



PUPPY INFORMATION

DIET

With all the thousand diets on the market it is no wonder this is one of our biggest questions pet owners ask us.

Brands: We recommend companies held to a higher standard of the Global Nutrition Committee called WSAVA (Worldwide Small Animal Veterinary Association). These include Purina Pro Plan, Hill's Science Diet, Royal Canin, Eukanuba, Iams, and Wellness.

Amount & Frequency: Recommendations are based on the calories in each cup, which you can find listed on the back of the food bag. However, the bag often recommends a larger quantity than what is needed since their studies are based on lab animals which often have a precise exercise regimen.

- The best assessment is to monitor the body condition of your puppy and adjust the amount fed based on this. Continue feeding the current amount and see how your puppy responds. If you notice your puppy is leaving food behind after feedings, then you should reduce the amount offered. If you notice your puppy is looking for food after finishing and not "filling out" in the belly as desired, you should increase the food by 20% and reassess.

DENTAL HYGIENE

It is never too early to implement dental hygiene.

Toothbrushing: Of course, the best dental disease prevention is brushing the teeth. Start with introducing the flavored pet approved toothpaste, then work up to introducing the toothbrush with the paste on it. After a few introductions, slowly attempt to brush the front teeth. Once that is implemented, you should be able to work your way back to the molars. Make sure to praise your pet after every brushing.

Multimodal Approach: To achieve the best dental hygiene, a multimodal approach using 2 or more methods is best. In addition to brushing the teeth, you can also use dental chews & treats, water additive, dental wipes, or a mouth rinse.

Dental Cleanings: Dental disease can lead to further medical conditions (pain, infection, and bacteriemia to the organs: heart, lungs, liver, etc.) if not addressed. Once your pet becomes an adult, make sure your veterinarian checks the dental disease with every annual exam so you can determine when the first dental cleaning should be done. Once the dental cleaning is performed, continue the multimodal approach and annual exams to make sure we are staying on top of dental disease.

CHEW TOYS

When selecting chew toys, it is important the toys cannot be torn apart into pieces the puppy may ingest – this can result in the need for surgical removal if it causes an intestinal blockage. It is also important the toys do not damage the teeth – tooth fractures can lead to the need for extraction of the tooth.

Hardness rules: Select toys that are at least pliable/bendable with your hands or able to be dented with your fingernail.

- Kong toys are usually ideal as it is difficult to get pieces off and they are meant to add treats like cheese or peanut butter to make the chewing more fun for your pup

Toys to avoid:

- Rope toys (often eaten)
- Stuffed animals (often eaten)
- Antlers (often cause tooth fractures)
- Marrow bones (often cause tooth fractures and often get stuck on the lower jaw)

TRAINING

Keeping your pet busy is the best step into training a happy and healthy dog.

Routine: The biggest step in this is to start a routine. Puppies are very smart and if a routine has been implemented, they will anticipate the schedule. Scheduled feedings, quiet time, leash walks, and play time help both you and your pet get through the day.

House Training: This is one of the first tasks you'll teach your puppy.

- *Consistency*: Whether you decide to use potty pads or go outside, be consistent to avoid confusion.
- *Frequency*: Puppies generally cannot control their own bladder until 12 weeks of age; therefore, they need to go out every 2 hours while awake and active. Also make sure to take them to potty when they first wake up and after meals.
- *Focus*: If your puppy chooses not to eliminate, you need to place them in a confined, quiet area (crate) and attempt again in 3 to 5 minutes.
- *Praise*: When your puppy eliminates in the appropriate area, they should be rewarded with verbal praise and a treat. Only after eliminating should they be allowed to play and explore. Ideally, the training treats you use should be no more than 5 calories per treat.

Leash Training: This is an important part in the beginning of basic training.

- The collar or harness should be snug, but not tight. To size the collar/harness, place it on your puppy and tighten the collar to where you are able to fit 3 fingers under collar.
- Start with a non-retractable leash so the distance is consistent with training. You can start with leash walking in the backyard, allowing your pet to walk around and get use to having the leash attached. Slowly graduate to having your pet walk next to you with the leash and finally guiding your pet around the yard on the leash. Once we are comfortable with the leash, start with taking short walks around your neighborhood.

Piranha Puppy: Puppies, like human babies, explore the world with their mouths. Since puppies have teeth, sometimes they are destructive or inflict pain during their play and explorations.

- *Redirection*: Make sure to always keep a toy on hand. When you notice that your puppy is chewing on something they shouldn't, interrupt the behavior by clapping your hands or shouting "no." Then, replace what they are chewing on (whether it is your hand, furniture, etc) with a toy that is meant for chewing. This is a positive reinforcement to show a puppy what is acceptable to play with or chew on.
- *Overzealous play*: If your puppy is being more aggressive with play than desired, the best negative reinforcement is to discontinue playing with your puppy and go to another room. This will eventually help your puppy understand that playing too hard or biting you is not allowed and play time will stop.

Desensitization: This is a key role in training to not only help your family, but also the medical staff and groomer that will be helping take care of your puppy.

