. Vaccination against Rabies can be given any time after 14 weeks of age and requires re-vaccination one year after being administered. Following this Rabies should be administered/ is required every 3 years to keep immunity at appropriate levels. Rabies is a fatal disease with no treatment. Vaccination against rabies **is the law** and is the only preventative against the virus.

For more information please visit the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association's Rabies Q&A page at: [https://www.ovma.org/assets/1/6/OVMA\\_Rabies\\_Public\\_QA1.pdf](https://www.ovma.org/assets/1/6/OVMA_Rabies_Public_QA1.pdf)

# Elective Vaccines

## Bordetella (Kennel Cough)

Bordetella is a highly contagious disease caused by the bacteria *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. Bordetella is easily spread through direct contact with infected individuals, through the air and through fomites. **Therefore dog's that are going to be around other dogs often, such as at the dog park, or staying at a boarding facility, are highly recommend to be vaccinated against Bordetella.** All reliable boarding facilities will not accept your pet for boarding without a proof of vaccination against Bordetella. Clinical signs can include a dry hacking cough, retching, sneezing and watery nasal discharge. In severe cases pneumonia, fever, inappetence and lethargy can also occur. Treatment for Bordetella may include antibiotics and cough suppressants; however recovery can be a long process. The best preventative to the disease is through vaccination. Vaccination can be injected subcutaneously or given intranasal. Bordetella can be given any time after 8 weeks of age and the injectable version requires a booster 3-4 weeks after the date given for the patient to gain full immunity to the disease. Annual vaccination for Bordetella is required to keep immunity at appropriate levels.

## Lyme

Lyme borreliosis is a bacterial disease transmitted from infected ticks. **Lyme is a zoonotic disease that can be spread to mammal's, including humans through a bite from an infected tick. It is recommended that dog's that are taken to the park, into longer grass, hiking or around areas where ticks are common be vaccinated against Lyme.** Please be aware tick presence in Ontario is drastically increasing. Clinical signs can include intermittent recurrent lameness, fever, anorexia, lethargy and swollen painful joints. Renal failure can also occur and once the disease has reached this point it is often fatal. Treatment can include antibiotics and symptomatic therapy; however treatment is more successful the sooner the disease is diagnosed. Vaccination is given through a subcutaneous injection under the skin. Lyme can be given any time after 8 weeks of age and requires a booster 3-4 weeks after the initial vaccination to gain full immunity to the disease. Annual vaccination for Lyme is required to keep immunity at appropriate levels.

For more information please visit Real Time Pet Disease Reporting's Lyme page at:

<https://www.petdiseasereport.com/content/content1.aspx?pview=public>



# Sterilization (Spaying) of Female Dog

An ovariectomy, also known as a “spay”, is a surgical procedure that is performed by a licensed veterinarian. This procedure involves removing both ovaries and the uterus from your pet. For this procedure to be performed, your pet must be put under general anaesthetic. This procedure will “sterilize” your pet and prevent estrus (heat) cycles and her become pregnant and producing offspring.

Female dogs reach puberty at approximately 6 months of age. Any time after puberty they can go into their first estrus cycle, more commonly known as a “heat cycle”. Smaller breeds tend to have their first heat cycle sooner than larger breed’s however it varies based on the individual. During the heat cycle the female will be able to become pregnant if given the opportunity. A female will have both physical and behavioural signs that show she is currently going through her heat cycle. The main physical signs are swelling of the external vulva and bloody discharge from the vulva. This discharge may change to a watery pink –red colour further into the estrus cycle. Female dog’s in heat usually seem more attentive to their surroundings and often are needier, wound up and more irritable than usual. During the estrus cycle, the female may urinate more often, as there are pheromones and hormones in her urine during her heat cycle that she uses to attract males. Physical and behavioural signs when in the estrus cycle are variable based on the individual. Females usually go into heat approximately twice a year (every 6 months) however smaller breeds may come into heat more often than larger breeds. The heat cycle usually lasts 2-3 weeks in length. It is recommended if you do not want you dog to breed, that you watch her closely and ensure there are not ways she can escape from your house or backyard. Female dogs in heat will have urges to mate with a male; therefore they may attempt to escape if the opportunity presents itself.

If you are not interested in breeding your female dog, it is recommended to have a spay procedure, performed, which can be done any time after your dog is 5-6 months of age. It is recommended the surgery be done before the first heat cycle has occurred and at this younger age as individuals tend to heal quicker, and take the anesthetic better than when they are older. **If your dog does go into her first heat cycle before she is able to have surgery, it is highly recommended to wait 10-12 weeks after the last day of the heat cycle before having the spay surgery performed, for the safety of your pet while the procedure is being performed.**

Benefits to Spaying:

- No heat cycles
- No chance of getting pregnant
- Elimination of the risks, potential injury, potential disease and stress of carrying, birthing and caring for puppies
- Less desire to roam or attract intact males
- Reduced risk of pyometra (bacterial infection of the uterus)
- Reduced risk or elimination of mammary gland tumours, ovarian cancer and uterine cancer, depending on what age the spay procedure is performed.

For more information please visit the Ontario SPCA page: [www.fixyourpet.ca](http://www.fixyourpet.ca)

For any further questions please discuss with the veterinarian when the best time to book your pets spay procedure is.

# Castration (Neutering) of Male Dogs

An orchiectomy, also known as a “neuter”, is a surgical procedure that is performed by a licensed veterinarian. This procedure involves removing both testicles from the scrotal sac of your pet. For this procedure to be performed, your pet must be put under general anaesthetic. This procedure will “sterilize” your pet and prevent him from being able mate and impregnate a female.

The neuter procedure is recommended for your male dog at approximately 5-6 months of age. It is recommended at this younger age, as individuals tend to heal quicker, and take the anesthetic better than when they are older. It is recommended that the procedure be done at least before your pet is 2 years of age, otherwise the procedure is a higher risk when performed.

## Benefits of Neutering:

- Eliminates ability to get a female pregnant
- Less desire to roam or be attracted by intact females
- Reduces risk or elimination of testicular cancer and prostate disease
- May reduce or eliminates spraying/markings behaviour
- May reduce inappropriate mounting behaviour
- May decrease aggressive behaviour (no guarantee, varies by individual and training)

For more information please visit the Ontario SPCA page: [www.fixyourpet.ca](http://www.fixyourpet.ca)

For any further questions please discuss with the veterinarian when the best time to book your pets neuter procedure is.



# Pre-Surgical Instructions

Your pet is, or will be, scheduled for surgery soon! Below are some pre-surgical instructions that need to be followed, for the safety of your pet before, during and after the procedure.

- Your pet should have **all food taken away at 10pm the night before surgery**, so that it will be fasted for 12 hours prior to the procedure. **No treats , breakfast or food of any kind is to be given the morning of surgery.** If your pet is not properly fasted, the surgery will be rescheduled.
- Your pet can have water overnight, up until they are dropped off at our clinic.
- Drop off time for surgery is **between 8:00a and 9:00a.**
- Please make sure our staff around away of any other concerns or medical conditions your pet has , as this may be important information the veterinarian needs to know prior to surgery
- Please make sure our staff is aware of any medication your pet is currently on, so there is no concerns with the drugs/medications used during surgery.
- It is very important that our doctors can reach you during the day. Please make sure you leave the best number for you to be reached during the day, in case we have a need to contact you about anything related to your pet.
- All vaccines must be up to date at least 10 days prior to surgery.

During surgery your pet will receive (included in price of spay/neuters):

- **Intravenous Fluids:** Fluids will be administered to your pet into their vein to help keep your pet hydrated, and comfortable throughout the procedure. These will also help flush the anesthetic out of your pet's body after the procedure.
- **Pain Medication:** Your pet will receive an injectable pain medication in their surgery which last 24 hours. Several days further of oral pain/anti-inflammatory will be sent home following the surgery to ease any soreness and discomfort during the healing process.
- **E-Collar A.K.A "Plastic Cone":** The cone provided is to keep your pet from licking or chewing at his/her incision while it is healing. This is to be worn at all times for 7-10 days following the surgery.



