

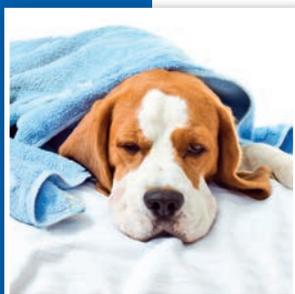
# PUPPY ADVICE



**Cromwell Vets**  
Over 100 years of care

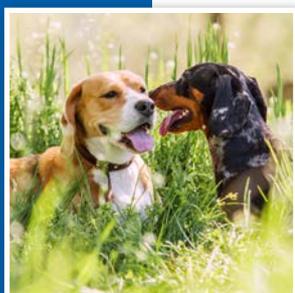
## Vaccination

Vaccines work by stimulating the body to produce its own defence against infection. The first vaccination can be given from eight weeks of age. Before this, the maternally derived antibodies (MDA) received from the mother provide some protection. The second vaccination is given 4-6 weeks later, usually at 12 weeks old.



Vaccinations will protect your puppy from life-threatening conditions including distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, para-influenza, leptospirosis and the extremely unpleasant illness kennel cough (infectious tracheobronchitis). Despite its name, it is not just spread in a kennel environment. It is a highly infectious airborne disease that is spread when your dog comes into contact with others, such as; in kennels, training classes or even at the park. This is why it is included in the Cromwell Vets protocol as standard.

At Cromwell Vets we only use the latest vaccines. Our current vaccine offers improved protection against Leptospirosis (the vaccine is known as L4) and covers 85% of strains. If your puppy has had their first vaccination elsewhere they may have had the L2 vaccine (only protects against 35% of Leptospirosis strains), this is why it may be necessary for your puppy to have a third injection if this is the case.



A week after the second vaccination has been given, your puppy can be walked in public areas and socialised. Until this point, your puppy should be kept in your house and garden but must be carried in public areas and contact with unknown dogs must be avoided.

Your dog will need to have annual boosters with the veterinary surgeon. This is necessary to maintain a high level of immunity. Without regular vaccinations your dog's immunity will wane leaving them at higher risk of infection. At the time of their vaccination the vet will give your pet a thorough examination to ensure they are in good health.

## Worms

Worms are internal parasites which can cause serious illness and can be life-threatening on rare occasions. There are many different types of worms our pets are exposed to and some can spread to people (children and the elderly being the most vulnerable). When a pet is infected with worms, the eggs are shed in their faeces, contaminating the environment thus continuing the worm life cycle. To protect your puppy (and your family) ensure you bag and bin their faeces appropriately, treat your dog for worms as advised and always wash your hands after handling faeces and soil that may have been contaminated with faeces.



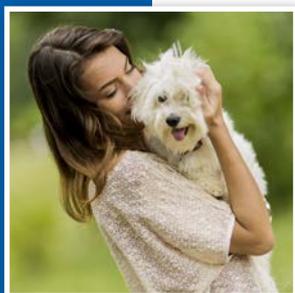
Contrary to some beliefs, you need to worm your dog regularly throughout their life not just if you see worms in your pet's faeces (which is only when the burden is already extremely high). The breeder should have wormed your puppy regularly from two weeks of age. Once they are in their new home, they should be wormed every month until six months old, and then at least every three months throughout their adult lives. If your puppy becomes a scavenger, eats soil or other animal's faeces, they live in a multi-pet household, or you have young children, monthly worming would be more appropriate.

## Fleas

Puppies need to be protected against external parasites too. Fleas can make your puppy miserable and they can pose a serious threat to health. Aside from skin irritation (which can be serious), fleas can also cause anaemia and transmit tapeworms (an intestinal worm which can also infect people).

The flea life cycle also involves an egg and larval stage in the environment, and thanks to central heating, our homes provide the perfect habitat. Once an infestation is present in the home, it can be extremely difficult to eliminate and can take months.

We recommend treating your dog for fleas monthly throughout their life to prevent an infestation taking hold.



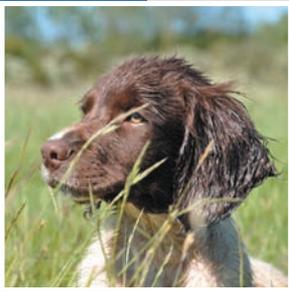
## Ticks

Ticks are parasitic arachnids commonly picked up in woodland or long grass areas. Once they find a host, the tick embeds their mouth-parts into the skin to feed on the blood, growing up to 600 times their original size. They cause irritation, infection, abscesses, skin reactions and can easily transmit disease (such as Lyme Disease).

