

Welcome to Heartland Animal Hospital

Congratulations on your decision to add a new puppy to your family! Whether you're a first-time pet owner or have been down this road many times, it is always exciting to share your love and happiness with a fuzzy ball of fur that will return the favor ten-fold.

With this new addition comes great responsibility on your part. Because of this, the doctors and staff at Heartland Animal Hospital have designed an information packet to take you through the first year of your pup's life. The first few weeks that he or she is in your home are critical for proper bonding, establishing your household hierarchy, and getting your puppy on track with optimal emotional and physical care.

Included in this packet you will find the hospital's protocol and procedures for vaccination schedules, preventative care, and much more. Please refer to this packet as often as needed, and always feel free to call us with any questions you may have.

It is our goal to make every visit to Heartland Animal Hospital as comfortable, compassionate, and pleasing as possible. There is nothing we enjoy more than seeing you being dragged in the door by your four-legged friend because, of course, they are so happy to see us!

We hope your pet's life will be a very long and happy one. We thank you for entrusting their medical care to us and we look forward to helping you have the best time of your life with your new best friend!

Canine Vaccination Schedule

It is crucial that your dog receive vaccinations during the first months of his/her life to safeguard against many serious and potentially fatal diseases. At Heartland Animal Hospital, we follow the recommendation of The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA)TM, and vaccinate every three weeks until the puppy is about five to six months of age.

6 weeks	DHP and intestinal parasite exam
9 weeks	DHP
12 weeks	DHP and Bordetella
15 weeks	DHP*, Rabies, and intestinal parasite exam
18 weeks and 21 weeks	Leptospirosis and Lyme (if indicated by lifestyle) * Previously unvaccinated dogs older than 12 weeks must have DHP, Leptospirosis and/or Lyme vaccinations boosted three weeks later.
6 months	Spay/neuter and heartworm test

Bi-Annual	Wellness exam and intestinal parasite exam
Annual	Bordetella, Rabies**, DHP***, Leptospirosis, and Lyme ** The first rabies vaccination is certified for one year. The second year, if the rabies vaccination is given on or before its due date, it will be certified for three years. If it is given after the due date, it can only be legally certified for one year. *** After the first annual DHP vaccine, this vaccine is given every 3 years.

<u>D</u> istemper	A virus that attacks the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, respiratory tract, and the nervous system. This virus is often fatal even with treatment.
<u>H</u> epatitis	An acute viral liver infection.
<u>P</u> arvovirus	A virus that attacks rapidly dividing cells within the body, including the GI tract and the heart. This virus is potentially fatal even with treatment.
Bordetella	A bacteria that causes a deep hacking cough and upper respiratory infection known as Kennel Cough. This vaccine is required by most boarding and grooming facilities.
Rabies	A virus that causes a fatal neurological disease that can be transmitted to humans. This vaccine is required by state and city law.
Leptospirosis	A bacteria that can severely compromise kidney and liver function. This infection can be transmitted to humans.
Lyme Disease	A tick-borne disease that can cause joint problems and possibly kidney failure. It is recommended in areas of high tick concentration or high frequency of Lyme Disease, as well as for dogs that will spend a lot of time outdoors.
Heartworm test	A blood test that detects the presence of heartworms. If the test is negative, then monthly heartworm prevention can be continued. This test is performed yearly after six months of age, and tests for three tick-borne diseases as well: Lyme Disease, Erlichia, and Anaplasma.

Heartworm Disease

Heartworms are parasites (worms) that attack the heart and lungs of infected dogs. Heartworms take 5-7 months to mature after initial infection. Because of this slow development, it can take several years before dogs show outward signs of infection. The most obvious signs of infection are a soft, dry cough, shortness of breath, weakness, listlessness, and loss of stamina. Damage that owners cannot see include heart enlargement and organ damage. Over time, heartworms will cause heart failure and death.

Heartworms are transferred through the bite of an infected mosquito. In Iowa, mosquitoes are very common and often enter homes, meaning that even dogs that spend most of their time indoors need to be protected. The good news is that there are convenient monthly preventatives that can stop this deadly disease.

Dogs **must** be screened yearly for heartworm disease even if they get monthly preventatives. No medication or treatment can be considered 100% effective in all cases. Though it is exceptionally rare, there have been instances in which dogs receiving monthly heartworm preventative have contracted heartworms. With annual testing, we can catch heartworm infections more quickly. Catching the infection early improves chances of successful treatment.

Heartworm Preventatives

Heartworm preventatives are an incredibly important part of your dog's preventative care routine. Though there is treatment for heartworm disease, it is very expensive, and it is not without risk. Prevention is the best and safest option for your dog. If you give your dog heartworm preventative consistently each month and they contract heartworms, the manufacturer may provide treatment at no cost to you.

Heartgard®:

A monthly soft chew that prevents heartworm disease, hookworms, and roundworms in dogs six weeks and older.

Advantage Multi®:

A monthly topical option to prevent heartworms, hookworms, roundworms, whipworms, and fleas in dogs seven weeks and older.