*If you have any questions or concerns before or after the procedure, please do not hesitate to ask our staff.*



# Additional Surgical Options

**“Pre-Screen” - Pre-anesthetic bloodwork:** Some health conditions can not be detected through a physical examination alone. Even a “healthy puppy” can have congenital disorders that may not be detectable on the outside. A pre-screen blood testing is performed in humans before undergoing surgery. It is basically an “internal physical exam”. We have your pet’s best interest at heart and want to make sure they are in the best possible shape to handle the general anesthetic and surgical procedure. The veterinarian performing the surgery will review and evaluate the bloodwork values based on your pet’s age, breed, sex and health status and will determine if there are any concerns before proceeding. If the veterinarian has any concerns, they may recommend further testing, medication or postponing the surgical procedure. The main components evaluated are in the table below:

Parameter	Description	Why We Evaluate It
<b>CBC</b> <b>Complete Blood Count</b>	WBC (White Blood Cells) [eosinophils, lymphocytes, monocytes and neutrophils]	Part of the body’s immune system and defence against infection. Elevation may indicate infection or internal parasites
	RBC (Red Blood Cells)	Carry oxygen to all the cells of your body. Decreased levels (anemia) may indicate destructions of RBCs, blood loss, or problem with the bone marrow
	Platelets	Help form blood clots. Decreased levels may indicate a problem with clotting and may pose a risk to surgery
<b>Biochemistry Panel</b>	TP Total Protein	High total protein may indicate dehydration, infection/inflammation or (in rare cases) cancer. Low total protein may indicate loss of blood or fluid
	GLU or BG Blood glucose (Blood Sugar)	Elevated levels indicates diabetes; decreased levels can cause seizures and needs to be addressed prior to surgery
	BUN Blood Urea Nitrogen	Elevated levels indicates decreased kidney function, or if the patient is on a high-protein diet. Decreased levels can be indicative of a liver “shunt”
	CRE Creatinine	Elevated values indicated decreased kidney function. Low values are insignificant
	ALT Alanine Aminotransferase	Liver damage enzymes. Elevation indicates a liver “shunt”, liver disease or temporary damage due to toxin/trauma/injury
	ALP Alkaline Phosphatase	“Steroid-induced enzyme”. Elevation indicates growing (puppies), liver disease, gall bladder problems or other conditions (Cushing’s disease)

# Additional Surgical Options (Cont'd)

## Microchip

A microchip is a small information chip implanted, using a large needle, under your pet's skin, usually between the shoulder blades. A unique number is attached to the chip, which stays in your pet for life, making it a permanent identification. This number will be registered to your name, address, phone number and pet's information/description. If your pet got lost or stolen and was brought to a vet clinic or humane society the chip can be scanned so you can be contacted and reunited with your beloved family member. We use a company called 24PetWatch for our microchips. Recently they have developed a new "mini-chip" which is only 1/3 of the size of a grain of rice. Although this can be inserted while the patient is conscious, it can cause some discomfort as it is a larger needle, so having it done while your pet is under general anesthetic is more comfortable for the patient, and prevents the patient moving during the insertion.

We are happy to register the microchip for you once inserted – all you have to do is fill out a form listing the emergency contact information you would like to have on record. **It is important to remember that if your address or phone number changes to update this information with the company!**



Physiolaser Machine



"Mini-chip"

## Laser Therapy Treatment

Therapy lasers have been used for a long time in humans and equine (horse) medicine, particularly with sports injuries. It is relatively new modality to companion animal medicine, but has already been met with great success. The principle of laser therapy is that a lower-level laser is used to stimulate mitochondria within the cells of the body. This increased blood flow to the area of treatment, reduces pain and speeds healing time. The treatment is performed directly over the incision from surgery, while your pet is still under general anesthetic. There is no physical sensation associated with the laser (ie. No heat, "tingly" feeling, etc).

We have also seen great results using the therapy laser to treat arthritis in older pets. We know it works because many of them have been able to reduce or even come off their daily pain medications! We want your pet to be as comfortable as possible after surgery so they can heal well.

# Deworming

Deworming is very important for puppies as most puppies are born with at least one kind of internal parasite. Puppies can receive their first deworming for certain parasites as early as 2 weeks of age. This medication can be repeated at 4, 6 and 8 weeks of age. Some breeders may have their litter of puppies dewormed when their first vaccinations are given, before they are sent home with their new owners, however this can vary depending on the breeder. The medical record booklet provided by the breeder /seller or previous owner can tell you what your puppy has received previously.

It is recommended that your puppy have a fecal sample examined, (called a fecal flotation) at your veterinary clinic to see if any internal parasites are present. Your puppy should also receive a broad spectrum deworming medication at their first and/or second vaccination appointment. Deworming should be repeated in 2 week, especially if worms were present initially. An additional deworming medication may be necessary depending on specific parasites found in the fecal examination

## Possible Internal Parasites

- Roundworm
- Hookworm
- Whipworm
- Tapeworm
- Coccidia
- Giardia

## Common Signs of Parasites:

- Vomiting
- Pot-belly (mostly in pups)
- Diarrhea/ Blood in stool
- Dry/dull coat
- Weakness/ Weight loss
- Visible signs of worms or worm segments in stool, vomit, or around the anus dried in the fur

As your pet grows, he or she should have a fecal sample tested for parasites every year. This will help prevent any serious health complications from developing due to parasites. As of 2019, a new tapeworm species, *E. multilocularis*, is emerging in Ontario. This type of tapeworm is transmitted when pets consume fecal material from wildlife infected by the parasite (foxes, coyotes etc.). Like many of the internal parasites above, this species is zoonotic, meaning humans can acquire it too. *E. multilocularis* specifically can cause serious disease in people as it is spread in the environment. For this reason it is recommended to deworm your pet against intestinal parasites, specifically this tapeworm, every month throughout the year.

Parasite preventatives that cover intestinal parasites include: Interceptor Plus, Heartgard and Nexgard Spectra, however Interceptor Plus is the **ONLY** preventative at this time <sup>(2019)</sup> that is on-label for prevention against *E. multilocularis*. Please ask the veterinarian for more information about which parasite preventative would be best for your pet's lifestyle.

# Potentially Fatal Tapeworm - *Echinococcus multilocularis*: Ontario, Canada

(Some key points from Scott Weese's Worm and Germs Blog )

<https://www.wormsandgermsblog.com/2019/01/articles/animals/dogs/echinococcus-multilocularis-ontario-canada/>

Found in the intestinal tract of wild canids (e.g. coyotes, foxes) and can also infect dogs.

- When ingested this can potentially lead to a different form of infection called alveolar echinococcosis (AE).
- In this form, the parasite causes tumour-like cysts to form in various parts of the body, particularly in the liver, and the condition can be very difficult to treat by the time it is diagnosed.
- Wild canids shed eggs in their feces and those eggs are eaten by small rodents, who develop the parasitic cysts in their bodies. When a canid eats one of those infected rodents, the life cycle continues, as the parasite grows into its adult stage in the canid's gut and produces more eggs.
- A study just published in *Emerging Infectious Diseases* ([Kotwa et al. 2019](#)). For this study, fecal samples were collected from 460 wild canids in Ontario.
- **23%** of them were positive for *Echinococcus multilocularis*, with infection concentrated most heavily in the western-central part of the province.

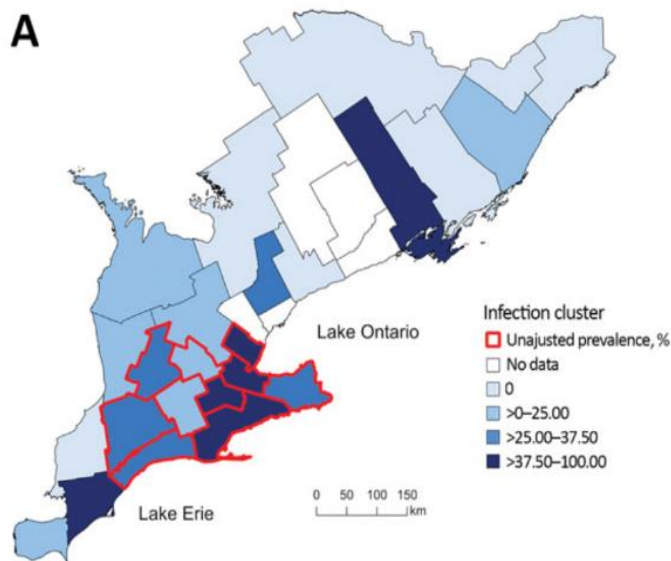
## What is the status of this disease in people in Ontario?

- The incubation period (the time from ingesting eggs to the time you get sick) is very long (typically 5-15 years).

