

Intestinal Parasites

Heartworms

are the most life-threatening of all canine parasites. These worms, which can reach a length of 14 inches, live in the heart of the dog, put stress on the heart, restrict blood flow to the organs, and cause organ failure that can lead to death.

Hookworms

attach to the dog's intestinal lining with hook-like teeth and feed on the dog's blood. Their eggs are released into the dog's intestine and passed through the feces. The eggs then hatch into larvae that can be swallowed by another dog, or can penetrate the dog's skin.

Roundworms

are typically found in most puppies. Puppies are either born with or acquire roundworms through their mother's milk. Older dogs can become infected through contact with soil containing roundworm eggs.

Whipworms

live in the large intestine and cecum of the dog. They can cause diarrhea, weight loss and dehydration. This parasite is very difficult to detect and also to eliminate.

Tapeworms

are the most common intestinal parasite of dogs. Puppies become infected with them when they swallow fleas; tapeworm eggs live inside the flea. When the dog chews or licks its skin as a flea bites, the flea may be swallowed. The flea is digested within the dog's intestine; the tapeworm hatches and then anchors itself to the intestinal lining. Therefore, exposure to fleas may result in a new infection in as little as two weeks. Dogs infected with tapeworms will pass small segments of the worms in their stool. The segments are white in color and look like grains of rice. They are about 1/8 inch long and may be seen crawling on the surface of the stool. They may also stick to the hair under the tail. If that occurs, they will dry out, shrink to about half their size and become golden in color. Tapeworm segments do not pass every day or in every stool sample; therefore, inspection of several consecutive bowel movements may be needed to find them. We may examine a stool sample in our office and not see them, and then you may find them the next day at home.

Flea Control

One female flea can lay up to 2000 eggs in her lifetime which is why just **a few fleas can cause a terrible infestation in a very short period of time**. The flea lifecycle occurs in four stages: the egg stage, the larval stage, the pupae stage and finally the adult stage. Most typically, all you see is the adult portion of this lifecycle which accounts for only 5% of the total population. The presence of fleas can pose many health problems as well. Infection to the skin, tapeworms and anemia are a few of the health threats fleas can introduce. For an allergic pet, one flea can cause such intense itching that your pet may chew out his hair and traumatize his skin. In addition, fleas can be carriers of several zoonotic diseases that can be dangerous to you and your family.

The products now available for flea control are better than they have ever been in the past. **Sentinel** is an **insect growth inhibitor** combined with an **anti-parasitic medication** and is the key to effective long-term flea control. Sentinel prevents the development of mature fleas by destroying the egg and larval stage of development. These two stages account for **85% percent of the typical flea population**. Sentinel is **NOT AN INSECTICIDE** and can be used safely for all dogs over 4 weeks of age and over 2 pounds.

Since Sentinel provides the benefits of heartworm, whipworm, roundworm and hookworm protection with the benefits of flea infestation prevention, we typically recommend **Sentinel** for all dogs. Sentinel is available in a convenient monthly flavored tablet.

For pets that frequent beaches, parks or other public areas, or for animals that have flea sensitivity, we recommend the use of **Comfortis** or **Bravecto – on an as needed basis**. Using these products more often will increase the inevitability of resistance, which is already beginning to occur. Using Sentinel **in combination with** one of these adulticides is the most effective flea control approach you can offer your dog.

Determining the most effective pest management approach can be confusing since there are so many products touting their own protocols and recommendations. The doctors at The Drake Center have spent a great deal of time researching the most effective products on the market in order to make flea control simple and easy for you. We hope you will follow our recommendation, as we are confident that the above approach is the most ideal and cost effective method available.

NUTRITION

*There are many choices of dog foods.
What should I feed my puppy?*

Diet is extremely important in the growing months of a dog's life. There are two important criteria that should be met in selecting a food for your puppy. We recommend a **PET STORE QUALITY FOOD** made by a national dog food company (not a generic or local brand), and a form of food **MADE FOR PUPPIES**. This should be fed until your puppy is between 10 and 18 months of age depending on the breed. The specific brand that we recommend for most puppies is Science Diet puppy food. Hill's is a reputable company that does extensive testing of their diets. The diets are highly palatable to most puppies and cause little gastrointestinal problems because of the high quality ingredients.

There is a specific diet made by Science Diet for large breed puppies. This diet is restricted in calcium and calories. Feeding this diet has been shown to reduce some orthopedic problems in rapidly growing, large breed puppies.



NUTRITION

Feeding dry, canned or semi-moist food is acceptable. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Dry food is the least expensive. The quality brands of dry food are just as nutritious as the canned diets and can be fed as the sole source of nutrition. Semi-moist and canned diets are considerably more expensive than dry food. They are often more appealing to dogs' taste but they are not more nutritious. The semi-moist foods are high in sugar.

Switching foods frequently can lead to a dog with a finicky appetite. It is better to start with a high quality diet and stick to it. As humans we enjoy eating a variety of foods. Most dogs actually prefer not to change from one food to another unless they are trained to do so by the way you feed them. Do not feel guilty if your dog is happy to eat one food day after day.