Fleas

Fleas are insects (parasites) that feed on your pet's blood and can cause other serious health problems. A flea bite may go unnoticed with some pets, cause slight irritation in others, or cause a severe allergic reaction. Signs of a reaction can include intense itching, red lesions, hair loss, and skin ulceration. Anemia is a critical concern in cases of severe infestations at all ages, but especially in puppies and kittens. Prolonged anemia will eventually result in death. Fleas can also transmit tapeworms and other diseases to your pets.

There are four stages in a flea lifecycle: egg, pupae, larvae, and adult. Fleas will only be found on your pet during the adult stage. The other three stages will reside in the pet's environment. The flea lifecycle can span 12-180 days. Female fleas can lay 30-50 eggs a day and consume up to 15 times their body weight in blood daily.

Preventing fleas is exponentially easier than treating an infestation. The safest prevention can be found at veterinary clinics. Over the counter flea products such as Biospot® and Hartz® are tempting due to their low cost, but their production is not as closely regulated as the preventatives provided by veterinary clinics. They have been shown to be more toxic and are known to cause severe reactions in cats, ferrets, children, and some dogs. At the same time, they are known to be a less reliable solution to prevent or control fleas. Over the counter flea collars and flea shampoos are also not typically as effective for their intended purpose.

The following steps should be taken when fleas are found:

1. Flea prevention should be applied to ALL pets in the household for a minimum of six consecutive months to ensure that the protection extends past the lifecycle of the last flea.
2. Home treatment is essential to eradicating a flea infestation. Remember, three of the four flea life stages are found in the environment. This means if one pet has fleas, they are in the house and the yard as well. Fleas lay eggs while on your pet, but they do not stick to the fur and instead roll off into the environment.

- A. Home treatment should begin by washing all bedding and washable rugs in hot water.

- B. Vacuum all floors (including the basement), making sure to reach the less trafficked areas, such as under furniture, as this is where eggs tend to settle until they hatch.

- C. Spray all floors with a home treatment product, such as Knockout Area Treatment® and vacuum again.

*** Immediately dispose of the vacuum contents into an exterior trash can to prevent fleas from escaping from the bag and getting back into the house.

- D. Repeat this process in four weeks.

Flea and Tick Preventative Options

There are many options available to protect your dog from fleas and ticks. Whatever your preferences may be, we are sure to be able to find a good fit for you and your pup!

Topical options:

Advantage Multi® A topical monthly preventative used to kill fleas and immature heartworms, while also treating and controlling hookworms, whipworms, and roundworms in puppies seven weeks and older. DOES NOT KILL OR REPEL TICKS.

Frontline® A topical monthly preventative that kills fleas and ticks that can be used in puppies eight weeks and older.

Seresto® A collar that kills and repels fleas and ticks for eight months of continuous protection in dogs and puppies seven weeks and older.

Oral options:

Nexgard® A monthly soft chew that kills fleas and ticks that can be used in puppies eight weeks and older.

Simparica® A monthly chewable tablet that kills fleas and ticks that can be used in dogs six and older.

Bravecto® A soft chew that kills fleas and ticks for 12 weeks that can be used in dogs six months and older.

Intestinal Parasite Exam

Intestinal parasites and protozoa are easily transmitted from infected animals to people and their pets. Intestinal parasites have adapted to use multiple tactics to infect a potential host to improve their chances of success. The most common method of parasite transmission is through direct contact with infected fecal material. Intestinal parasite eggs are passed in the stool of the infected animal. These eggs can drop from the stool into the soil, where they can live for several weeks to years, thus making it more likely that they will be able to take on a new host. Direct contact is an extremely common method of transmission, but puppies and kittens are especially prone to infection because intestinal parasites can also be transmitted via the placenta and/or through the mother's milk. Because of this, all puppies and kittens should submit a stool sample for examination as soon as possible (preferably before coming home).

With intestinal parasite exams, we scan a sample of your pet's feces under the microscope, looking for parasite eggs. Parasites do not always shed eggs into the stool continuously, and if they are not shedding at the time of sample collection, we may not be able to detect their presence. Therefore, it is important that a sample of your pet's stool be examined at six weeks of age and again at fifteen weeks, and then every 6 months after.

The manufacturers of heartworm preventatives extend their product guarantees to account for their ability to protect against intestinal parasites as well as heartworms. If you give your pet heartworm preventative each month, they may pay for treatment if your pet tests positive for roundworms, hookworms, or whipworms.

If your pet is diagnosed with parasites, it is crucial that all medications be given as directed. Keep your yard free of fecal material while treating your pet or reinfection may occur. Following treatment for intestinal parasites, make sure you bring in a stool sample as directed by a veterinarian to confirm that the prescribed treatment was successful.

Always wash your (and your children's) hands thoroughly after discarding fecal material or interacting with your pet.

Proper Diet

Ensuring that your puppy lives and grows healthily starts with a proper diet. At Heartland Animal Hospital, we carry several brands and types of food designed to meet the changing needs of your pet. Any problem, from gastrointestinal upset to liver or kidney failure can be substantially benefited with a specialized diet.