## What can we do?

- Avoid contact with canine feces and wild canid feces as much as possible.
- Use preventative treatment for your dog such as Interceptor Plus or Milbemax for your cat

Figure 2





# Parasites, Pets, and Kids

Authored by: Tiffany J. Rule, DVM

Know the facts: Don't expose your children!

Hookworms and roundworms can be harbored by your dog or cat and transmitted to children who are living in homes with pets. In some cases these parasites can cause blindness in humans. It is thought that 30% to 50% of dogs and cats carry gastrointestinal (GI) parasites and that 1 to 3 million people in the U.S. have infections from the same parasites carried by pets. Children, the elderly and immunocompromised people are at high risk.

Dogs get infected with hookworms and roundworms by walking places where other dogs have defecated. The microscopic roundworm eggs and hookworm larvae end up on your dog's feet. Your dog then licks his feet and infects him or herself with these GI parasites. Three weeks later, your dog is shedding hookworm eggs and larvae from his GI tract. If your dog licks his anus and then licks your child, or if your child pets your dog, he or she can become infected with these parasites.

Dogs can get ticks that spread Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, ehrlichiosis, and tularemia, which can affect people if the ticks detach from the dog and attach themselves to your child. This could be a risk factor for your children if the family dog or cat sleeps in their bed.

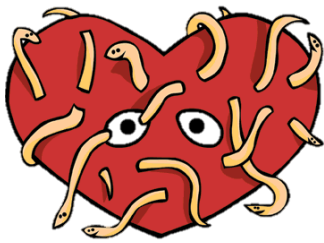
Cats get infected with hookworms and tapeworms by hunting prey. Even if your cat lives indoors, the ingestion of one house mouse can expose your cat to GI parasites. Cats with a flea infestation can spread cat scratch fever to children, elderly people, or immunocompromised (AIDS, cancer patients, organ transplant recipients) people.

## How Can You Prevent the Risk of Spreading Parasites to Your Children?

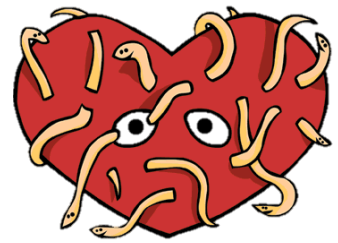
- Keep your dog on monthly heartworm and internal parasite preventative all year. This medication helps to prevent hookworms, roundworms and tapeworm in your dog. Keep your dog on flea and tick preventative all year.
- Scoop the yard where your dog defecates at least weekly, ideally daily, as worm eggs and larvae are found in stool and can contaminate the environment.
- Bring your pet's stool sample to your veterinarian at least twice per year and ideally four times per year. You do not have to bring your pet into the veterinary hospital for this service. The stool should be fresh. Many veterinarians will provide a special cup that allows specimen collection without touching the stool.
- Keep your cat on heartworm prevention once per month all year. This medication eliminates hookworms that could be potentially spread to humans in the household. It also kills fleas, which can be culprits in spreading cat scratch disease (cat scratch fever).
- Teach your children to wash their hands before eating, especially if they have recently handled their pet.

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# Heartworm



*Dirofilaria immitis*, more commonly known as **heartworm**, is a microscopic parasite that can infect dogs. Heartworm is spread through mosquitos. When an infected mosquito bites to suck blood from an unprotected dog, the parasite's larvae is transferred into that dog's blood stream. Once in the body, the larvae enter the tissue to mature and then make their way to the heart. Adult heartworms usually reside in the pulmonary arteries, and the right ventricle (in heavy infestations) of the heart. Here they will reproduce to create more larvae, called microfilaria, which circulate in the blood until they become adults.

**Heartworm can be a very dangerous. If heartworm is left undiagnosed the infestation can cause a blockage in the heart/arteries leading to heart failure.** Clinical signs often do not appear until extensive damage to the heart has already occurred. Clinical signs may include general signs of heart failure, coughing and lower energy levels. Fortunately, there is very accurate diagnostic testing and treatments against heartworm, but **early detection is of critical importance.** This is why heartworm testing is recommended each year, even if your dog was receiving heartworm preventative the previous year.

There is a simple diagnostic test to determine whether your pet is positive for heartworm. The test requires a blood sample to be taken from your pet and sent to a diagnostic laboratory for testing to determine either through DNA or an antibody, if your dog is positive for heartworm. It is recommended that your pet be tested each year in April or May **before** the heartworm season begins. This testing will determine if your pet was infected by heartworm from the previous season, as heartworm can only be detected via the above methods a minimum of 6 months after infection has occurred.

It is highly recommended that your pet be put on heartworm prevention through the heartworm season. The heartworm season is usually approximately June to November, based on when the weather is warm enough for mosquitoes to be out and breeding. Since the weather is variable, sometimes the heartworm season can start earlier and go later one year versus another. Talk to your veterinarian if you have questions or concerns about when and how early or late into the year you should be using heartworm prevention. There are various products that provide monthly prevention against heartworm including: Interceptor Plus, Revolution, Advantage Multi, Sentinel and Heartgard. Some of these products also prevent against other things such as fleas, ticks and internal parasites. Discuss with your veterinarian which product is right for you pet and your lifestyle.

For more information please visit:

Real Time Pet Disease Reporting's Heartworm page at:

<https://www.petdiseasereport.com/content/content4.aspx?pview=public>

The American Heartworm Society's Life Cycle page at:

<https://www.heartwormsociety.org/images/pdf/AHS2014HWLifeCycleCLIENTCLR.pdf>

(Source: McCurin's, 2010; Summers, 2007, Merck Manual, 2013)





# Fleas

Fleas are a very common problem among pet owners, but they can be easily prevented. Fleas will attack and infest any mammal, even humans, as they need a host to feed on blood to survive. Fleas are most commonly found in warm, humid environments and originate from outside. Fleas have incredible leaping capabilities to allow them to gain access to their hosts. They are also very hardy and have the ability to travel up to the length of three football fields to find a host.

Your pet could have obtained fleas from being outside, being in contact with an animal that has fleas, or from fleas being tracked into the house by the pet owner. In the right conditions fleas can complete their full reproductive life cycle in as little as 16 days, but this cycle can take longer in other cases. Female adult fleas lay eggs in the fur of the host. Some of these eggs will fall off into the environment where the animal is, such as in common places your pet lays. The eggs in the environment and the eggs on your pet will hatch to create more fleas leading to an infestation if not treated.



## Signs of fleas include:

- Excessive scratching, licking and chewing
- Hair loss
- Redness and scabbing on the skin
- Small black “dirt” found on the skin and in the fur (left)

\*Note: In some case, your pet may be allergic to the flea bites (called flea allergy dermatitis) and will have a much more severe reaction and exaggerated symptoms.

Fleas are also a common carrier of a parasite called tapeworm. When your pet is chewing at their sore skin, they may ingest some of the fleas. If the fleas have tapeworm, when swallowed they can infect your pet. **It is recommended that your pet also be dewormed when being treated for fleas.**

Due to the flea's lifecycle, new adult fleas will hatch from the eggs that have been laid. Due to this, **it is recommended that three months of treatment with a flea treatment product be administered to get rid of all fleas. It is also very important to treat the environment your pet lives in through thorough cleaning and spraying the household with a spray designed for killing fleas, such as Vet-Kem Siphotrol.**

There are various products that can treat against fleas including: Bravecto, Nexgard, Nexgard Spectra, Advantage, Advantage Multi, Revolution, Trifexis and Capstar. Once your pet has been treated for the fleas, **it is recommended that they be put on a flea preventative.** Due to changing cyclical climates in Ontario, this is now recommended year round. All the above products (except Capstar) can be used as a long-term flea preventative. Many of the above products also prevent against other parasites. Discuss with your veterinarian which product is right for your pet and their lifestyle.



# Ticks

Ticks are a common blood-sucking arthropod parasite that can be acquired by your pet and their presence in Ontario is becoming much more prominent in recent years. Ticks are not host specific, and as a zoonotic species, will bite any mammal **including humans**. There are several tick species that reside in Ontario, which you might come across with your pet including the Blacklegged Deer Tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), American dog tick (*Dermacentro variabilis*), Brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) and Lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*).

