

Commonly Asked Questions About Your New Puppy

1) Why the need for all these vaccinations?!

Puppies need multiple vaccinations because every puppy's immune system develops at a different rate. Cells called maternal antibodies, passed from the mother's milk to fight infection, persist for long periods of time in a puppy's system and actually inactivate most vaccines. We commonly give vaccines at 2-4 week intervals to overcome these short term maternal antibodies, to ensure your puppy is protected against extremely debilitating and often-fatal diseases such as Parvo Virus, Distemper, 4 types of Leptospirosis, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, Canine Influenza, Kennel Cough, and Lyme Disease.

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?

Some intestinal parasites, or "worms", can be transmitted to humans. The risk is greatest for children and immunocompromised adults. Soil and fecal matter are the most common sources of these parasites. Open sores, cuts, and oral contamination are the most common modes of transmission. In a human these parasites may damage the skin (*cutaneous larval migrans*), the intestines (*visceral larval migrans*) or, rarely, the eye (*ocular larval migrans*) causing blindness.

Most puppies are born with intestinal parasites transmitted from their mother's milk, even when their mother has been "dewormed". With good hygiene, you can dramatically decrease your risk of these infections. It is important to have your dog checked annually for intestinal parasites, treated when infected, and protected every month with a preventative that includes intestinal parasite protection.

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

Infected mosquitoes bite dogs and take a blood meal, they then transmit *Dirofilaria immitis* or "heartworms" when they bite the next dog. Once infected, these parasites develop into 4-12 inch worms living in your pet's heart, lungs, and major arteries. Untreated, heartworm disease is usually fatal. To prevent your dog from becoming infected, we recommend monthly heartworm prevention starting at 8-weeks of age and continuing every month for his or her life. These preventatives are important not only to prevent heartworm disease, but to prevent many intestinal parasite infections, fleas, and ticks.

Although seemingly expensive, purchasing heartworm preventative monthly for your pet's entire life will be less expensive than treating your pet for heartworm disease, and will prevent permanent irreversible damage to your pet's heart, lungs and major arteries. Heartworm treatment is available, but poses many risks for dogs and is an uncomfortable process for your pet.

4) Anything else I need to provide for my puppy?

- We recommend that you **Spay or Neuter** your pet to prevent unwanted litters of puppies, to decrease the incidence of various cancers, and to minimize potential behavior concerns.
- Feed a **High Quality Diet**. For more information about what diet is recommended for your pet, ask the doctor at your pet's next visit.
- **Home Dental Care** is much more than shiny white teeth. Keeping your pet's teeth clean prevents stinky bacterial buildup and will keep your pet's breath fresh. It will keep your pet's mouth pain free by preventing plaque buildup which causes gum pain, bleeding and tooth loss. Finally, home dental care will prevent internal diseases caused by the constant swallowing of bacteria harbored in plaque and tartar.
- **Regular visits to the veterinarian**, so we can help you keep your pet healthy for a long and happy life!