It may be overwhelming to pick a diet when there are so many options to choose from. Whether you need help selecting a quality manufacturer to purchase from, or you can't decide whether your puppy would benefit from a large breed diet, the staff at Heartland Animal Hospital would be happy to help you navigate your way through the decision-making process.

It is strongly recommended that you do not feed your pet human food. We know you may feel that as a "treat" once in a while, it will do no harm, but it could. Pets are creatures of habit and do not get bored with eating the same thing every day. It is also important to remember that canine digestive tracts are not designed to handle foods that are high in fat and sodium or those that contain artificial sweeteners. Many popular snack foods fall under one of these categories, and while they are not so good for us, they are even worse for our pets. Even small amounts of these foods could cause a variety of issues, from mild to severe vomiting and diarrhea or even pancreatitis or death. If you would like to give a treat (in moderation), there are several good treats to choose from that are designed for pets. If you have questions about which treat is best for your dog, we would be happy to give suggestions!

Once we have helped you choose a high-quality food for your dog, it is important to make sure you don't over-feed your pet. All commercial pet diets include feeding guidelines on the bag, but these are only meant as a guide and may need to be adjusted (usually decreased) to keep your pet at an appropriate weight. Obesity is the most common nutritional disorder in pets. An obese pet may develop many health problems over time. This includes joint problems and a higher risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers. An overweight pet can also have breathing difficulties and is at greater anesthetic and surgical risk.

There are several ways that you can prevent obesity or help a pet lose weight.

1. Designate one person in the household to feed the pet(s). Also, make sure that they are feeding a measured amount of food that is appropriate for each pet's caloric needs.
2. Feed pets in the household separately so you know the exact amount each pet eats.
3. Divide your pet's ration into 2-3 small meals daily. Digesting food takes calories, which means less food will be stored as fat with smaller, more frequent meals.
4. Reduce your pet's meal size by 25% to lower calorie intake.
5. Put pets in another room while you are eating to prevent begging for bites of your food.
6. Give affection instead of treats. Pats or throwing a favorite toy can be an appropriate alternative for giving treats.
7. Break treats into smaller pieces to make them last longer.
8. Give fruits and vegetables in addition to their regular diet.
- *Avoid grapes, raisins, garlic, and onions as those are extremely dangerous for cats and dogs. **
9. Offer ice cubes as a treat.
10. Take your pets for frequent walks or play with them to help them lose weight.

Dental Care

With recent advances in medical care, we have learned a great deal about dental disease in the companion dog. Not having a regular oral care program puts your dog at risk for health issues as they grow older. Plaque and tartar are breeding grounds for bacteria. As tartar builds up on the tooth surface, it is pushed below the gumline, introducing the bacteria to the bloodstream. At that point, bacteria are free to travel to internal organs, such as the heart, kidneys, and liver, where it can cause considerable damage. The key to combating dental disease in your dog is to start prevention early.

There are several things you can do for your dog to reduce the buildup of plaque and tartar that will eventually lead to periodontal disease. This includes tooth brushing, oral hygiene solutions, providing a dental diet or dental treats, and regular dental cleaning.

When starting a dental program with your dog, short intervals are the key to success. You want him or her to warm up to the idea of having their teeth and gums brushed. You will find more in-depth instructions for tooth brushing on the next page. It is very important that you use appropriate toothpaste. **DO NOT USE HUMAN TOOTHPASTE** as the fluoride content is too high and will cause GI upset. We carry C.E.T.® dental products and have a variety of flavors. For optimal oral health it is recommended that you brush your dog's teeth daily. Realistically, brushing teeth several times weekly is better than nothing.

To supplement daily brushing, you can add Dog::Essential Healthy Mouth™ or Oxyfresh® Pet Oral Hygiene Solution to your dog's drinking water to help reduce plaque build up. Dog:: Essential Healthy Mouth™ is the first and only dental water additive to receive the Veterinary Oral Health Counsel (VOHC)® Seal of Acceptance for plaque control in dogs and is recommended by leading board certified veterinary dentists around the world.

Oravet® Dental Hygiene Chews are formulated to impede plaque formation by preventing bacteria from attaching to surfaces in the mouth. It also breaks down existing plaque so that as your dog chews, it will remove plaque from the tooth surface. These can be given to dogs 6 months and older.

Even with preventative care, most pets will need to have a professional dental cleaning at some point in their life, just like we go to the dentist to have our teeth scaled to remove the tartar missed during preventative cleaning.

Teaching Your Pet to Accept Toothbrushing

Your goal is to be able to brush the outside surfaces of your pet's teeth once a day, using a soft-bristled toothbrush and veterinary toothpaste. This will not happen overnight, but with patience and a lot of positive reinforcement, you can be successful. Behavior modification techniques are listed below. The process may take several weeks (there may be two steps forward and one step back) – just stick with it and **keep it a positive experience for you and your pet.**

Select your training time

- Pets respond to routine, so be consistent with your training time.
- Pick a time of day when your pet is likely to be hungry, and pick a quiet time - not the first thing after you get home from work.