Ticks can be a serious problem for your pet. They are more commonly found on dogs, but outdoor cats can also get ticks. Ticks usually sit on the tips of grass and shrubs waiting to attach to a host. Ticks are quite small before they are on the host, but once they have attached they will grow bigger as they feed on the animal's blood. Ticks also have a neurotoxin in their saliva which can cause an ascending, flaccid paralysis known as **tick paralysis**. The longer the tick is present on the animal, the worse the paralysis will become. Ticks are also vectors of several diseases your pet can acquire including: Lyme disease, Canine anaplasmosis and Canine ehrlichiosis. It is recommended that you routinely check your pet for ticks during tick season.

## Clinical Signs of Ticks

- Visualization of a tick or a lump attached to your animal
- Pale mucous membranes or weakness (with large tick loads)
- Ascending, flaccid paralysis
- Arthritis-like signs such as joint/ muscle pain, lameness or fever



Once a tick is noticed it is important that it be removed as soon as possible. It is also vital that the entire tick be removed from your pet. If the mouthpart ("head") is still left attached to the skin the neurotoxic saliva can still continue to cause paralysis in your pet. Ticks should **never** be removed using bare hands. Rubbing alcohol should be applied to the area and then the tick can be removed. Tick removing devices are available that can aid with this process. Ticks should be crushed with a hard object (NOT your fingers), or soaked in rubbing alcohol to kill them after removal. **Never** use gasoline, a cigarette, or kerosene to remove a tick from your pet, as this can be serious damaging to their skin. If you are not comfortable removing a tick from your pet, please bring them to a veterinary clinic as soon as possible so the tick can be properly removed and disposed of.

It is recommended that your pet be tested each year in April or May for any tick borne-illnesses they may have acquired the previous year. The test requires a blood sample to be taken from your pet and sent to a diagnostic laboratory for testing to determine either through an antibody, if your dog is positive any of the diseases.

Ticks will be active and searching for a host anytime the temperature is above 4°C, which means with present changing weather throughout the year, ticks are a concern all year round. There are several preventative medications that can be used to kill ticks once they are on your pet, as long as your pet is already on the medication prior to being bitten by the tick. Tick preventative medications include: Bravecto, Nexgard, Advantix, Credelio, and Simparica. **Tick prevention YEAR-ROUND is strongly recommended in Ontario, due to our cyclical climate. Vaccination against Lyme disease is also recommended if you commonly take your pet hiking, camping, or live in an area where there is high tick incidence.** Some of these products also prevent against other parasites as well. Please discuss with the veterinarian which product would be right for your pet and their lifestyle.



For more information on ticks please visit:

<http://www.bravecto.ca/en> and <http://www.dogsandticks.com/>

























For more information on tick borne-diseases please visit the respective Real-Time Pet Disease Reporting pages at:

Lyme- <https://www.petdiseasereport.com/content/content1.aspx?pview=public>

Anaplasmosis - <https://www.petdiseasereport.com/content/content2.aspx?pview=public>

Ehrlichiosis - <https://www.petdiseasereport.com/content/content3.aspx?pview=public>

## Tick Species of Ontario

Species	Larva	Nymph	Male	Female	Partially Fed Female	Fully Fed Female
<b>Deer Tick</b> <i>Ixodes scapularis</i>						
<b>Dog Tick</b> <i>Dermacentor variabilis</i>						
<b>Lone Star Tick</b> <i>Amblyomma americanum</i>						
<b>Brown Dog Tick</b> <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i>						

# Nutrition

## The Growing Puppy Life Stage

The puppy life stage spans approximately one year for small breeds and up to 24 months for large and giant breeds. Feeding a product specifically formulated for growth, during the entire development stage, is essential to optimal health. During growth, puppies are very sensitive and fragile while important body systems like the skeletal, digestive, neurological, and immune systems are developing. It is critical to support and protect this developmental life stage in order for your puppy to grow into a healthy adult dog. Start your puppy off on the right paw with precise nutrition for growth!

### ***NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF GROWING PUPPIES***

Puppies have very unique nutritional needs that are best met by foods specifically designed for growth. Within the canine species, there is a huge range in sizes and health predispositions of certain breeds. Royal Canin recognizes this diversity and has created nutritional products that support the developmental requirements of puppies of different adult sizes and breeds. Royal Canin puppy foods are balanced with optimal amounts of protein, calcium, and phosphorus, as well as other nutrients, vitamins, and minerals, to support skeletal development and growth. Since puppies are very prone to gastrointestinal upset, Royal Canin puppy foods are formulated to be highly digestible, with a number of nutrients to support digestive health. Our puppy formulations are also supplemented with ingredients such as antioxidants and omega fatty acids to ensure healthy development of the neurological and immune systems. All Royal Canin puppy products provide complete, precisely balanced nutrition for your growing puppy.

### ***FEEDING STRATEGIES FOR GROWING PUPPIES***

Very young puppies require multiple feedings per day, however as they get older, meal frequency can be reduced. Our feeding guidelines provide an estimate of what quantity to feed your growing puppy. Puppies have a very specific growth curve, growing most rapidly in the first six months of life, after which their caloric needs plateau. Your puppy's weight and body condition should be evaluated by your veterinarian on a regular basis. With your puppy's caloric needs constantly changing, your veterinarian is best suited to help adjust feeding quantities and ensure a healthy rate of growth.

Obesity is a significant problem in the pet population and puts dogs at risk for serious diseases. Feeding appropriate quantities of food, divided into meals throughout the day, plays a key role in preventing obesity and its consequences. Introducing the concept of meal-feeding at a young age is ideal for the future health of your dog.



# Royal Canin Development Puppy Diet

Precisely developed to provide optimal protein, energy and other nutrients for the specific growth and development needs of puppies, with specific formula's available for the development needs of small breed puppies (adult weight less than 10 kg) and the needs of large breed puppies (adult weight greater than 25 kg).

## Benefits

- **Supports healthy growth and development:** High quality protein and precisely balanced calcium, phosphorus and other vitamins and minerals to support optimal growth in small breed puppies
- **Promotes cognitive development:** Supplemented with DHA to support healthy brain development
- **Provides digestive support:** Highly digestible protein, prebiotics and zeolite to reduce the likelihood of vomiting and diarrhea
- *Development Puppy- Builds Natural Defenses:* Synergistic patented antioxidant blend of vitamin C, vitamin E, lutein and taurine to support immune health
- *Development Puppy Small Dog -Specially designed kibble for small breed puppies:* Specific kibble size, shape, density and texture adapted to the mouth and jaw of small breed puppies
- *Development Puppy Large Dog - Supports development of healthy joints:* Supplemented with glucosamine, chondroitin and omega 3 fatty acids to support joint health in growing large breed puppies

## Available Products:

Development Puppy Canned: 385g cans

Development Puppy Dry: 4 kg, 10 kg bags

Development Puppy Small Dog Dry: 2 kg, 4 kg bags

Development Puppy Large Dog Dry: 4 kg, 14 kg bags

(Source: [www.royalcanin.ca](http://www.royalcanin.ca))



# The Adult Dog Life Stage

Dogs are considered to be in the adult life stage until they reach senior age, which varies depending on the size of the dog. Smaller dogs are generally considered senior around 8-10 years of age, while large and giant breed dogs become senior sooner, around 5-7 years. Feeding a balanced diet specific to your dog's needs during adulthood is essential to optimal health.

Within the canine species, there is a large array of breeds, lifestyles, and specific health conditions. Royal Canin recognizes that your dog is a unique individual, with precise nutritional needs. Our range of adult dog foods offers balanced nutritional solutions for specific breeds, maintenance and therapeutic needs. Provide your dog with precisely balanced nutrition for optimal health!

## ***NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF ADULT DOGS***

Adult dogs have a wide variety of nutritional needs depending on their breed, lifestyle, and health status. Our canine maintenance products allow for nutritional customization. Based on your dog's specific needs, Royal Canin maintenance products can provide nutritional support for activity level, reproductive status, environmental factors, anatomy of the jaw, and the prevention of certain medical conditions. All Royal Canin adult dog foods offer complete, precisely balanced nutrition for your dog.

## ***FEEDING STRATEGIES FOR ADULT DOGS***

Our feeding guidelines provide an estimate of what quantity to feed your adult dog. Your dog's weight and body condition should be evaluated annually by your veterinarian to ensure the most appropriate nutritional selection and feeding quantities for optimal health.

Obesity is a significant problem in the pet population and puts dogs at risk for serious diseases. Feeding appropriate quantities of food, divided into meals throughout the day, plays a key role in preventing obesity and its consequences. Your veterinarian can guide you through a safe and effective weight loss program for your dog, if needed.