When embedded in the skin, ticks look like small brown or grey warts and can be difficult to remove. We recommend using a specialist tick removal tool which is available from our surgeries. Incorrect removal techniques can result in the tick's mouth-parts being left in the skin causing infection.

We advise thoroughly checking your dog after walks, especially after walks in woodland or long grass, and remove any ticks immediately. We recommend monthly preventative treatment.

Some areas of the country have a higher tick population, extra vigilance is advised.



## Worm, flea & tick treatments

There are many products on the market but not all will kill all types of worms or be the most effective at killing fleas and ticks. As vets, we have prescription-only treatments including spot-ons and tasty treat tablets, which we are confident are the optimal choice for parasite control. Different products suit different dogs and their lifestyle (such as scavengers, explorers and keen swimmers), please speak to our team to discuss the best product for your dog.

Like most medications, worm, flea & tick products give the dose according to the pet's weight which is why it is important for us to weigh your puppy as they grow (monthly visits are recommended for the at least the first 6 months). This also gives an ideal opportunity for your puppy to be socialised with us and the veterinary practice.



## Neutering

**Neutering of males** (castration) can be done from six months of age if both testicles have descended. Our nurse can check the testicle position when you bring your puppy in for their monthly weight check and parasite treatment. They will also be able to discuss any related male behaviours your puppy may develop and advise you of the appropriate time for castration. Neutering male dogs prevents medical conditions such as testicular cancer and can also help with unwanted behavioural problems if neutered at the right age. Large breeds of dog are normally neutered when they are slightly older as they take longer to reach maturity.

**Neutering of females** (spaying) is recommended 3-4 months after their first season. Females can come into season from six months of age. This can vary according to breed and size of dog. They have approximately two seasons a year. Spaying your female can prevent any related medical problems in the future such as mammary tumours or a condition known as pyometra, which can be life threatening. Spaying also prevents undesirable male attention and unwanted pregnancies.

Unlike many other vets we prefer to keep females in our hospital overnight for close monitoring and pain relief due to the nature of the procedure.

**If your pet has not been seen recently a pre-operative check is normally needed before neutering.**



## Diet

Most puppies are already on a diet recommended by the breeder when they come to their new home. If not already on one, most puppies will do well being gradually changed over to a proprietary complete puppy food. There are many different diets now available.

A complete dry diet contains all of the essential nutrients to keep your puppy healthy and is helpful as it reduces the build-up of plaque on the teeth from an early age. Puppies should be fed according to their size and age. The amount needed depends on the diet given. Most diets have specific guidelines to follow on the packet. Puppies should be fed 3-4 meals daily until they are approximately 6-9 months old. They can then be reduced to twice daily feeding.



Once your puppy is 10-12 months old, a complete adult diet can be introduced. Large breed dogs take longer to reach maturity and should therefore maintain a puppy diet until 12-18 months old. Any change in diet should be introduced over a 7-14 day period to prevent the risk of an upset tummy due to sudden dietary change.

Clean, fresh water should be available at all times. Toy feeding aids are also a great way to keep a puppy entertained and can be a useful training tool.

As they get older, a dog's dietary requirements change. You need to ensure you feed appropriately for their age and health to give them the best dietary support and avoid obesity. If you are uncertain, please speak to us for advice.



### Microchipping

A microchip is approximately the size of a grain of rice and is inserted into the scruff of the neck. The chip contains essential information, which is linked to a national database. If your pet becomes lost or stolen, scanning them at any veterinary practice, re-homing shelter or by the dog warden, your details will be easily obtainable and you will be contacted. For this reason it is essential that all your details are kept accurate and up-to-date to ensure your pet can be returned back to you.

Since 6th April 2016 it became a legal requirement for all dogs to be microchipped. As part of this scheme, puppies have to be microchipped by their breeder by the age of eight weeks, therefore your puppy should already have a microchip and you should have been given the paperwork. If you haven't already done so, ensure you update the database with your contact details.

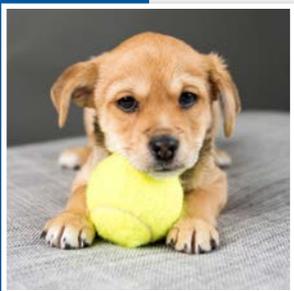
If for some reason your puppy doesn't have a microchip, one can be implanted at any age by one of our clinic nurses or veterinary surgeons.