Choose their reward

- Pick a reward that motivates your pet - a food they LOVE or playtime with their favorite toy.
- If you are using food, have tiny bits of the food available.

Set the surroundings, keep it positive

- A small dog may work best on your lap; a cat probably would be best next to you on a large chair or couch; a large dog should be asked to sit on the floor.
- Use a calm, gentle tone of voice. Maintain a positive attitude and demeanor – your pet will sense and respond to any anxiety that you have. If they think that this is a fun game that involves rewards, they will be eager to play.
- Be persistent, but have reasonable expectations about how fast you will progress.

Begin by handling and manipulating their mouth

- Start with a brief period of affectionate touching and giving treats if they are staying calm.
- Begin trying to gently touch/manipulate their mouth. If they are calm, responding to requests and allowing you to manipulate their mouths, they get IMMEDIATE rewards. If they resist in any fashion...take your treats away and end the session.
- Slowly progress from manipulating the lips to running your fingers along the teeth and gums. Once they are comfortable with your hands, try a moist, soft cloth wrapped around your finger.
- It will likely take several sessions to work up to this point. Give rewards throughout, and end the session when they resist. Try again tomorrow!

Add in toothpaste

- Once they are comfortable with the cloth along their teeth, add a veterinary toothpaste or gel to the cloth.
- Keep up the praise and rewards!

Introduce the toothbrush

- The next step is to bring the toothbrush out - touch it to their face, put it under their lips and gently work it around. Pick a toothbrush that is easy for you to use.
- If they like their toothpaste, have them start by licking toothpaste off of the toothbrush. Don't forget the praise!

Start brushing!

- Use a circular motion and focus on the gumline. Concentrate on the outside surfaces of the teeth, under the lips.
- Eventually you can work up to spending about 2-3 minutes brushing the entire mouth, ideally once a day.

To supplement regular toothbrushing, you can give your dog one of the products listed below. These have been awarded the VOHC® Seal of Acceptance in the category specified:

'Helps control plaque and tartar':

- Ø Hill's® Prescription Diet™ Canine t/d® Original and Small Bites
- Ø Hill's® Prescription Diet™ Canine Dental Care Chews
- Ø Hill's® Science Diet® Oral Care Diet for Dogs and Cats
- Ø Canine Greenies™, (including Veterinary Formula, Weight Management, Senior, Hip & Joint Care, and Grain-Free)
- Ø HealthiDent™ Bright Bites and Checkups Chews for Dogs

'Helps control tartar':

- Ø Iams® Chunk Dental Defense Diet for Dogs
- Ø Eukanuba® Adult Maintenance Diet for Dogs
- Ø Purina® Pro Plan® Veterinary Diets DH Canine Formula dry food
- Ø Purina® Pro Plan® Veterinary Diets DH Small Bites Canine Formula dry food
- Ø Purina® Busy HeartyHide™ Chew Treats
- Ø Purina® Pro Plan® Veterinary Diets® Dental Chewz Dog Treats
- Ø Tartar Shield® Soft Rawhide Chews for Dogs
- Ø Virbac CET® VeggieDent® Chews for Dogs
- Ø Milk-Bone® Brushing Chews for Dogs
- Ø VetIQ® Minties® Medium Dog Dental Treat
- Ø Merial®/BI® OraVet® Dental Hygiene Chews for Dogs
- Ø Purina® DentaLife Daily Oral Care for Dogs (also Advanced Clean)
- Ø DentiQ® Periodontal Gel

'Helps control plaque':

- Ø Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ Anti-plaque Water Additive
- Ø Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ Anti-plaque Water Additive Mobility Formula
- Ø Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ Anti-plaque Gel
- Ø Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ Anti-plaque Oral Spray
- Ø Dog::ESSENTIAL™ healthymouth™ Gel and Brush Combination
- Ø Petsmile by Supersmile toothpaste

If you have any questions or would like help in choosing an oral health supplement for your dog, we would be happy to help in any way we can.

Microchipping

Each year, millions of lost or stolen pets never return home because they cannot be identified.

Heartland Animal Hospital is proud to offer HomeAgain® Pet Microchip Identification System as part of a three-part program for responsible pet care. This program is simple: we believe that the best way to ensure your pet remains happy, healthy, and safe is to have your pet spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. By practicing these simple steps with your pet, you can avoid unwanted litters, help prevent disease, and keep your pet from being one of the 10 million pets that are lost each year.

HomeAgain® Pet Microchip Identification System is the most complete nationwide system for recovering lost or stolen pets. Microchipping involves implanting a microchip the size of a grain of rice between your pet's shoulder blades. Each chip encodes a distinct serial number, which is recorded in a national database. When an animal arrives at an animal shelter or veterinary clinic as a stray/lost pet, a scanner is used to identify the unique number on the implanted microchip and the owner is identified and contacted immediately. We strongly recommend that all companion animals of all species, breeds, and ages have the benefit of being microchipped.

One in three pets is lost during their lifetime and only one in ten is found.