Various maintenance diets are available for your pet depending on their specific needs recommended by your veterinarian. Please discuss with your veterinarian which product is best for your pet.

Royal Canin Canine Adult (with small dog and large dog formula's also available)

Royal Canin Canine Dental (with small dog formula also available)

Royal Canin Canine Weight Control (with small dog and large dog formula's also available)

Royal Canin Canine Mobility Support





# Dental Care



Just like humans, dogs have two sets of teeth throughout their life. Puppies first grow with a set of 28 deciduous (“baby”) teeth which they start losing at 8-12 weeks of age. By 6 months of age all the baby teeth should be lost and their full set of 42 adult teeth appeared. As with anything, some individuals may not grow all their adult teeth if their mouth is too small, especially brachycephalic (“short snouted”) breeds. In addition, some individuals, smaller breeds being more prone to this, will “retain” some of their baby teeth after 6 months of age, as they do not fall out on their own. Retained baby teeth can cause problems in the future as excess calculus can build up or it can cause difficulties eating due to teeth crowding. Your veterinarian can examine your pet’s mouth to determine if there are any extra teeth. It is recommended that if present these teeth be removed during the spay/neuter surgery, so that your pet will not have to go through a second anesthetic procedure later to have them removed.

Oral health for your pet is just as important as your own oral health, but is often forgotten. Improper oral hygiene can also affect the heart, liver and the kidneys. We encourage you to keep an eye on your pet’s mouth even from a young age. Start getting them use to playing with their gums and putting your fingers in their mouth. (Always use caution, in some case it is not that simple and the animal will not tolerate it.) Once you and your pet feel comfortable with moving around in their mouth you can start brushing their teeth. Using a fingerbrush or a pet toothbrush and toothpaste designed for pets, brush the front surface of the teeth gently, just like you do with your own teeth. This can cut down on plaque and tartar build up on teeth, helping promote a healthy mouth.

Using a good diet also helps reduce build up on teeth. If it is possible for your pet to be on a dry food versus canned food it is better for their teeth to use the dry. Dry food does not stick to the teeth as readily as canned food and thus reduces build up. Dental diets (Royal Canin Dental and Hill’s Prescription Diet T/D) are available also, which promote removing buildup while the pet’s chewing the kibble.

Brushing your pet’s teeth as often as possible is important. Ideally your pet’s teeth should be brushed daily; however, even a few times a week will keep your pets teeth clean longer. Pet dental rinses and dental chews are also available to help with their oral health. Finally, your pet will likely require a toothscaling (dental cleaning) under general anesthetic, a one point or another in their life, to thoroughly clean the teeth of debris to prevent as much oral cavity issues as possible.

Regular visits to your veterinarian will aid in monitoring your pet’s oral health throughout their life. If you have any concerns with their mouth or teeth please feel free to discuss it with your veterinarian.

For further information on pet dental health please visit: <http://www.petdental.ca/>

# Poisonous Substances to Pets

Various substances can be *very dangerous* for pets, including many that are fine for humans to consume. The list below highlights some common threats to your pets

## **Foods**

Many food's that human's consume on a daily basis can be toxic to your pet including, but not limited to:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Apple seeds
- Apricot pits
- Avocados
- Cherry pits
- Candy (particularly chocolate—which is toxic to dogs, cats, and ferrets—and any candy containing the toxic sweetener Xylitol)
- Coffee (grounds, beans, and chocolate-covered espresso beans)
- Garlic
- Grapes
- Gum (can cause blockages and sugar free gums may contain the toxic sweetener Xylitol)
- Hops (used in home beer brewing)
- Macadamia nuts
- Moldy foods
- Mushroom plants
- Mustard seeds
- Onions and onion powder
- Peach pits
- Potato leaves and stems (green parts)
- Raisins
- Rhubarb leaves
- Salt
- Tea (because it contains caffeine)
- Tomato leaves and stems (green parts)
- Walnuts
- Xylitol (artificial sweetener that is toxic to pets)
- Yeast dough

The above is not an exhaustive list, and food you provide that is not specifically intended for pets should be discussed with your veterinarian first.

For further information on foods that could be unsafe for pets, visit the ASPCA's People Foods to Avoid Feeding Your Pets page at: <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/people-foods-avoid-feeding-your-pets>



# Plants

There are many plants that are toxic to pets, if any or a certain part is consumed. Each plant has its own level of toxicity, however some can be severely dangerous, if not fatal to your pet if eaten. Common signs of ingestion of a toxic plant species (depending on the plant and amount eaten) may include: mild to severe vomiting, mild to severe diarrhea, abdominal pain, gastrointestinal bleeding, liver and kidney damage, cardiac arrhythmias and respiratory failure. Make sure you know which plants are most deadly to avoid your dog or cat from getting into these poisonous flowers and poisonous plants!

## Top Common Toxic Plants:

- 1) Autumn Crocus
- 2) Azalea
- 3) Cyclamen (especially the roots)
- 4) Kalanchoe
- 5) Lilies (all species)
- 6) Oleander (especially leaves and flowers)
- 7) Dieffenbachia
- 8) Daffodils
- 9) Lily of the Valley
- 10) Sago Palm
- 11) Tulips and Hyacinths



# **Human Medications**

It is also important to note that while a medication may be safe for you or children, it may not be safe for animals. In fact, nearly 50% of all pet poisonings involve human drugs. Pets metabolize medications very differently from people. Even seemingly benign over-the-counter or herbal medications may cause serious poisoning in pets. Some medications are so toxic, that just one pill can be fatal. Common signs of ingestion of a toxic human medication (depending on the type and amount eaten) may include, but are not limited to: vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal ulcers, red blood cell damage, gastrointestinal bleeding, liver and kidney damage, heart and respiratory failure, seizures and death.

## **Common Toxic Medications**

- Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatories (e.g. Advil, Aleve and Motrin)
- Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol)
- Antidepressants (e.g. Effexor, Cymbalta, Prozac, Lexapro)
- ADD/ADHD medications (e.g. Concerta, Adderall, Ritalin)
- Benzodiazepines and sleep aids (e.g. Xanax, Klonopin, Ambien, Lunesta)
- Birth control (e.g. estrogen, estradiol, progesterone)
- ACE Inhibitors (e.g. Zestril, Altace)
- Beta-blockers (e.g. Tenormin, Toprol, Coreg)
- Thyroid hormones (e.g. Armour desiccated thyroid, Synthroid)
- Cholesterol lowering agents (e.g. Lipitor, Zocor, Crestor)

Always keep medications safely out of reach and never administer a medication to a pet without first consulting your veterinarian.

- Never leave loose pills in a plastic Ziploc® bag – the bags are too easy to chew into. Make sure visiting house guests do the same, keeping their medications high up or out of reach.
- If you place your medication in a weekly pill container, make sure to store the container in a cabinet out of reach of your pets. Unfortunately, if they get a hold of it, some pets might consider the pill container a plastic chew toy.
- Never store your medications near your pet's medications – Pet Poison Helpline frequently receives calls from concerned pet owners who inadvertently give their own medication to their pet.
- Hang your purse up. Inquisitive pets will explore the contents of your bag and simply placing your purse up and out of reach can help to avoid exposure to any potentially dangerous medication(s).
- If you suspect your pet has ingested any of these items or any other questionable substance, call Pet Poison Helpline or your veterinarian for assistance. Accurate and timely identification of the suspected substance is very important. Having the container, package, or label in hand will save valuable time and may save the life of your pet.

For a more complete list of poisonous substances to cats and dogs, visit Pet Poison Helpline's Poison List page at: <http://petpoisonhelp.wpengine.com/poisons/>





A new puppy can have a lot of stress and learning to do when introduced to a new family. It can also be stressful on other dog's already in the household. Adaptil is an innovative, non-drug solution for helping dogs feel more relaxed and secure. By mimicking the natural appeasing pheromones that mother dogs use to comfort and reassure their puppies, Adaptil helps reassure and comfort dogs in their own language.