- You should handle the paws, ears, mouth, and belly daily. You should also practice holding your puppy still by picking them up or holding them in a seat with you. This teaches them it is normal and safe to be touched anywhere and it is okay to sit still when asked. If they do not receive this training, they could become afraid of objects needed for grooming or become difficult to medicate.
- Benefits of desensitization:
 - You – makes it easier for you to medicate or trim nails at home when the need arises.
 - Vet team – they can perform a thorough exam and treat your puppy when they are sick.
 - Groomer – they can perform a better cut with less risk of injury to your pet.
 - Puppy – they are not afraid when someone handles them for any of the above reasons.

SPAY AND NEUTER

The following information is cited from AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association), which creates best recommendations for hospital guidelines.

What does research show about spaying and neutering pets?

There is little data concerning the correct age to spay and neuter pets, but emerging research informs AAHA's guidelines. For example, cancer, orthopedic disease, behavioral problems, endocrine disorders, obesity, and urinary incontinence may be linked to sterilization status and the age at which the procedure is performed. The University of California, Davis, conducted a study on golden retrievers in 2013 that turned the world of veterinary medicine on its head concerning early spaying and neutering. Early sterilization prevented many issues, according to the study, but also appeared to increase the risk of other diseases, such as cranial cruciate ligament rupture, hemangiosarcoma, mast cell tumors, lymphosarcoma, and hip dysplasia. More research is needed, especially with different canine breeds, to help us understand the cause and effect of sterilization and the relationship between spay/neuter status and disease prevalence. More studies on the link between sterilization age and the onset of certain diseases also are needed. The decision about when to spay or neuter your pet is one you should make with your veterinarian. She is your most up-to-date resource, and her knowledge of your pet's particular breed and potential disease risk can help you make an informed decision about the appropriate age for your pet's sterilization.

As part of the battle against pet overpopulation, it used to be common practice to spay and neuter young pets as soon as it was safe to do so and early sterilization is still performed routinely in shelters.

When it comes to privately-owned dogs in secure homes, AAHA recommends:

- Small breed dogs (under 45 pounds projected adult body weight)
 - Neuter at 6 months of age.
 - Spay at 5-6 months of age, prior to the first heat.
- Large-breed dogs (over 45 pounds projected adult body weight)
 - Neuter at 9-15 months of age, after growth stops.
 - Spay at 5-15 months, depending on your dog's disease risk and lifestyle which is based on many factors—your veterinarian can help narrow down.

Many pet owners think their female pet needs to experience the joy of motherhood at least once or that their male pet will feel less masculine if he's neutered, but animals simply do not think that way. US pet owners choose not to spay or neuter their pets for a variety of reasons, including:

- They show or breed the animals
- Financial constraints
- Fear of anesthesia
- Lack of understanding of the benefits

These concerns might seem valid, but the reasons to spay or neuter far outweigh the risks of not doing so. Older show or breeding pets who are spayed or neutered can avoid various cancers and infections. Anesthesia in veterinary medicine is now on par with human medicine. If you're still not convinced that spaying or neutering your pet can lead to a happier, healthier, longer life, consider these benefits:

- Benefits of spay:
 - Decreased risk of breast cancer
 - Prevents heat cycles which cause yowling, crying, erratic behavior, and bloody vaginal discharge
 - Prevents unwanted litters or expensive c-sections
 - Prevents life threatening uterine infection that requires emergency surgery which can cost several thousand dollars
- Benefits of neuter:
 - Decreased risk of testicular cancer and perineal hernias
 - Prevents inappropriate behaviors such as roaming to find a mate, marking inside your home, and fighting with other males
 - Prevents need to eliminate urine odors after your home has been well-marked by your territorial male

VACCINES

Puppies go through a vaccine series to build their own immune system as their mother's antibodies received from nursing fade over time. Each set is given 3 to 4 weeks apart, with the last one being given at 16 to 20 weeks of age. Depending on when the series is begun, your puppy may get a total of 3 or 4 DHPP vaccines.

General Vaccine Info:

Core vaccines are recommended for all puppies as follows:

- Bordetella – highly contagious infectious cough caused by Bordetella bronchiseptica.
- DHPP – deadly viruses of Distemper, Hepatitis from adenovirus type 2, Parvovirus, and Parainfluenza
- Rabies – deadly virus which is 100% fatal and is required by Florida law to be kept current.

Non-core or Elective vaccines:

- Leptospirosis – caused by a contagious bacterium transmitted in urine of other animals (pets, wildlife, livestock) which causes kidney and/or liver failure. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED in Florida.**
- Influenza – respiratory virus which varies in severity. Recommended if your puppy will go to grooming, dog parks, day care, and boarding.
- Lyme – tick borne disease which causes a variety of disease including joint disease and kidney disease. Recommended if your puppy will visit Lyme endemic states, particularly the northeast (New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, etc.)

Neighborhood walks and puppy play dates: If your puppy is 12 weeks old and has received 2 DHPP vaccines, they can have minor interactions with other dogs. This means, meet/greet on a walk or play date with your friend/family's dog. Studies show this social interaction is important for puppies at this age, while the risk of contracting disease is relatively low with 2 vaccines.

Training: This can begin after 12 weeks of age with 2 DHPP vaccines also. Most group training for puppies younger than 16 weeks will require a record of the most updated vaccines based on the puppy's age. I recommend confirming this so you can be sure all puppies in the class will be up to date on vaccines, which decreasing risk to your puppy.

Grand Socializing: The final set (3 or 4 DHPP depending on age started) should be completed when socializing at dog parks, boarding, grooming or daycare.