

Vaccinations

The core vaccinations recommended for every cat includes Rabies and the annual booster. The annual booster vaccinates against 5 common infectious agents: Rhinotracheitis virus, Calicivirus and Panleukopenia virus. Multiple vaccinations are required to build up immunity in kittens. As adults, they only need to receive the annual booster every year, and the Rabies is only once every 3 years as long as the vaccination is given on time.

A Feline Leukemia Virus vaccination is also commonly recommended based on the kitten's lifestyle. The Leukemia virus is a virus. Other vaccinations that are commonly recommended include Bordetella and Lymes. Bordetella (or Kennel Cough) is an annual vaccine recommended for all puppies since puppies are commonly exposed to the bacteria. It is recommended for adults who are exposed to other dogs including being groomed, boarded at a kennel, and walking in public parks. Lymes is a bacteria spread by ticks. Any dog who is at risk of being exposed to ticks should receive this annual vaccine.

Common side effects seen with vaccinations include lethargy, soreness at the site of the injection, and decreased appetite. These signs generally resolve within 24-48 hours after the vaccine has been given. You should call your veterinarian immediately if you note any facial swelling or difficulty breathing in your dog.

Parasites

Nearly all puppies are born with intestinal parasites. Puppies should be dewormed every 2 weeks until they are 4 months old. Strongid is a dewormer that is effective against the common puppy parasites, roundworms and hookworms. Puppies are commonly exposed to and more susceptible to other parasites as well. We recommend have a fecal performed to identify any parasites that may require additional treatment.

All puppies should be protected against fleas and heartworm. Heartworms are a parasite of the heart that is spread by mosquitoes. Both fleas and heartworm are common in this area. They should also be protected against ticks if they are exposed to wooded areas, deer, or tall grass areas. Your veterinarian can recommend the appropriate preventative for your pet.

Nutrition

Providing your pet with a high quality food appropriate for your dog's size is very important for healthy growth. Large breed dogs have different nutritional requirements than small breed dogs. Large breed dogs should also be fed puppy until they are about 9 months old. Small breed dogs only require puppy food until they are 6 months old since they do not grow as much as a large breed dog. Small breed dogs require more frequent meals (3-4 times a day) until they are 6 months old since they are less able to control their blood sugar levels than adults or large breed dogs. Large breed puppies can be fed twice daily.

Higher quality foods have less fillers and more digestible ingredients that promote a better fur coat, healthier skin and produce less feces. Feeding on at regular intervals with the food left out for a short period of time will encourage regular bowel movements as well as reinforce your role as the leader of your pet.

Basic Handling / Desensitization

Pet owners should handle their pet's mouth, paws, ears and body frequently. This will desensitize your puppy to having these areas handled later on. Pets tend to tolerate general grooming behavior such as nail trims, combing, brushing the teeth and ear cleaning. Bathing your pet or placing them in small amounts of water can also help with bathing later on in life.

Microchipping

A Home-Again microchip can also be placed under the skin of your pet. This microchip will allow for life-long association of your pet with you. Veterinarians, animal shelters and Humane Societies have a scanner that reads a specific number assigned to your pet. This number will allow you to be contacted when your pet is discovered. Other services associated with the Home Again company can be purchased for a yearly fee, but your contact information will always be on record for your pet.

Spaying and Neutering

Spaying and neutering should be performed at 3-6 months of age. Larger breed dogs can be spayed or neutered closer to 3 months old. For small breed dogs, having the procedure performed at 6 months of age is recommended due to their propensity to retain baby teeth. The baby teeth, especially the canines, generally fall out on their own by 6 months. If they do not fall out, they have to be removed under anesthesia to prevent the teeth from becoming crowded and infected. It is best to perform the spay or neuter and the tooth removal at the same time so your pet does not have to undergo anesthesia twice.

Spaying should be performed before your pet has their first heat cycle. The risk of developing breast cancer later on in life significantly increases with each heat cycle. The risk of infections and cancer of the reproductive tract are eliminated as well by having your pet spayed. Many pet owners prefer to avoid the annoying behavior of their pet in heat too.

Neutering your pet eliminates the chance of reproductive tract diseases such as infections, cancers and prostate growth. Marking their territory with urine, wandering off, aggression and other common male behaviors can also be reduced or eliminated by neutering your pet before they sexually mature.

Gastropexy

Gastropexy is a surgery that tacks the stomach in place. A condition called Gastric Dilated Volvulus (GDV) can occur in dogs where the stomach becomes inflated with gas and then twists upon itself. This condition is highly fatal and progresses rapidly. Large, deep chested dogs such as Great

Danes, Weimaraners, Saint Bernards, Irish Setters, Standard Poodles, Irish Wolfhounds, German Shepherds, and Doberman Pinschers are at risk of developing this condition. Having a gastropexy performed at the time of the spay or neuter to prevent this condition from occurring may be recommended for at risk breeds.