Adaptil has a variety of products available to suit every pet owner's need with their new puppy or dog. Please talk to your veterinarian to discuss these products further or visit [www.adaptil.com](http://www.adaptil.com)



# **THE CANINE BEHAVIOR SERIES**

**By Kathy Diamond Davis**

*Author and Trainer*

## **Crate Training Puppies**

Every puppy needs to learn the skill of resting calmly in a crate. This skill will be needed at the veterinary hospital, for traveling, and for restricted activity due to illness. It's also a lifesaver for many young dogs during the destructive chewing stage that starts at several months of age and can last until age 2 to 3 years in some breeds.

After a dog has become trained and reliable in the house, the crate will often be needed only for specific reasons rather than everyday use. One critical situation that can call for bringing out the crate again is separation anxiety. The ability to relax in a crate can save a dog's life during this crisis.

Usually it works best to crate the puppy in your bedroom when you're sleeping. If you want the dog to share your bed, wait until the adult temperament emerges. Then if it turns out the temperament is not suited to bed privileges, you will not have the difficult job of teaching the dog to stay off the bed. Teaching a puppy to stay off the bed from the beginning is much easier, both for you and for the pup.

People tend to make the mistake of giving the puppy attention for making noise in the crate. When you do this, you confirm the puppy's instinct that being alone is death (it would be, in the wild), and that calling for help will bring someone. Having the crate in your bedroom for sleeping tends to help because the puppy can hear, smell and possibly see you. Not being alone, the puppy usually finds it easier to get used to the crate. Your sleeping helps set the scene for the puppy to sleep, too.

Keep the puppy on a good schedule of food, water and outings so the puppy's body will have the best chance of making it through the night without a bathroom break. If the pup does need a break, make it very low-key with dim lights and soft voices and no playtime. If you completely avoid going to the puppy when the puppy is making noise, problems usually pass quickly. But make no mistake, lost sleep comes with the puppy-adoption territory! Don't miss the chance to start your puppy off right, or you will lose a lot more sleep over a longer period of time, because crate-training will take much longer.

The worst thing to do is let the puppy yell for a long time, and then go to the puppy. Doing that teaches the puppy to persistently make noise in the crate. It communicates to the pup that you want to be notified with lots and lots of noise! It also causes the puppy enormous stress that can become a lifelong response to being confined in a crate. Adult dogs in this stressed state can break out of crates and badly injure themselves. This is not the future you want for your puppy. What you want the puppy to discover is that nothing bad happens from being alone in a crate. You also want the puppy to learn that it's okay to let you know of a need, but you will not come in response to loud racket. Check on the puppy after the puppy has become quiet again.

If your puppy isn't making it through the night without a potty break, schedule it so that the puppy doesn't have to wake you up and ask. Realize, too, that the puppy's body will awaken and need to potty whenever someone in the household gets up. That person or someone else will need to give the pup a potty break.

Don't trick a puppy about the crate. Give a treat when the pup goes in, but don't be sneaky about shutting the door. Don't put the puppy into the crate when the puppy is sound asleep, to wake up trapped in a crate. That can cause the puppy to distrust both you and the crate.

Be careful not to abuse the crate. When you are at home and awake, supervise the puppy in person rather than using the crate. Puppies need exercise, mental stimulation and guidance from you in order to grow up healthy and happy. Too much crate time is not humane. Puppies sleep 14 hours a day or so. If the crate time is scheduled so the pup can use it for sleeping, that's ideal.

Make the crate a pleasant place to rest. A few safe chew toys and a treat can help the puppy relax and drift off to dreamland. Everyone in the household can sleep better with a crate-trained puppy.

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Permanent Link: <http://www.VeterinaryPartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&A=1129>

## **Housetraining Basics**

Housetraining can be a frustrating process, but if you do it right most dogs can be housetrained. Follow these tips to help make housetraining your dog a success.

-Increased frequency, volume, or urgency of urination or defecation are some indications of a medical problem and there are many medical reasons that can sabotage housetraining efforts, so if your dog is having accidents the first step is to take him to your veterinarian for a physical exam. Also, make sure your dog is on a top-quality dog food recommended by your veterinarian.

-Some spayed female dogs will develop a problem as they age with bladder incontinence (leaking urine). This is not a housetraining problem, and will normally be noticed as loss of urine where the dog is resting--the dog may not even be aware when it happens. This is a medical problem and your dog needs the attention of your veterinarian.

### **Supervision or Confinement is Not Optional**

To start housetraining make sure to keep your dog in a safe place when you cannot directly supervise (i.e., when you are not home or are asleep). A crate just large enough that he can lie down, turn around, and stand fully erect in is usually ideal for this. If your dog is not crate trained, then the crate needs to be introduced slowly. A small room will also work, provided this safe place is a place where the particular dog will not use the bathroom. You are trying to help the dog develop control. As a rule, dogs do not eliminate where they sleep unless they cannot hold it anymore and have no other choice.

Every time your dog has an accident in the house, it confuses him. Therefore, you need to supervise or confine your dog 100% of the time. If necessary to keep you watching the puppy you can fasten yourself to the puppy with a leash tied to your belt buckle.

When you are able to watch your dog, keep him in the same room with you. Your dog should be accident-free for one month before you start to give him more freedom. If you see your dog start to have an accident, say "Outside" at the very same time you scoop him up and run outside. For a dog you cannot carry, use a leash. Avoid using punishment, ALWAYS. That doesn't work for housetraining, and can cause nasty complications. If you find an accident in the house that you did not see happen, that is more your mistake than the dog's. Whatever you do, never punish your dog for this.

## **What to do When Taking Your Dog Outside**

When you are outside in the place you want your dog to relieve himself, use a verbal cue, such as "Go Potty." This is only used at the time and in the place where you want your dog to do it now. Never say it before you take your dog outside. While you're still in the house, only use the word "Outside." When your dog relieves himself outside, immediately praise him sincerely. Also have some hidden treats, and whip one out at that moment to really seal the deal. If your dog likes to play outside, allow a little playtime after he relieves himself. If your dog wants to get right back inside, reward him by going right back inside.

When you are at home and awake, take your dog outside about once per hour. As time goes by, you will be able to tell just how often your dog needs to go. The general rule of thumb is that your puppy can hold it for the number of months he is old plus one. For example, an 8-week-old puppy can hold it for three hours. Puppies generally are not mature enough for full bladder and bowel control until at least 16 weeks of age. When you first start housetraining though, you will need to start with more frequent outings. During housetraining, you must go outside with your dog, not put him outside on his own. That way you are there to reward him for urinating and defecating, and you also know when your dog did and did not relieve himself.

When you first start, key times to take your dog out include after eating, playing, coming out of his kennel, when you first arrive home, and first thing in the morning.

## **Cleaning Accidents in the House**

Before using any other cleaning agents, treat the spot deeply and thoroughly with a bacterial enzymatic odor eliminating product. These products work to degrade the urine, getting rid of the scent. If you don't get rid of the scent, it will draw the dog's instincts to use the spot again. Using other cleaning products before the bacterial enzymatic product can cause it to not work by killing the bacteria before they have a chance to deal with the odor.

## **Food For Thought**

One thing that frequently confuses people is that the dog can hold it for 8 hours during the night or when they are away at work. That makes them think 8 hours is reasonable to ask of the dog at other times, too. However, during sleep, the body quiets the bladder and bowels to allow this longer period of time. When you're gone, the dog likely sleeps a lot, too, since dogs sleep about 14 hours a day. Take your puppy out at least twice in the morning before you leave for work, too.

Schedule food and water. Ask your veterinarian if you can restrict your dog's water when he is in the crate, and right before he is going to have to wait in the crate for some time. The recommendation will be based on your individual dog or your situation. Meal feed at least twice a day, and keep the food to a careful schedule. Scheduled food going IN leads to scheduled stool coming OUT, and that is important for housetraining.

Most every dog can be housetrained, if you do it right. Some take longer than others. If you are minimizing the accidents by providing the proper supervision, and if you are treating any accident spots correctly, having a dog who takes longer to housetrain will not result in your having a smelly house or a ruined carpet.

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# **Leash Training for Puppies**

A puppy may refuse to budge while on leash one day, and try to drag you down the street on the same leash the very next day! Dogs who walk well on leash face fewer dangers and have more fun. It's well worth the time to develop this skill with your puppy.

## **What's this Thing on My Neck?**

The first step in leash training is to get the pup used to a collar. Expect the pup to scratch at it. Put the collar on when the pup is eating and playing under your supervision. Distract the puppy from thinking about the collar.

Remove the collar only at a time when the pup is NOT trying to get out of it. If you take the collar off when the pup is obsessing over getting it off, you encourage the pup to fight the collar. To the puppy, it seems that fighting the collar worked, and got that nasty collar removed!

