

Socializing your new puppy

What is the best age to obtain my new puppy?

Since it is so important for the puppy to develop and maintain social attachments to their own kind, puppies ideally will remain with their mother and littermates until 8 weeks of age. When placed in the new home they can expand their social contacts to new people and species while they are still in their primary socialization period. By this time puppies will also begin to develop preferences for elimination sites, so this timing can also be helpful for housetraining.

What can I do to assist my puppy in its social development?

There should be little problem with a puppy that is less than 12 weeks of age developing healthy and lasting attachments to the people, sights and sounds in its new home. Your puppy is most likely to become fearful of stimuli that are not found in its day-to-day routine. Make a conscious effort to identify those people and situations that the puppy is not regularly exposed to. For example, if there are no children in the home, you might arrange regular play sessions with children. If you live in the country, make a few trips into the city, so that the puppy can be taken for walks on city streets, or through neighborhood plazas. Conversely, a puppy that grows up in the city might become fearful or aggressive toward farm animals that it was not exposed to during its early development.



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Introduce your puppy to as many new people and situations as possible, beginning in its first three months of development. People in uniforms, babies, toddlers, the elderly, the physically challenged are just a few examples that might lead to fear and anxiety, unless there is sufficient early exposure. Similarly, car rides, elevators, stairs, or the noises of cars, trains, airplanes, or hot air balloons are some examples of events and experiences to which the puppy might be usefully exposed.

One way to facilitate the introduction of the puppy to new situations and people is to provide a reward such as a favorite toy or biscuit each time it is exposed to a new stimulus. Having a stranger offer a biscuit to the puppy will teach it to look forward to meeting people and discourage hand-shyness since the puppy will learn to associate new friends and an outstretched hand with something positive. Once the puppy has learned to sit on command, have each new friend ask it to sit before giving the biscuit. This teaches a proper greeting and will make the puppy less likely to jump up on people.

Be certain that the puppy has the opportunity to meet and receive treats from a wide variety of people of all ages, races, appearance and both sexes during the formative months. There will of course be times when your puppy is in a new situation and you do not have treats. Be sure then to use a happy tone of voice and encourage your puppy. If your puppy seems to panic, back off a little and try again later, rather than aggravating the fear. Never reassure the fearful dog as this might serve to reward the fearful behavior.



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Is it healthy to take my puppy out in public at such a young age?

There is always a concern about the risks of taking the puppy out of its home before it is fully vaccinated because it may be exposed to infection before the vaccines have had time to become protective. However benefits gained from these new and early public appearances can be enormous and without them the risk of the puppy developing permanent fears or anxiety is a serious concern.

One solution is to have people and healthy vaccinated animals visit the puppy in its own home until it is sufficiently vaccinated and can be taken out. A compromise is to take the puppy out to meet people and other pets in low risk environments. As long as vaccines are up-to-date, taking the puppy for walks along the sidewalk and avoiding neighborhood parks where stools and urine might accumulate is generally safe and effective.

Another valuable aid is to enroll the puppy in puppy socialization classes. If these classes are held in a clean environment, and all puppies are screened for vaccination and health prior to each class, these classes provide varied and plentiful exposure to people and other dogs in a low risk environment.



Common Toxicities

Your pet’s world is full of new sights, smells, and objects to explore. But along with these new experiences come potential dangers for your pet. We have provided a list of common toxicities to your pet. This is not an exclusive list and any decision to give your pet something not specifically intended for animals should be discussed with your veterinarian

Human Medications

Medication	Toxic to Cats	Toxic to Dogs
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	✓	✓
Aspirin	✓	
Advil/Ibuprofen (NSAIDs)	✓	✓

- * There are many other human prescription medications that are toxic to pets.
- * Before giving your pet any non-prescribed veterinary medication, please ask your veterinarian.

Common Toxicities

Foods

Food	Also Found In	Toxic to Cats	Toxic to Dogs
Alcohol	Vanilla Extract, Raw Bread Dough	✓	✓
Caffeine	Coffee, Coffee Grounds	✓	✓
Grapes, Raisins			✓
Hops		✓	✓
Macadamia Nuts			✓
Marijuana		✓	✓
Certain Mushrooms		✓	✓
Nicotine	Tobacco	✓	✓
Onions/Garlic	Baby Food	✓	✓
Theobromine	Chocolate	✓	✓
Xylitol	Sugarless Candy, Gum, Peanut Butter		✓

*If your pet has ingested any of these foods, please note the type of food and amount ingested. Also please try to keep the label if possible.

Common Toxicities

Plants, Flowers, Pesticides, and Chemicals:



Signs that your pet is having a Veterinary Emergency

Urgent or emergency care:

You know its an emergency when your dog ingests something poison or has a traumatic event such as a dog fight, but you do not always know when to take him to the vet for less obvious reasons. Here is a list of symptoms that require immediate attention and assessment by a veterinarian.