NUTRITION

Additions of cooked green veggies (broccoli, leafy greens, green beans) or some clean (not fatty or bone filled) proteins to your dogs diet is ok in amounts up to 25% of their total fed amount. This will allow for some healthy whole foods and still maintain a good well balanced diet. If you choose to give your puppy table food, be sure that at least 90% of their diet is good quality puppy food and that the table food be very low in fat. Fatty foods are the biggest culprit in vomiting and diarrhea disorders in dogs that eat table food.

Dog food commercials can be misleading. Most commercials promote dog food on one basis, TASTE. Most of the “gourmet” canned foods are marketed to appeal to owners who want the best for their dogs; however, they do not offer any nutritional advantage over a good quality dry food and are considerably more expensive. If your dog eats a gourmet food for very long, it will probably not be happy with other foods. If your pet needs a special diet later in life due to a health problem, he/she will be very unlikely to accept it.



NUTRITION

How often should I feed my puppy?

The most popular feeding method and the one we recommend is called “meal feeding.” This means that the puppy is fed at specific times of the day. A measured amount of food should be fed three times per day to puppies between 7 and 12 weeks of age. What is not eaten in 30 minutes should be taken away. If the food is eaten within five minutes, the quantity is probably not sufficient and should be increased. Puppies fed in this manner generally begin to cut out one of the meal times between three and four months of age. If a feeding is ignored for several days, it should be discontinued.



Neutering/Spaying

Why should I have my female dog spayed?

Spaying is the removal of the uterus and ovaries. Spayed females will no longer have heat periods, will no longer attract male dogs and will no longer be able to become pregnant. Spaying prevents unwanted litters of puppies. Intact male dogs will go to great lengths to mate with females in heat. Despite your best efforts, accidents often happen.

It has been proven that as the female dog gets older, there is a significant incidence of breast cancer and uterine infections if she has not been spayed. Spaying before she has any heat periods will virtually eliminate the chance of either. If you do not plan to breed your dog, we strongly recommend that she be spayed before her first heat. This can be done any time after four months of age.

Why should I have my male dog neutered?

Neutering offers several advantages. Intact male dogs are more likely to roam in search of females. They are more likely to fight and be aggressive, especially with other male dogs. Neutering does not calm down a hyperactive dog or change a dog's personality.

As dogs age, the prostate gland frequently enlarges and causes difficulty urinating and defecating. It is often more prone to developing infections (prostatitis) or cancer (prostatic adenocarcinoma.) Neutering will greatly reduce the incidence of these diseases. The surgery can be performed any time after four months of age.

All dogs over 30 pounds (at adulthood) should have a hip radiograph to screen for hip dysplasia at the time of surgical altering.



Neutering/Spaying

When should I have my dog spayed or neutered?

While most dogs should be altered around 6 months, based upon the dog's breed and behavioral issues, your veterinarian may recommend earlier or later time schedule. These are discussions to have with your veterinarian as you go through the puppy vaccine and wellness schedule.

Misconception #1: Spay and neuter procedures cause dogs to become overweight

Neutering a male dog will reduce the levels of testosterone in their body which have a positive impact on weight control. However, it is very possible to keep neutered and spayed dogs very fit simply with portion control and a regular exercise program. Lack of exercise and overfeeding will cause your dog to pack on the extra pounds, not spaying or neutering. Keeping your dog fit is very much in the control of its owner.

Misconception #2: Spay and neuter procedures will cause severe changes in demeanor

Although aggressive tendencies in male dogs will be reduced through neutering, the fear that you will be getting back a dog with a significantly different personality after surgery is just not true.

Little known misconception #3: Your dog may grow a hipster mustache

This simply isn't true... *unfortunately.*



Dental Disease

What kinds of dental problems do pets have?

Dental disease is as common in dogs and cats as it is in humans. The most common form of dental disease in humans is caries (cavities). However, this is not the case in our pets. The most common form of dental disease is tartar buildup. Ultimately, this leads to infection and tooth loss. One of the main factors determining the amount of tartar buildup is the individual chemistry in the mouth. Some dogs and cats need yearly cleanings; others need a cleaning only once every few years.

What does tartar do to the teeth?

If tartar is allowed to remain on the teeth, several things may happen:

01

The tartar will mechanically push the gums away from the roots of the teeth. This allows the teeth to loosen in their sockets and infection to enter the root socket, causing the teeth to fall out or need to be extracted.



02

Infection will accumulate in the mouth, resulting in gingivitis (irritation of the gums around the base of the teeth), tonsillitis, and pharyngitis (sore throat). Although antibiotics may temporarily suppress the infection, if the tartar is not removed from the teeth, infection will quickly return.

03

Infection within the mouth will be picked up by the blood stream and carried to other parts of the body. Kidney and liver infections, as well as infections involving the heart valves, frequently begin in the mouth.

Dental Disease

What is involved in cleaning my pets' teeth?

Proper cleaning of the teeth requires complete cooperation of the patient so plaque and tartar can be removed properly. Anesthesia is required to thoroughly clean the teeth. Although anesthesia always carries a degree of risk, the modern anesthetics in use in our hospital minimize this risk, even for older animals.

Scaling

removes the tartar above and below the gum line. This is done with hand instruments and ultrasonic cleaning equipment

Polishing

makes the surface of the teeth smooth so they are resistant to additional plaque formation.

Flushing

removes dislodged tartar from the teeth and helps to remove the bacteria that accompany tartar.

Fluoride

coating decreases teeth sensitivity, strengthens enamel, and decreases the rate of future plaque formation.