Just like wearing a watch or a ring feels strange to you at first, the strange sensation of a collar can annoy a dog. In the same way that your senses habituate to the jewelry, the dog will get used to the collar when handled properly. Of course the collar needs to fit and should not be of a stiff or uncomfortable design. A lightweight nylon collar with a buckle or snap is a good choice.

Remove the collar whenever your pup goes into the crate. Consult your dog's breeder and veterinarian about safety with the particular breed or mix as far as leaving a collar on when the dog is outside unsupervised. Ideally a puppy wouldn't be left outside unsupervised, but if the puppy is going to be in this situation, the risks must be weighed. Some breeds are especially prone to the collar catching on something and strangling the dog (the reason collars are to be removed whenever a dog is crated). On the other hand, a dog left outside unsupervised is at risk of being lost, and collar identification saves dogs' lives. Both of these risks are also factors for dogs outside in covered kennel runs.

Some puppy breeders give you a head start on leash-training your new puppy by tying a piece of colored yarn or rickrack around the neck of each pup. This practice varies from breeder to breeder and from breed to breed-what's ideal for some is not a good idea for others. Whether the breeder has done this or not, your puppy will likely start ignoring the sensation of wearing a collar within a few days of your conditioning.

## **Is This Another Tail or a Toy?**

The next step is to add a leash. Some pups seem overwhelmed by an entire leash all at once. In these cases you can start with a string, shoelace, or something of the sort. Add length as the puppy gets used to it.

Experienced dog people learn that chewed leashes can be useful later, and this is one of those times. Dogs tend to chew through leashes several inches from the snap. This leaves a "tab" of leash material with a handy snap on it to attach and detach easily from the collar. Tabs occasionally come in handy for other training, too, so if your mouthy young dog "creates" one for you from a leash, be sure to save it!

Attach the leash or the short item to the collar when the puppy is eating or playing, and let the pup get used to it being there. As with the collar, don't remove it when pup is making a fuss about it. Remove it at a time the pup has forgotten it's there.

Do not leave a leash on an unattended dog. It can catch on things and trap the dog in dangerous and traumatic situations. Leashes are only safe during supervised times.

Distract your puppy into play or other interaction with you whenever the puppy seems bothered by the leash or starts to chew it. It's fine to apply Bitter Apple to the leash, but realize this substance does not last long as a chewing deterrent, and will need to be reapplied for every session. Doing this can keep leash-chewing from ever becoming a habit, and save you money, work and the worry of a loose dog.

## **Training Techniques**

Before you pick up the other end of the leash with it attached to the puppy, you need to first put in some time conditioning your puppy to come to you and to move with you. Treats are ideal for this training. Don't be afraid the puppy will always need treats to walk on a leash. Leash walking has its own rewards, but a young puppy doesn't know that yet. The treats will help get things moving in the right direction.

Feeding time is a good time to work on this conditioning, when you have the dish in your hand and an eager puppy at your feet. Back away from the puppy. Use your body language and the puppy's name to attract the puppy to follow. Move around a bit with your puppy, making it a fun game, before putting down the dish and thus delivering a great reward.

At other times when your puppy is likely to be interested in games and treats, use a bit of food from the puppy's next meal to condition the puppy to look at you and move with you. Keep moving away from the puppy, encouraging the puppy to follow you. Young puppies naturally do this anyway, so the training is easy and fun.

At all times, be prepared to reward your puppy with little treats, games and other things the puppy likes, for moving with you, coming to you, and looking at you. Make this a habit, and develop your body language and voice to what works best with **THIS** puppy.

Each puppy is different. Pups have different things they like best, and different things they respond to in different ways. You can build your puppy's desires to interact with you by how you use your praise, treats, petting, and the games you and your puppy play together. All of this factors into your leash training as well as all other training, both in puppyhood and later.

## **The Leash Has Two Ends**

With your puppy used to the presence of the leash attached to the collar and used to moving with you, you're ready to pick up the free end of the leash. Now it's time to visualize the real goal of leash walking.

When a dog freezes up on leash and won't move, obviously you can't get anywhere. So part of the goal is for the dog to relax when wearing a leash. You're off to the right start there, having conditioned your dog to the presence of the leash with no pressure.

A dog pulling on leash can suffer damage to the throat, which is potentially very serious in some breeds. The person trying to hold the other end of the leash may not be able to control the pulling dog, and can even be injured. Therefore a huge part of our goal in leash training is to teach the dog to walk with the leash **LOOSE**, no pulling. This is not only for the purpose of having control, but also to be humane to the dog.

Ironically, it's not the dog who causes the pulling-on-leash problem. Humans instinctively hold the leash tight. A dog's completely normal and natural response to a tight leash is to pull. If the dog did not pull against the pressure, the dog would be constantly off-balance.

From the first minute you pick up the leash, keep it loose. Follow the dog at times, and at other times use the skills you have been developing to induce your dog to follow you. Resist the impulse to pull the dog around on leash, or even to guide the dog with the leash. Work hard at remembering to communicate through your voice, body language and various motivators. Keep building those abilities! Keep your attention on your mental communication with the dog, rather than trying to communicate through the leash.

If your puppy makes an attempt to pull you, your job is to stand still. The message to the puppy is simply that pulling on the leash is fruitless. It doesn't work. When things don't work, people and dogs eventually quit doing those things! You can help yourself and your puppy so very much by making sure that right from the start, pulling on the leash never works for your puppy. Then pulling will never become a habit, and your puppy will be spared innumerable problems-as will you!

As soon as the puppy notices that trying to pull you didn't work because you stopped, switch into your attention-getting, puppy-follow-me mode, and get that puppy moving with you! This is the game. And to a puppy, it really does need to be a game. Make it fun for the puppy. It will be fun for you, too, and that's one of the great benefits of living with dogs!

## **A Great Start**

If this training seems like a lot of effort, the truth is that raising a puppy IS a lot of effort. The puppy is constantly learning, no matter what you do or don't do. It's actually less work, and much more fun, to shape the learning in the right direction. Doing a good job of conditioning your puppy to the leash helps with many other important dog behaviors at the same time. Have a great time leash-walking with your puppy!

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## **Destructive Chewing**

Puppy teething doesn't surprise most families, although just how *much* puppies use their teeth may. Human babies have hands, so they use hands and mouths for necessary learning and exploring as their brains develop. Canine babies must do this exploration mostly with their mouths.

Puppy teeth are quite sharp, and the sharp tips become somewhat smoother through teething/chewing. When the permanent teeth emerge, they are not as sharp. At this point the pup may be housetrained, and early teething has largely subsided. Whatever confinement the family was using to keep the pup out of trouble, they may decide to discontinue. Then it happens.

## **What Nobody Told You**

The *real* chewing comes after the dog has cut the permanent teeth. These teeth seem to require "setting" in the jaw by hard chewing. Dogs who don't do this chewing may have poorer lifelong dental health. But, the dogs who proceed to firmly set their shiny new teeth with robust chewing may have horrified families!

This completely normal stage of dog development is more pronounced in some breeds than others, and in some individual dogs than others. It can be greatly aggravated by anxiety, including separation anxiety, but some dogs who are simply going through the destructive chewing stage are diagnosed with separation anxiety.

To complicate the situation, you can *give* your dog separation anxiety by 1) coming home when you've imprudently left your dog with access to toothsome possessions of yours, 2) seeing a mess, and 3) freaking out at the dog. Do this enough times, and any dog will develop anxiety. Some dogs will develop anxiety if you do it just once. You think, using human logic, that the dog full well knows why you had that conniption fit at the sight of your sofa in pieces. The dog, on the other hand, has no earthly idea why you got mad.

Naturally, the next time you're gone and leave the dog with access to tempting toothables, the physical urging (it may even be pain) in the dog's jaws will result in another chewing episode. After all, the dog is not able to make a mental connection between chewing stuff at 2 p.m. and you getting angry at 5:30 p.m. You come home to the mess, and your human logic interprets this as deliberate defiance.

You act like a human, and the dog acts like a dog. Most dogs will submit to your anger the first few times, until your not accepting the submission and insisting on punishing the dog anyway results in the dog feeling cornered. Then all bets are off as to how the dog might react. You can ruin the dog's temperament.