House Training Your Puppy

House training can be one of the most challenging aspects of owning a new puppy. You can significantly increase your chances of success by following a few simple steps.

Consistency

Set a schedule and stick to it. Remember that a young puppy does not have reliable bladder control, so you should plan to take your puppy out every 30-60 minutes when they are awake, as well as after naps and meals. When your puppy urinates or defecates outside, praise them. Puppies are naturally motivated to please you, so once they understand what you want them to do, they will start to consistently urinate and defecate outside. Go out the same door every time and take them to the same spot in the yard. The more consistent you are, the faster housetraining will click for your puppy.

Crate

Invest in a crate. Many owners feel guilty for confining their puppy to a crate while they are not home, but if you introduce it properly, puppies won't see the crate as a punishment. A crate will keep your puppy from getting into trouble when they are not supervised. It will also become a safe spot for your puppy. Make sure you are consistent and use the crate whenever you cannot supervise your puppy directly. The crate you use must be small enough that your puppy cannot urinate or defecate in one corner and sleep in another. They avoid urinating and defecating where they will sleep, meaning they will actively try not to go when they are confined appropriately.

Clean-up

If you catch your puppy relieving themselves in the house, try clapping, making loud noises, or simply picking the puppy up to stop them. Calmly take them outside to their designated spot and wait for them to finish. If you do not catch them in the act, do not scold them! This will only teach the puppy to relieve themselves where you cannot see. Clean the area and watch the puppy more closely to prevent more accidents. An enzymatic cleaner such as Nature's Miracle® or Equalizer® will break down the smell of urine and stool, making your puppy less likely to go in the same spot.

If you are having difficulty with house training, please don't hesitate to call us.

Obedience Training

Obedience classes are extremely beneficial whether this is your first puppy or you've lived with dogs all your life. Beyond the learning to sit and stay, training classes also provide a unique opportunity to socialize your puppy in a controlled environment. Early socialization is extremely important for your puppy. A puppy who doesn't learn how to interact and play appropriately with other puppies (and new people) is one who may respond fearfully to those situations later in life. Obedience classes will expose your puppy to new people and new situations. This will help your puppy develop into a confident dog, who knows how to respond appropriately even in situations that are foreign to them.

There are many different training styles and techniques. Some trainers advocate treat-only methods, others use clickers, and some suggest using reprimands and correction when the puppy is acting inappropriately. A good trainer will use a variety of techniques. We suggest you talk to the trainer and/or observe a class before deciding on one.

A well-trained dog is a welcome guest in other people's homes, businesses, and in public places. No matter how big or small your puppy is, obedience classes are a necessary part of the training process.

Establishing Leadership

Dogs are often, unintentionally and unknowingly, treated like the leader of their “pack” by owners who do not fully understand canine hierarchy and psychology. Allowing dogs to demand attention or jump up on furniture may not feel like you are handing them a leadership role, but dogs do not see these actions from the same perspective that we do. It is important that you establish yourself as the leader in a way your dog will understand, or your dog may feel that they need to take on that role themselves. Listed are some exercises that will help teach your puppy that you are the leader.

Feeding

- Feed your puppy regularly scheduled meals. Follow the advice of your veterinarian for how much and how often your puppy should be fed.
- Make your puppy sit before offering a meal. Be ready to block any attempts he/she makes to dive for it. Have your puppy wait until **you** say it is okay to eat.
- Once your puppy leaves the bowl, pick it up until the next scheduled feeding.
- Your puppy should allow you to approach the food bowl without growling or snarling.

Sleeping

- Your puppy should sleep in a crate at night and when you are not home.
- Your puppy should accept being moved from any sleeping or resting place.

House manners

- Have your puppy perform simple commands to get things he/she likes (a walk, playtime, etc.)
- Your puppy should allow you to go through doorways first. Teach your puppy to sit and wait for you to go through the door before following.
- Reward your puppy with attention only for being good, and not when he/she is misbehaving.

Good manners at the veterinarian’s office (and groomer’s)

- Handle your puppy daily, making sure to handle all four feet and the ears, to get him/her used to being examined and restrained. Not only will this make vet visits less stressful for your puppy, but it will make it more likely that your veterinarian can fully examine your pet throughout his/her life. Be sure to reward your puppy **ONLY** when he/she is not struggling.
- Do not make a big deal of going to the veterinarian’s office. If your puppy perceives that something big is going to happen, then he/she may respond fearfully.

Keep in mind that once your role has been established, your dog may earn freedoms such as being allowed on the couch, bed, etc. If your dog ever starts acting badly when a privilege is added, simply take it away.

Appropriate Play and Toys

It is crucial that you control the pace and tone when playing with your dog. There are certain games and types of playing that you should avoid.

Tug of war may seem like a harmless game, but tugging is a natural act of dominance. In the wild, chasing, tackling, and shaking prey to death are means of survival. Though dogs have been domesticated for hundreds of years, they are still descendants of wild dogs, and they retain those natural instincts. Wrestling or rough-housing falls into the same category as tug of war for similar reasons.

