



## NEW PUPPY GUIDE



Bringing a new puppy home is an exciting time. We have put together some information to help you with some of the key issues you will need to consider now you have taken on your new baby!

### ***Diet & Feeding***

What you feed your new puppy is so important. Pups have different nutritional needs to people or even adult dogs. To ensure they get the best start, we recommend you feed your puppy a good quality, puppy-specific, premium dry food as the basis of their diet. In addition to this you can add **small** amounts of good quality canned food, raw or cooked meats, home cooked pet food or even table scraps (being careful to avoid toxic foods like onions, garlic, macadamias, grapes/sultanas, chocolate or spicy/spoiled foods).

Large breed pups like Rottweilers, Great Danes, Labradors and German Shepherds should ideally be fed a puppy dry food specifically formulated for large-breed pups to provide the appropriate calcium to phosphorus ratio required for the growth of their big bones.

- Pups up to 10 weeks of age should be fed 4 times per day.
- Pups 10 weeks to 6 months of age should be fed 3 times per day.
- Pups 6 months - 12/15 months should be fed twice daily

Dogs over 12-15 months can then continue with twice daily feeding, OR be changed to once daily feeds if preferred (in this case reduce the size of the second meal slowly to phase it out)

- *Small breed* pups should be fed puppy-specific food until at least 10 months of age
- *Medium breed* pups should be fed puppy-specific food until at least 12 months of age
- *Large breed* pups should be fed large breed puppy-specific food until at least 15 months of age

Here at CPH we recommend Royal Canin and Hills Science Diets, but there are many premium foods available which will provide excellent nutrition for your pup.



Some breeders recommend Weetbix and milk for breakfast for pups. Unlike people, animals generally don't desire breakfast to be a different type of meal than the other meals of the day, and many dogs are in fact lactose intolerant, so we would recommend all three meals contain the good quality dry food outlined above. Other breeders recommend all puppy food should be home cooked and to avoid commercial diets. It is incredibly hard to

get the nutrient and mineral balance your pup needs correct in home cooked foods and we would strongly advise against this unless the diet is professionally formulated for you.

Treats like pigs ears and rawhide chews can be offered in moderation. Raw bones are a great way to keep pups entertained and improve dental hygiene, but should be size appropriate. Small dogs and pups can be offered chicken wings or necks, but large dogs and pups can potentially swallow these whole, so lambs necks and brisket bones can be better for larger dogs. Marrow bones are very hard and quite fatty and can actually damage teeth and cause tummy upsets so should be avoided. Lamb shanks often splinter and should also be avoided. NEVER feed cooked bones to your pet. They may splinter or break into shards and cause severe intestinal damage and potentially life-threatening complications.



### ***Parasite Prevention***

There are many parasites which can affect dogs which can cause illness, discomfort or even shorten your pet's lifespan. The main parasites which should be treated and prevented in our area are intestinal worms (including tapeworm, roundworm, hookworm and whipworm), heartworm and fleas.

*Intestinal worms* can cause stunted growth, weight loss and diarrhoea in animals and can even potentially cause issues in people (who can pick up the larval stages of the worms from their pets). Intestinal worming should be carried out every 2 weeks in pups up to 12 weeks of age, monthly from 12 weeks to 6 months of age, then 3 monthly in adult animals.

*Heartworm* is a worm which is transferred from infected dogs to other dogs by mosquito bites. It is more common in areas which are hot and humid and have higher numbers of mosquitoes, but is seen in low levels in our area. It is a potentially fatal parasite as the worms mature into adults in the blood stream and can become so numerous they can actually block the chambers of the heart. Due to the seriousness of heartworm disease, we recommend you start your pup on a treatment which prevents heartworm as early as possible.

*Fleas* can cause major issues in pets as a result of discomfort and pain due to their bites, but in more serious cases they can also transmit other parasites (like tapeworm) and some animals can be allergic to their bite, meaning they can develop widespread allergic skin rashes and itch even after a single flea bite. Fleas can be very difficult to control and require the use of good modern flea control products treating not only the affected pet, but all in-contact animals as well as the environment to reduce the risk of re-infection (the fleas on your pet represent only 5% of the total flea population in your environment).

*Ticks* are not something we commonly see in the local area. We do sometimes see bush ticks, which whilst potentially irritating for your pet, are harmless. Paralysis ticks which are seen towards Bairnsdale and north east Victoria, and most commonly in NSW and QLD, are a serious threat. If you are likely to travel with your pet into areas where these ticks are found, we would strongly recommend that you take preventative measures. Our nursing staff are able to discuss tick preventatives with you.

There are numerous products available to treat and prevent these key parasites. Your vet will discuss these with you and determine which product is best suited for you and your pet. Our nurses are also well trained to talk to you about these options either over the counter or over the phone. As a general rule, supermarket branded parasite control is not recommended as they are generally less effective than veterinary products (due to drug licensing and regulatory laws).

## **Vaccination**

As with humans, vaccinations are important to reduce the risk of your animal picking up potentially fatal diseases from other animals and the environment. In Australia we routinely vaccinate against Parvovirus, Infectious Hepatitis and Distemper, as well as Canine Cough (Parainfluenza virus and Bordatella bronchiseptica).

*Parvovirus* is a deadly virus which causes lethargy, high fever, listlessness, vomiting and diarrhoea (usually containing blood) in dogs. It is highly contagious and the virus is shed in the faeces of infected dogs and can live in the soil in favourable conditions for up to 9 months. Treatment of affected dogs has mixed success. Vaccination is the only certain method of preventing parvovirus.