Here are some symptoms you should watch for:

1. Changes in breathing – fast, labored or loud. Sounds of choking, drooling and distressed breathing can all be signs of respiratory distress or something obstructing the airway.
2. lethargy can be sign of many serious illnesses including pneumonia, anemia, infectious disease. If your pet is lethargic, you need to take it to the vet.
3. Blood in urine or stool – can be a sign of obstruction or infection.
4. Restless – usually a sign of pain. When a dog or cat cannot get comfortable, it may be a sign of intestinal pain, bloat, orthopedic – back or neck pain. If your pet cannot settle in and rest comfortably, it needs to be seen by the veterinarian.
5. Straining to urinate in either dogs or cats means they may have a UTI or may be blocked and cannot urinate. This is very painful and life threatening.
6. Vomiting – protracted which means vomit, vomit, vomit...this can be a sign of obstruction or ingestion of a poison.



Signs that your pet needs to Schedule a Veterinary Appointment

Non-emergency symptoms that signal your pet should see a vet:

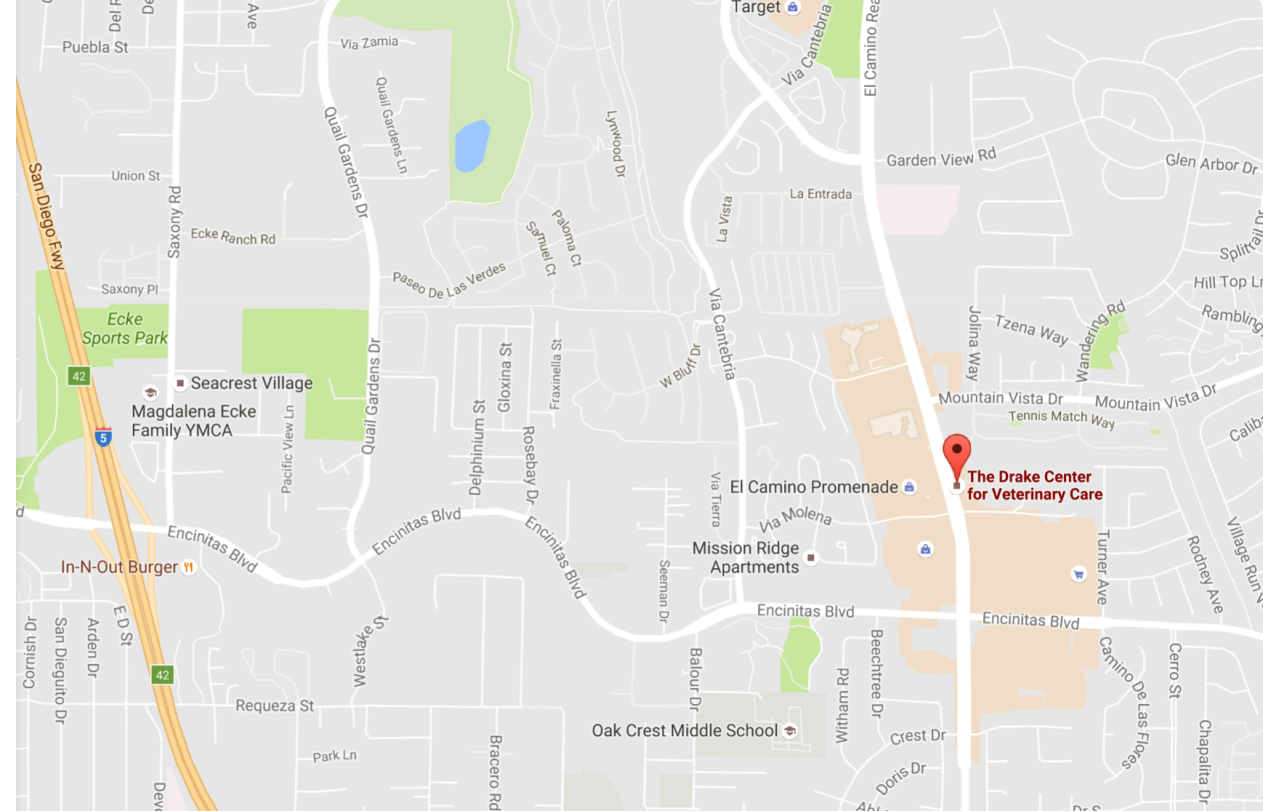
1. Behavioral changes – less active, sleeping in different locations,
2. Itching – signs allergic reactions
3. Bad breath
4. Changes in eating or drinking pattern. Eating less or drinking more are both serious symptoms.
5. Weight loss – is usually a sign of illness in pets. Unless you are actively dieting your pet, they will not lose weight naturally.
6. Reluctance to jump up or a reluctance to go for walks. When dogs or cats change their normal exercise pattern, it is usually a sign of pain or weakness.



We are here for you!

In general, you know your pet well. You know when things are not normal. Be aware that these subtle signs can be signs of more serious illness. Our pets rely on us to be aware of their general health and take of our health needs by bringing us to the veterinarian.

It is very helpful if you have some type of relationship with your veterinarian and for your veterinarian to know your pet. Semi annual exams allow the best opportunity for you to partner with your veterinarian to provide optimal care for your pet. It is during these visits that your veterinarian can assess weight, nutrition, exercise, dental health, metabolic health and overall good health. During these visits, you and your veterinarian can discuss changes and concerns, make plans for optimal health. When your vet knows your pet, there is a great advantage when something goes wrong because they already have a great knowledge of your pet.



Contact Us

To schedule an appointment!

TheDrakeCenter.com

(760) 753-9393

**195 N. El Camino Real
Encinitas, CA. 92024**