Playing ball, frisbee, or catch are good games. Not only will the vigorous exercise make your dog sleepy, but it also leaves you in control. When your dog brings the toy back to you, have them sit and give them the command to give it to you. This tells the dog that you will not play until they have honored your request, establishing you as the leader.

Tennis balls, squeaky toys, Kongs®, and rope toys are appropriate for puppies, if you supervise them during use. Chewing on tennis balls wears enamel away from the external surface of the tooth, and toys should be taken away when they start to fray or fall apart. A puppy may ingest part of a worn or broken toy, which can cause bowel obstruction. The only intervention for obstruction is surgery, without which death is likely.

Do not give your dog old shoes, socks, or stuffed animals to play with. They cannot distinguish between your old shoes and your new ones, so make sure to give them toys that are wholly their own.

Dogs need constant stimulation, so giving them two or three toys is ideal. As they tire of playing with one toy, they can switch to a different one.

Do not allow your dog to chew or bite any part of your body. If he or she does chew on you, tell them “No” or “Ouch” and then give them an appropriate toy to chew on.

Spaying and Neutering Your Dog

What Every Owner Should Know

- ❖ Sexual activity will not help your puppy mature mentally or physically. A dog will grow to its full potential with regards to size, weight, and personality with proper diets, care, and love.
- ❖ Spaying or neutering your dog will **NOT** make them obese. Dogs become obese from too little exercise coupled with too much food (or too many treats!).
- ❖ Personality and temperament are a product of heredity and environment, **NOT HORMONES**. Altered pets may be less aggressive with other animals, but their basic reaction(s) to humans will remain the same.
- ❖ A dog that has never been allowed to be sexually active does not know any differently. Dogs do not have 'feelings' about sexual activity like humans do, and perceive it solely as a means of reproduction.
- ❖ Spaying or neutering your dog will drastically reduce the odds they will develop cancer.
- ❖ Spaying your dog is cost effective, and breeding is **not** an easy way to make money. If you take proper care of a female and her litter, you will lose money. Also remember, for every puppy you place, you have potentially taken away a stray puppy or dog's chance to be adopted from an animal shelter. Thousands of animals are euthanized in shelters annually due to insufficient resources.
- ❖ Neuter your dog for his protection. Sexually active males are escape artists and are often killed while pursuing a female in heat.

Unsupervised mating can cause physical damage to both the male and female. Your six-foot fence will not slow down, much less discourage, a determined male.

Grooming

The frequency and type of grooming your puppy will need depends on the breed, your personal preferences, and, of course, the individual dog. Some owners prefer to keep their dog's hair trimmed short, while others like the look of long, flowing hair. Some breeds have long hair, prone to matting. Other dogs may have short hair, but tend to get dirty often.

The frequency with which you need to bathe your dog is a personal choice. Some dogs can go several months without needing a bath, while others need to be bathed every 2-3 weeks. We recommend that you bathe your dog no more than twice a month unless directed by your veterinarian. Excessive bathing can dry out your dog's coat and skin, which can lead to skin infections. Do not use human shampoos as these may irritate the skin. There are several dog shampoos and conditioners on the market, catering to every possible need. Most dogs can remain on hypoallergenic, soap free shampoo for their entire lives.

Brushing is another important aspect of coat care. Brushing your dog has considerable health benefits and should not be limited to long-haired breeds. Regular brushing increases circulation in the skin, which keeps it healthy. A short-haired dog should be brushed 1-2 times weekly. Likewise, a medium or long-haired dog should be brushed daily to prevent matting. It is important to start brushing your puppy as young as possible to get them used to the routine.

You should keep your dog's nails trimmed as short as possible to prevent broken nails and ingrown toenails. You may be able to do this at home or you may need the assistance of veterinary staff or a professional groomer. Trimming nails every 3-4 weeks will ensure that the "quicks" will not over grow. The "quick" is the blood vessel that supplies each nail with oxygen and nutrients. It is this vessel that determines how short the nails can be trimmed. Often referred to as a bullseye, the nail can be safely and comfortably trimmed until just before cutting the quick (you often see a bullseye-like pattern at this point). When the edge of the quick is exposed, it will recede to protect it from the elements. With regular trimming, the quick will continue to recede, and your dog's nails can be cut shorter over time.

Anal Glands

The anal glands are two small sacs located on either side of the anus at approximately the 4 o' clock and 8 o' clock positions. These pouches are lined with numerous specialized sebaceous (skin) glands that produce a strong-smelling secretion. Each sac has a small duct, which empties just inside the anus. The sacs typically express their contents as the dog defecates and the secretion acts as a territorial marker. The glands are present in both male and female dogs. Anal sac issues can arise in dogs of any breed or gender.