Other dogs, not so submissive, will see your anger-completely unexplainable from the dog's point of view-and react in a defensive manner. Either way, there are no winners here, only losers. The dog may ultimately lose his or her life, since destructive chewing is a major cause of people giving up their dogs. Often the first step is to put the dog outdoors to live. This can weaken the family's bond with the dog and also introduce new issues, such as barking that disturbs neighbors and brings authorities to your door.

## **How to Fix It**

Dogs need chew toys of good quality that are safe for the chewing habits of each particular dog. It takes observation to determine which toys are okay for which dogs. Provide the dog with a variety of textures, so that whatever the teeth are screaming for at any given moment, the dog can locate a toy-within reach-that will fill the need.

When you're not able to supervise the dog, provide a safe area for the dog to rest. A crate, a comfortable dog run and a room in the house with a baby gate (or two, one stacked above the other to provide adequate height) are all possibilities that work for some dogs. Avoid putting the dog behind a closed door in a room, since this often leads to the dog developing habits such as clawing up doors or the flooring at the bases of doors. Baby gates that allow the dog to see through the doorway tend to avoid these complications.

The destructive chewing stage can last for quite some time, but in most cases will end by the time the dog is 2 years old or so. If you do an excellent job of directing a puppy to appropriate toys using the instructions below, some dogs will be focused on their toys by the time they're a year old and able to have more house freedom. If you've waited until a destructive chewing problem has emerged and are now starting to deal with it in a dog several months of age, plan on restricting house freedom until the dog is a bit older.

Either way, don't just give up and toss the dog outside because you don't want to use a crate or other confinement forever. Rarely does it need to be forever, unless you have a situation that requires confinement for other reasons. Destructive chewing is a stage that, with your help, the majority of dogs can come through very well.

Another tool you need for this training is a bottle of Bitter Apple spray or similar product. Bitter Apple has been around for a long time, doesn't harm dogs if they ingest it, and doesn't stain most surfaces. It's also readily available. This is a training tool, not a protect-the-house tool. Alcohol-based, the spray evaporates quickly and has to be applied three to four times a day to keep its bittering effect active.



Let's look at a teachable moment. You are in the same room with your dog, perhaps watching television or reading a book. A few good dog toys are within easy reach on the floor. The Bitter Apple spray is also handy. The dog, exploring, starts to chew (or any movement showing intention to chew) an inappropriate object.

You get up. Take along the Bitter Apple spray and a dog toy as you calmly go to the dog. Spray the OBJECT the dog is chewing (do not spray the dog), while you calmly say, "Leave it." *Instantly* animate the dog toy and get the dog excited enough to want it. Do not carry this to extreme teasing-it's not a game. Your goal is simply to direct the dog's attention to the toy, not to agitate the dog into a state of high activity. You want the dog to continue thinking of chewing, which dogs do when relaxing.

As soon as the dog wants the toy, give it to the dog. When the dog settles with it to chew, softly praise the dog and withdraw, back to what you were doing before. You've completed a successful lesson.

You will need to repeat this many, many times. You're helping your dog form strong chewing habits of choosing a dog toy every time. A young dog with jaws urging "Chew! Chew! Chew!" is apt to make many mistakes. You actually want these mistakes made in front of you-you do not want to scare the dog into hiding from you to chew.

The longer the dog was allowed to keep making mistakes about chewing before the human family wised up and started this training, the more habits there will be to overcome. Additionally, the dog needs time to mature. Your patience will pay off. Your dog is learning a lot of other good things in the process of this training, including the fact that you're smart and a good person.

If you notice the dog going back to an inappropriate item of a certain texture unlike the dog's toys, by all means get some toys of that texture. This may be a texture your dog's teeth need at that point in development. Don't use discarded human items for toys. It's not fair to expect a dog to consistently know the difference between old shoes and new shoes! Use dog toys.

During the most rampant chewing stage, it pays to bring in new and interesting toys frequently. Some people rotate the toys to keep them interesting. Just remember to keep an assortment of textures available to the dog at all times. This will likely mean you have some toys in every room where you and the dog spend time.

If you find something your dog has chewed and damaged when you weren't watching, it's okay to do the training maneuver (*calmly*) if the dog is still chewing it. If the dog is done chewing it, you've missed your chance. There is nothing you can teach your dog about destructive chewing by punishing the dog. Your best bet is simply to do a better job with confinement and supervision, so that the dog is not again put into a position to make this mistake without your help to choose the right toy.

You're helping your dog form habits for life. Not only do you want the dog to chew dog toys instead of your things, you also want your dog to form the chewing habit! Yes, that's right! The dog who continues to chew on appropriate toys through life will typically have better dental health. If you've ever had a dog with teeth that quickly got dirty and infected and had to have a lot of dental work, you'll realize that you want a dog who chews. Of course, you want the dog to chew the right toys!

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## **Barking and Your New Puppy**

The first time most people find a new puppy's noise bothersome is when they confine the pup at night in a crate, exercise pen, or small room with a baby gate across the doorway. It's natural for a pup alone to call out for someone to come. Pups alone in the wild would not survive! The puppy is following instinct.

The first thing you need to know about helping your new puppy learn to remain quiet in confinement is NOT to go to the puppy in response to noise. If noise does not work, the puppy will eventually give up that method of communication.

If you have responded to the noise by going to the puppy, you have now reinforced this instinct. The process of conditioning your puppy to relax and remain quiet in confinement is going to take longer. You will need extra patience. Remember, this is not your puppy's fault, and getting mad at the puppy will not help. Be consistent about going to the pup ONLY when the pup is quiet.

In particular, do not wait and wait while the puppy makes more and more noise, and then you finally go to the puppy. By doing this, you would teach your puppy to be especially PERSISTENT about making noise! If you have done this already, remember you are going to have to be very patient indeed to give your puppy time to unlearn this unfortunate reinforcement. If you stop reinforcing a behavior, eventually it will fade. But the more strongly it has been reinforced before you stop reinforcing it, the longer it will take to fade.

Punishment would NOT speed your puppy's learning to be quiet, any more than it would help your human infant learn not to cry. Punishment would greatly increase stress on the puppy, create more behavior problems, and seriously damage your relationship.

You can help your puppy accept confinement more quickly by introducing the confinement area gently, giving the pup treats while in the confined area. You can also make confinement less stressful for the puppy by placing the crate or exercise pen in your bedroom at night. This lets the pup get used to the confinement without at the same time having to deal with being alone.

It's a good idea to always give a pup or dog a treat upon entering the confinement area, along with high-quality chew toys. Make sure, of course, to use only treats consistent with your dog's diet as recommended by your veterinarian.

Your goal is for the dog to rest calmly in confinement. Since dogs sleep fourteen or more hours a day, it's reasonable to use confinement if that time will be sleeping time. Excessive confinement is physically and mentally unhealthy for dogs.

There are adult dogs who cannot tolerate confinement to crates. Some of these dogs can be trained without crates to the point of being able to be safely loose in your house. Those suffering from severe separation anxiety may require the help of medication from your veterinarian during the adjustment process.

The ability to rest calmly in a crate can mean life or death to your dog at some point in the future, so it's extremely important to help your puppy develop this skill. Situations where a dog needs this ability include recovery from medical problems, travel, emergency evacuation, and adjustment to a new home or a new family. It will never again be as easy for the dog to develop the ability to rest calmly in a crate as it is in puppyhood.

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*Kathy Diamond Davis is the author of the book [Therapy Dogs: Training Your Dog to Reach Others](#). Should the training articles available here or elsewhere not be effective, contact your veterinarian. Veterinarians not specializing in behavior can eliminate medical causes of behavior problems. If no medical cause is found, your veterinarian can refer you to a colleague who specializes in behavior or a local behaviorist.*

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# Pet Insurance

Pet insurance is an important part of owning a pet. Pet insurance can help reimburse some of the veterinarian fees if your pet is unexpectedly ill or gets into an accident, or acquires a disease. There are various pet insurance companies available, all with various policies available to suit you and your pet's life. Listed below are just a few available:

Trupanion - <http://trupanion.com/canada>



Pets Plus Us - <https://www.petsplusus.com/>



Ontario Veterinary Medical Association Pet Health Insurance  
<https://www.ovma.org/pet-owners/pet-insurance/>



Petsecure - <http://www.netsecure.com/>



OSPCA Insurance - <http://www.ospcainsurance.ca/>



Pet First - <https://www.petfirst.com/>





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