



COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR NEW PUPPY

1) *Why the need for all these vaccinations?!*

Good question! We must give multiple vaccinations because every puppy's immune system develops at a different rate. In addition, cells called maternal antibodies, passed from the mother's milk to fight infection, persist for long periods of time and may actually inactivate the vaccine. We commonly give three combination vaccines at three-week intervals to overcome these factors and ensure your puppy is properly protected against extremely debilitating and often-fatal diseases such as Parvo and Distemper. Additionally, because Rabies is a disease that can be transferred to humans, this vaccine is a legal requirement of the state of Wisconsin.

2) *Can I get worms from my dog?*

Intestinal parasites or "worms" can be transmitted to humans. The risk is greater in small children who walk barefoot and contact fecal matter on the ground and in the soil. Open sores, cuts or oral contamination are the most common modes of transmission. The parasite may develop into the larval stage in the infected person and damage the skin (*cutaneous larval migrans*), the intestines (*visceral larval migrans*) or, rarely, the eye (*ocular larval migrans*) causing blindness. Unfortunately, most puppies and kittens have intestinal parasites transmitted from their mother's milk. Fortunately, with good hygiene, you can dramatically decrease your risk of these infections. It is important to have your dog checked regularly for intestinal parasites, treated when infected, and protected from fleas & ticks.

3) *Where do heartworms come from and how can I prevent them?*

When infected mosquitoes bite and take a blood meal from dogs, they transmit *Dirofilaria immitis* or "heartworms". Untreated, heartworm disease is usually fatal. Lucky for us, our immune system can destroy these blood parasites so we don't contract the disease. To prevent your dog or cat from becoming infected, we recommend starting monthly heartworm preventative when your puppy is 8-weeks of age and continue year-round for his or her entire life. This is important not only for heartworm disease, but to prevent many of the intestinal parasite infections. The newer preventatives even prevent fleas! In the long run, your pet will be much healthier and you will save money. We test for heartworms once a year with an antigen test that is extremely sensitive for this disease. This must be done to prevent life-threatening side effects in the event that your dog has become infected. In the event that your dog has or develops heartworm disease, don't give up hope. There is a treatment – although expensive and not without risk to your pet, and irreversible damage to the heart or lungs may have already occurred. Remember, these are 4 to 12 inch worms that live in the heart! "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" – and may even save your pet's life.

4) *Anything else that I really should do?*

Yes. First and foremost, **SPAY or NEUTER** your pet! This prevents unwanted litters of puppies, decreases the incidence of *Mammary Cancer* in females and *Prostate Problems* in males, and minimizes potential behavior concerns. Second, feed a **GOOD DIET**. The benefits of a high quality diet are simply essential to good overall health. Large breed puppies (greater than 50 lbs.) and those at risk for developing bone disorders, especially hip dysplasia, should be fed only a Large Breed Growth diet during their first year, to help prevent these crippling diseases. Third, **HOME DENTAL CARE** should be started while your puppy is young, to prevent future tooth loss and painful periodontal disease. Finally, lots of **TENDER LOVING CARE!** Enjoy yourself! Nothing is better than a loving wag of the tail or affectionate kiss from a dog!