Anal gland problems often start when the fluid thickens or hardens within the gland(s). This can result in an impaction in the gland(s). Impaction is uncomfortable for the dog and is especially painful while the dog defecates. The first sign of an anal gland problem is often scooting or dragging the rear-end along the ground. You may also notice your dog licking or biting, often at the root of the tail. If you catch the impaction early, veterinary professionals can manually express the glands, thereby solving the problem. If an impaction progresses, it could develop into an abscess. Anal gland abscesses are characterized by swelling on one or both sides of the anus. These abscesses often burst and release a foul-smelling greenish yellow fluid and/or bloody discharge. To treat an anal gland abscess, your dog will be sedated to allow a veterinarian to flush out the solidified material. Once a dog has had an anal gland abscess the owner must have the dog's anal glands expressed frequently to prevent reoccurrence.

Allergies

An allergic reaction is a state of over-reactivity of the immune system in response to a substance called an allergen. The most common symptom associated with allergies in dogs is scratching/licking the skin, either in one area or all over the body. There are four common types of allergies: contact, flea, inhalant, and food.

A contact allergy results from direct contact to allergens. For example, an allergy to wool bedding may cause irritation and itchiness. Bathing your dog with a hypoallergenic shampoo may help soothe the skin after an allergic response. It will also rinse the remaining allergens off your dog's coat so they do not absorb into the skin. Once the allergen is removed the problem will resolve.

A flea allergy is an inflammatory response to flea saliva. It causes severe itchiness, and you may see your dog biting and scratching incessantly (especially at their tail and neck), often resulting in hair loss and skin infection. Keep your dog on a flea preventative monthly to prevent your dog from interacting with the allergen (flea saliva). In severe cases, medications may be prescribed to relieve itchiness.

Inhalant allergies are allergens that are inhaled by the pet that cause a reaction. Common inhalant allergens are tree, grass, or weed pollens, molds, mildew, and dust mites. Many of the pollens occur seasonally, whereas mold, mildew and dust mites can last all year. Inhalant allergies may cause a dog to rub his/her face, lick his/her feet, scratch all over, or drag his/her bottom. Medications can typically control the symptoms of inhalant allergies. If medications do not produce a satisfactory response, your veterinarian can perform an allergy test to determine which allergens the pet is allergic to, and veterinary professionals can give allergy shots for those specific allergens.

Food allergies are a response to a protein component of the food, or of a food origin such as beef, chicken, pork, wheat, and/or dairy products. Clinical signs can include itching, recurrent ear infections, vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory distress, and/or anal gland problems. This type of allergy is diagnosed through the process of elimination. If the pet does not respond to treatments for other potential diagnoses, a food allergy could be to blame. To confirm food allergies, your veterinarian will prescribe a hypoallergenic diet. It takes about 8-12 weeks to see a response to the diet change if a food component is at fault. During this time the pet cannot be fed table scraps, treats, or some medications as this will interfere with food trial results. If the allergy symptoms disappear on the food trial, then other foods can be slowly added back into the diet until the allergen can be identified.

The symptoms of allergies can be confused with other disorders or can coexist with them. Do not attempt to diagnose your dog without consulting your veterinarian. If an allergy is diagnosed, the whole family must follow your veterinarian's advice very closely to successfully control the problem.

Ear Infections

Otitis externa, or infection of the external ear canal, is a common ailment in dogs. Some breeds, particularly those with floppy or hairy ears are more prone to ear infections, but they can occur in any breed.

Ear infections are painful. Infected ears typically appear dirty and inflamed and develop an offensive odor. Many dogs shake their head and scratch their ears in response to physiological changes caused by the infection, but it does little to soothe their symptoms. Head-shaking and scratching can also cause broken blood vessels in the earflap (hematoma), which requires surgery to correct.

Inflammation (typically due to allergies) causes the pH of the skin to change. Bacteria and yeast take advantage of these changes, as they are now more favorable for them, and reproduce quickly. This overgrowth commonly causes the itchiness associated with ear infections. Using a microscope, we can determine what microflora are present. This is vital information to determine which medication would best treat that particular infection. A thorough aural exam can determine if the ear drum is intact and rule out a foreign body or tumor as the cause of infection. Treatment with medication will not resolve the problem if it is caused by a foreign body or tumor; other measures must be taken.

Chronic ear infections can cause severe problems. The ear canal may swell shut because of chronic ear infections. There are medications that can reduce the swelling and allow the ear canal to open, though some dogs may require surgical intervention to fully open the canal. If the infection penetrates the eardrum, it will result in an internal ear infection (otitis interna). Signs of an inner ear infection can include pawing at the ear, a (potentially permanent) head tilt, and/or hearing loss. With an internal ear infection, hospitalization may be necessary to get the infection under control.

Regular ear cleaning can help you stay ahead of recurrent ear infections. Cleaning removes moisture and foreign material. We recommend using an ear cleaner containing a drying agent. You should clean your dog's ears as directed by your veterinarian following an ear infection. Some dogs may require weekly to monthly ear cleanings to stave off infection, while others may need them much less frequently. Always clean your dog's ears after bathing and swimming.

Arthritis

Arthritis is inflammation of the joint and it can come in many forms, with the most common being osteoarthritis.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative disease that affects joint cartilage. This causes the joint cartilage to wear, ulcerate, and dissolve or disappear, causing bone to rub on bone. These bones are rich with nerves and readily transmit painful impulses.

