

Canine basic health check

Special care instructions for _____

Congratulations, you have a new puppy!

You've anticipated the new arrival by 'puppyproofing' your home and had lots of fun choosing the bed, blanket, toys and other supplies he or she will need. This frisky little creature is sure to bring you much joy. In return, you can make a major contribution to your pet's longevity, happiness and quality of life by providing him or her with good nutrition, loving attention in a safe, healthy environment, and regular checkups with your veterinarian.



Your puppy's basic health check

Your new puppy should visit a veterinarian as soon as possible. The first visit may include:

- Thorough physical examination to determine his or her state of health.
- Check for external parasites (fleas, ticks, lice, ear mites).
- Check for internal parasites (tapeworm, roundworm, etc.), if you can bring a stool sample for analysis.
- Initial vaccination and/or a discussion of the types of vaccines your puppy needs and when they should be scheduled.
- Discussion about whether your puppy should be desexed (spayed or castrated) and when.

This first health check will give your veterinarian the information they need to advise you on your puppy's immediate diet and care. Plus, it will give them a knowledge base from which, on subsequent checkups throughout your pup's life, they can better evaluate, monitor and manage your pet's health.

Desexing your puppy

Many veterinarians believe that desexing not only helps solve the serious problem of unwanted pet overpopulation, but also makes for friendlier, easier-to-live-with pets. Spayed female dogs are less likely to escape to find a mate, while castrated males are less likely to roam, urine-mark their territory, or fight with other males. Plus, desexing has health benefits – it helps to minimise the risk for cancers of the reproductive organs and mammary glands in females, and reduces the incidence of prostate problems and testicular cancer in males.

SPAYING involves removal of the reproductive organs of a female dog, usually around the age of six months. It is performed under general anaesthesia and occasionally involves an overnight stay at the veterinary clinic. Complications are rare and recovery is normally complete within two weeks.

CASTRATING, also carried out under general anaesthesia, involves removal of the testicles of a male dog through an incision at the base of the scrotum. This is performed when the puppy is about six months old, and full recovery takes about seven to ten days.

Make your puppy feel at home

Show your puppy the special places where he or she can eat, sleep, toilet and, since they're probably quite overwhelmed, give him or her some quiet time to themselves to let them adjust to the unfamiliar sights and sounds of their new home. Be sure, if there are also young children in the home, that they are taught that a puppy is not a toy, but a living creature who must be treated with gentleness and respect. As early as 8 weeks old, your puppy is capable of learning specific lessons – so start house-training and teaching simple obedience commands the day you bring him or her home. Your veterinarian can suggest the best training methods and recommend a good puppy training class. Your pup will find learning fun and easy and, with your positive reinforcement, they should remember their lessons well!