### Socialisation and behaviour

A puppy is very impressionable in their first sixteen weeks of life. Appropriate introductions and exposure to the world around them at an early age will help them to develop into a more balanced adult and less likely to display undesirable behaviours. Here's our advice on early introductions for your puppy. We also highly recommend puppy classes as they are a great way to start training and socialisation.

**Settling in to your home** is the first big step for a puppy and can be a difficult one. It is important for your puppy to experience all the sights and sounds of your household and they should be allowed time to investigate all areas of the house safely. If they are fearful do not force them; instead reward positive, non-fearful behaviour. Provide your puppy with a clear sleeping area and encourage them to use it by placing items with a familiar scent, such as a blanket from the breeder. In time you can add a piece of your clothing. This creates a "safe place" for your dog which is good for their wellbeing, and helps them cope with any stresses in the future.



**Handling your puppy** is an important life lesson. We encourage you to handle your puppy regularly by stroking all areas of their bodies, particularly around their face, ears and paws. This will not only help with future grooming, veterinary examinations and medication administration but will also help you become familiar with what is normal for your dog. It is also a good idea to allow your puppy to be handled by all ages of visitors to your home.

**Introducing your puppy to a resident dog** should ideally occur on neutral ground initially, (e.g. a friend's garden but NOT a public place until fully vaccinated). Ensure both dogs are on a lead and allow them to sniff each other while giving praise to both dogs. Gradually you can increase the lead length and allow them to investigate each other and the garden in more depth. If they want to play let them!

Always ensure the older dog gets as much attention as the puppy - they both need individual quality time with you for play and training. It is advisable to do some sessions together to help them learn to listen to you in each other's company.

In the house, ensure both dogs have their own space for eating and sleeping. You should not allow them to intrude into the other's space until you are happy there is no anxiety or aggression.



**Introducing your puppy to a resident cat** must be done in a calm environment. It needs to be a gradual process and interactions should be kept short initially. Before meetings ensure your puppy has been fed and exercised. With the puppy on a lead, allow the cat to enter the room. Do not allow your puppy to bark, yap or jump at the cat. Regularly reward your puppy with treats for positive calm behaviour. Do not force them to come face to face, the cat will come closer in time of their own accord. Ensure the cat has escape routes and allow them to leave when they are ready. With time, the cat will be more accepting and the puppy will be calmer. Always ensure the cat is able to feed, sleep and exit without having to interact with the puppy if it does not want to.



**Introducing to children** - this is a very exciting time for children but can be a very worrying one for the puppy. Again it is best done with calm and patience. It is useful for the child to understand that your new puppy is scared being away from their mother for the first time and they can help the puppy by staying calm and gentle. For their first meeting, have the child waiting in a room (sitting on the floor is helpful) and with the puppy on a lead allow the puppy to approach the child. Explain to children not to run around the puppy, make lots of noise or wave their arms about as this may encourage the puppy to bark, jump and nip. Remember puppy's nails are sharp and may scratch if they become excitable and jump. In the home, the child must learn to respect the puppy's "safe place" and not bother them there - this gives your dog somewhere to go for a break when they choose.



**REMEMBER** - Always supervise children around ALL dogs and NEVER leave them unattended together.

With the right education and time together, children and dogs can have a very close and special bond.

### Insurance

It is highly recommended that you take out insurance for your pet to cover any unexpected vet bills if your dog was to become poorly or injured. There are three main types of insurance policy.



**A life time cover policy** is renewed on an annual basis but cover is provided up to a set amount for veterinary fees each year, providing it is renewed annually. There is no time limit on how long you can claim for each illness or injury, so if your pet has something that will require ongoing treatment, such as diabetes or skin problems, the policy will cover the condition for the pet's life time.

**A maximum benefit policy** covers up to a maximum amount for life but there is no time limit on how long you can claim for. However, when you have reached the maximum amount, you can no longer claim.

**An annual policy** is renewed on an annual basis but it will only pay for the first year of treatment per condition. So, if your dog were to become poorly or have an accident, it would be covered for that first year only. The policy would no longer cover for that condition the following year.

We recommend a life time policy for your pet. One of our clinic nurses can issue your puppy a four weeks free insurance cover note with Pet Plan on the day they are checked over by the vet.



It is worth noting that if you were to change insurance company (or take out insurance at a later date), any pre-existing conditions would not be covered with the new insurance policy.

Always check policy details carefully and read the small print.

**If you require further information about caring for your puppy, we invite you to book a free appointment with our clinic nurses.**



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