Since the disease is degenerative, it is important to get it diagnosed as early as possible and treatment should begin immediately. Radiographs may be helpful in the diagnosis of moderate to advanced disease because it can ascertain the severity and extent of the damage. Sometimes a diagnosis is based on owner reported signs, especially in early stages of the disease, before degeneration is visible on radiographs. Common signs of OA include decreased activity, weight gain, shortened stride, dragging of the feet, limping, stumbling, and generalized weakness. Pets with musculoskeletal problems, such as hip or elbow dysplasia, are at higher risk for developing OA. Other risk factors include obesity, being over the age of 7 years, being a large breed (Labrador retriever, golden retriever, etc.), or having short, crooked legs (basset hounds, dachshunds, etc.).

Treatment usually consists of three interrelated therapies, including exercise, diet, and pharmacological agents. Low impact exercise, such as leash walking or swimming, will increase muscle strength and joint stability. Diet is especially important in overweight pets because additional strain is placed on the joints to support the excess weight. The use of medication, such as a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, may be necessary to provide pain relief. Glucosamine and/or chondroitin supplements may slow down the degeneration and decrease the need for prescription medications. Steroids may be used, but usually as a last resort because long-term use is associated with side effects and organ damage. Do not give your dog human pain medications without consulting your veterinarian. These medications can cause harmful side-effects in pets.

Hazardous Household Products

It's only natural for animals to be curious, but that curiosity can get them into trouble when they get into items that are dangerous for them. Many common household items that you use every day can be harmful, or even lethal, to your pet.

Foods

Alcohol
Apricots
Avocados
Bones
Caffeine
Cherries
Chocolate
Chives
Coffee
Coconut/coconut oil
Garlic
Grapes/raisins/currants
Milk/dairy products
Moldy foods
Mushrooms
Nuts
Onions
Peaches/plums
Raw/undercooked eggs and meat
Rhubarb
Star fruit
Tomato plants
Xylitol
Yeast dough

Common Household Items

Antifreeze and other car fluids
Bleach and other cleaning products
Batteries
Breath fresheners
Deodorants/deodorizers
De-icing salts
Essential oils
Furniture/shoe polish
Fabric softener sheets
Gasoline
Gorilla Glue
Homemade Playdough
Human Toothpaste
Insecticides/fertilizer
Kerosene
Mothballs
Mosquito repellent
Paint
Prescription/nonprescription medication
Rat/mouse poison

Symptoms of possible poisoning include vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, salivation, and weakness. If your pet ingests harmful chemicals, contact us or a poison control center (888-426-4435) immediately.

The ASPCA Poison Control Center offers a free, downloadable app for Apple® and Android® phones to make it easier to determine which plants, foods, and household items that are dangerous for your pet. For more information, visit the website at <https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/apcc-mobile-app>.

Pet Insurance

Being a responsible pet owner includes taking care of your pet's emotional and physical wellbeing. In the event of an emergency, do you have the means to get your pet the care they would need? Some pet owners opt to set aside money each month in an "emergency savings account" for their pet's needs. For others, pet insurance is a good option to cover unexpected medical bills. There is no one "correct" option, and if you are unsure if pet insurance is for you, you may find the following website helpful:

Pet Insurance University

This website delves into the basics of pet insurance and helps you decide if pet insurance is the best option for you.

http://www.pet-insurance-university.com/guide_to_pet_insurance.html

Each insurance company has its own protocols and coverage options, so while we are providing a list of reputable companies for your convenience, we highly encourage you to do your own research and find the best fit for you and your pet. Below you will find a list of some reputable pet insurance companies. This is by no means a comprehensive list; there are many more options available, but these are among the more popular.

ASPCA

<https://www.aspcapetinsurance.com>

Trupanion

<http://trupanion.com/pet/insurance>

Petplan

<https://www.gopetplan.com>

Nationwide

<https://www.petinsurance.com>

Embrace

<https://www.embracepetinsurance.com/>

Pet Insurance Review

This website will help you compare the benefits offered by the various companies offering pet insurance, so you can be sure to choose the one that works for you!

<https://www.petinsurancereview.com/>

Important Phone Numbers

Iowa Veterinary Referral Center (Emergencies)

Open 24 hours per day, seven days a week
4631 Merle Hay Road, Des Moines, IA 50322
(515) 727-4872

Iowa Veterinary Specialties (Emergencies)

Open 24 hours per day, seven days a week
6110 Creston Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50321
(515) 280-3051

Iowa State University-Hixson-Lied Small Animal Hospital (Emergencies)

1809 S. Riverside Drive, Ames, IA 50010
515-294-4900

Des Moines Animal Control

(515) 283-4811

Des Moines Animal Care and Control

(515) 284-6905

West Des Moines Animal Control

(515) 222-3321

Urbandale Animal Control

(515) 278-3911

Windsor Heights Animal Control

(515) 279-3662

Clive Animal Control

(515) 278-1312

Animal Rescue League of Iowa (Main)

(515) 266-2005

Poison Control

(888) 426-4435