



CONGRATULATIONS on the arrival of a new puppy to your home. All of us here at The George Veterinary Group hope that have many happy and healthy years together.

Vaccination

We routinely vaccinate puppies at 8 and 10 weeks of age. Up until this time, they will have a degree of protection from infectious diseases through the colostrum (first milk) from their mother. This protection begins to wane from 2 months onwards though.

Puppies are vaccinated against a range of potentially fatal diseases including: Distemper, Parvovirus, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Parainfluenza virus and Leptospirosis. They are fully immune 1 week after their second vaccination and are then safe to explore.

A booster vaccination is then needed every year, which also provides a good opportunity for us to give your dog a health check.

Worming

All puppies have worms regardless of the conditions into which they are born. This is because the main roundworm that affects puppies, *Toxocara canis*, passes to the pup while it is still in the uterus, and even after birth in the milk.

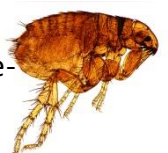
Therefore, we advise that puppies are wormed every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks old; then every month until 6 months old. Adults should be routinely wormed every three months unless there are very young children or people with poor immune systems in the household, in which case we will recommend more frequent worming. Besides causing damage to the intestine and potentially lungs, the eggs, which are passed in the faeces, are a **public health concern**. The migrating egg larvae that hatch can cause blindness in children and therefore if children play with your puppy, it is especially important that the puppy is wormed meticulously.

There are a number of good wormers available from us, please enquire at reception when it is necessary to worm your dog.

Fleas

Fleas are a potentially huge and expensive problem, which can very easily (and cheaply) be prevented. It is always best to keep up regular flea treatment as the majority of a fleas life cycle is spent in your home and *not on your pet*. The types of flea preventative treatments vary and we are happy to advise you about which would best suit your needs.

Some treatments kill the eggs in the environment in which the dog lives and prevents re-infection of your dog, while others aim to kill the flea at several stages in its life cycle.



All dogs will pick up fleas at some stage even if they have been treated; fleas firstly need to bite in order to ingest the product and die. They can also be a problem at any time of the year, not just the spring and summer months.

Feeding

Sensible feeding of the young animal is extremely important. Some problems are caused by not meeting its nutritional requirement or conversely exceeding it. In general, we advise that you aim for an average growth rate for the breed with a quality brand food. Fat puppies, become fat dogs and the excess fatty tissue laid down in the first year is much more difficult to lose than any fat put down in adulthood.

To ensure a correct growth rate and weight gain we advise that you feed strict portion-controlled meals of high energy density complete diet until adult body size is reached. Supplementation of a complete diet is **not necessary**. The food should be advertised as 'Puppy' or 'Junior' and large breed puppies (reaching more than 25kg in adulthood) should be fed a 'Large Breed Puppy/Junior'. We recommend HILLS Puppy or ROYAL CANIN Junior as both as these diets are scientifically formulated to provide the best start in life for your pet.

Socialisation and Exercise

Puppies have an early socialisation period up to 16 weeks of age and so it is important to get your puppy out and about as soon as possible. Care has to be taken until puppies are fully covered by their vaccinations (1 week after the 2nd vaccination) but they can be carried around outside and introduced to fully vaccinated and healthy dogs.

Most behavioural problems, particularly in relation to aggression and phobias are caused by poor socialisation early in life. Puppies should ideally be getting used to anything they are likely to encounter throughout their life including different people, children, animals, traffic and noises. A lot of adult dogs also have a phobia of loud noises. This can be prevented by getting puppies used these noises from the start. It is important to either ignore the puppy or ensure they have a positive association to the noise, for example playing a noise-related C.D in the background when they are playing. For more information speak to reception or one of the nursing team.



Your puppy is also invited to a 'Puppy Party' at the hospital in Malmesbury where there will be other puppies to play with and a nurse on hand to supervise and answer any questions you have.



Regular exercise is also important for young dogs to ensure muscular development as well as preventing early onset obesity. There are no hard and fast rules as to the amounts of exercise required but generally it is said around 5 minutes per month of life would be

enough and to vary the type of exercise; for example lead walks around the streets, running off lead in field and chasing toys. It is important to be aware that over-exercising when young can cause joint damage and lead to arthritis later in life.

Identification

It is currently a **legal requirement** for any dog in a public place to wear a collar with a tag showing **name** and **address** for the owner. It is also sensible to have a contact number on the tag.

There is now a means of identifying pets that is invisible, permanent, safe, reasonable priced and tamper-proof. It is call 'microchipping'. A microchip is approximately the size of a grain of rice and is inserted under the skin on the scuff of the neck in a similar fashion to a vaccination injection. All lost animals that are bought into the vets, police and animal shelters are routinely scanned for the presence of a microchip. Each chip has an individual barcode that corresponds to your details which are registered and held on the national database so that you can be contacted when your animal has been found. Several cases have been recorded of pets being re-united with their worried owners after having been missing for six months. **You must remember to update your contact details** with the chip company if you move house.

Microchipping is an essential part of the Pet Travel Scheme. In addition, a recent change in rules means that *after 6th April 2016 it will be compulsory for all dogs in the U.K. to be microchipped.*

Insurance

We are proud to say that the standard of veterinary care available to animals these days is extremely high, even to the extent of surpassing the care we receive ourselves. However, there is no NHS available for animals and good veterinary care is not cheap. When you consider that every one in three animals requires treatment as a result of an accident or illness, **we strongly recommend taking out pet insurance**. There are a lot of different companies that offer a range of policies, the best things is to shop around and try to get a lifelong policy. It is always distressing when a situation arises where the treatment required is not possible due to financial constraints: with insurance, you do not need to worry about the financial aspect of the treatment.

Ask at reception for helpful hints and tips on insuring your puppy.

Neutering

This is always a contentious issue if you do not intend to breed from your dog. We feel that neutering is particularly important for bitches because early neutering dramatically reduces

the incidence of several types of cancer later in life. Neutering before the second season greatly reduces the risk of mammary cancer and almost eliminates the risk of cancers of the ovaries and uterus. It is also important to be aware that bitches that come into season approximately every six months, with each season lasting an average of three weeks. During this time you will need to be very vigilant to prevent unwanted mating. This requires a month and half of close scrutiny for the bitch and worry for the owner every year.

Phantom pregnancies are common in un-neutered bitches. During this time, her behaviour can change and she may become aggressive. She may also start to produce milk.

Pyometra is a uterine infection and is a common condition in older bitches that haven't been neutered. If severe, it can be life threatening and emergency surgery is needed.

The main reason that we castrate males is to make them more socially acceptable and biddable pets. Castration prevents some forms of cancer later in life. It can also prevent and treat aggression, reduce wandering behaviours and will stop signs of hypersexuality.

Ideally, we spay females at 6 months of age or 3 months after their first season. Males can be castrated when they reach maturity at around 9 months of age.

Dental Care

Puppies have two sets of teeth in their life time: deciduous (baby teeth) and adult. The Deciduous teeth fall out at around 4-6 months to make way for the adult teeth coming through.



Even though the deciduous teeth fall out it is always best to start brushing your dog's teeth when they are young in order to get them used to having it done. Dogs that have their teeth brushed regularly will have less problems and will require less work done during adult life. It is important to introduce teeth brushing slowly and to use a specific dog tooth paste. If you would like more information, please ask at reception or speak to one of our nursing team.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns on 01666 823165.

You can also join in the fun on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/georgevethospital

We look forward to watching your puppy grow into a happy and healthy dog.