*Distemper* is a viral disease spread via the air and direct contact and can affect dogs, ferrets and foxes. It initially causes fever, red watery eyes, runny nose, then later vomiting, diarrhoea, anorexia and eventually neurological signs like seizures and paralysis. There is no known cure for Distemper so vaccinations are the only proven protection against it.

*Canine Infectious Hepatitis* is a virus which spreads via urine, faeces, saliva, blood and even the nasal discharge of infected animals. It causes fever, depression, cough, tender abdomen and eventually liver disease which can be fatal. Treatment is possible, but vaccination is very protective.

*Canine cough* (also known as kennel cough) has both viral and bacterial causes and is similar to whooping cough in people. It causes a dry hacking cough which sounds a little like something stuck in the dog's throat. It is rarely fatal and responds well to treatment. Vaccination is not 100% protective but usually decreases the severity and duration of the symptoms. Dogs are most commonly infected by going to (or being in contact with dogs that have gone to) boarding kennels or the pound.

Puppies are generally vaccinated at 6-8 weeks with a C3 vaccination which covers Parvovirus, Distemper and Hepatitis, and then again at 12 weeks and 16 weeks of age with a C5 vaccination (which is a C3 plus the two components of Kennel Cough). Dogs are then required to have a booster vaccination 12 months after the 16 week vaccination. At this time your vet will discuss options such as Triennial vaccinations and titre testing, and formulate a vaccination plan which suits both you and your pet.



## **Socialisation**

It is important to socialise your puppy as early as possible. Pups are generally best introduced to other dogs, people and animals around 10-14 weeks of age, but it is important to remember your pup is not fully protected by vaccination until about 1 week after the 16 week injection, so socialisation must be done in a safe environment.

Puppy school provides excellent socialisation for your pup with other dogs of a similar age and vaccination status in a safe, controlled environment. It is also a great way for you to learn some basic training, especially tips on toilet training and information on raising a well-adjusted, sociable pup. Here at CPH we have teamed up with an excellent behaviourist (Natalya Dundovich) to offer a wonderful Puppy School. Natalya is also available to run in-home assessments to work on more challenging issues if needed. Our nurses can give you information on our next available puppy school class and the times they run.

Socialisation with dogs outside of your home and puppy school should be undertaken with caution. Ideally make sure any dogs your puppy meets are well-mannered, sociable dogs who are not likely to behave in an aggressive or intimidating manner towards your pup. A negative interaction with another dog during this socialisation period can

lead to a lifelong behavioural problem for your pup so take care to make all experiences with other dogs and animals as positive and rewarding as possible.

Be mindful not to take your pup out to places like dog parks or even popular areas where there may be many dogs of unknown vaccination status (and temperament). It is more likely for your dog to pick up a virus in these heavily-populated areas if they are not fully vaccinated, and also the chances of meeting unsociable or aggressive dogs is increased.



### ***Microchipping***

A microchip is a small device about the size of a grain of rice which carries a unique 15 digit code which is then linked (via a computer database) to owner contact details. Microchipping is compulsory for all pets in Victoria and many pups will arrive into their new homes already microchipped. It is important to keep your details up to date on the registry to make sure if your pet gets lost, they can always be returned to you. Only authorised people have access to the online microchip registries and are not authorised to give out your details to a member of the public without your consent. Please let us know if you wish to check your details are all up to date on the microchip registry, and we can check all the current details for you.

### ***Pet Insurance***

Pet insurance is becoming increasingly popular amongst pet owners, and for good reason. With increasing costs of living and more specialised medical and surgical treatments becoming available for pets, having pet insurance means you have the luxury of making treatment decisions with your heart, not your wallet.

There are many pet insurance companies and policies available, and while we cannot recommend one for you, we would recommend doing your research and reading policy fine print to make sure you are getting the most suitable policy for your situation. Online policy comparison tools are available and can be helpful to get you started on the search for your best policy.

### ***Desexing***

Desexing your dog (spaying for females, castration for males) is something we strongly recommend here at CPH. Desexing animals decreases the risk of many potential issues like:

- Pyometra (infection in the uterus, often following a heat cycle)
- Ovarian cancer
- Uterine cancer
- Mammary (breast) cancer
- Testicular cancer
- Prostatic hyperplasia (enlarged prostate)
- Peri-anal herniation

- Behavioural issues (often related to hormone-driven aggression)

The age at which you have your pet desexed is generally best based on a few factors. Recent studies suggest it is beneficial for larger breed dogs to be desexed later than what was previously considered the recommended age of desexing (6 months). It is now generally thought that large breed dogs are best desexed at 9-12 months, whilst smaller breeds are fine desexed at the more traditional 6-8 months. This is a fairly simple choice for males, but in females there is some variation based on breed and the home environment.

Small breed female dogs can come into heat any time from 6 months onwards. Larger breeds can be anywhere from 10-12 months old during their first season. We often recommend desexing before the first season to reduce the risk of unwanted pregnancy, the mess associated with the season (often bleeding for up to 4 weeks) and also the impact that a season can have on the risk of developing mammary tumours (every season increases the risk). Larger breeds are often best left until after the first season so long as owners are prepared to keep them safely away from undesexed male dogs and are willing to cope with bleeding etc.

It is generally best to consult with one of our vets to work out an appropriate desexing age for your pet based on your home environment and the breed of your dog. We will also be able to give you an individualised estimate of the cost of desexing as well as information on the procedure and ways to make the surgery safer for your pet.

