



Dear Client,

Congratulations on your new puppy! Bringing home a new family member is an exciting time for everyone involved. It can also bring new challenges and opportunities. I have put together the following collection of *resources and information addressing common puppy questions and problems*, based on the most recent scientific information on health and behaviour of dogs, and with emphasis on puppy behaviour and training, basic care, and veterinary care. Whether this is your first puppy or your tenth, there are likely at least a few nuggets of information enclosed that will be useful to you. *Starting puppies with a good foundation of training and health care can help avoid prevent more difficult issues down the road.*

There is a lot of information here. The most important information is in **green** boxes and highlighting, but if you're looking for a specific topic take a look at the [table of contents](#) and click on hyperlinks.

If you have any questions or want to discuss any of the topics covered in more detail, or if there are additional resources you might find helpful, please don't hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Your Hermitage Veterinary Clinic Team

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Puppy Pack – Additional Resources

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[Muzzle Training](#)
[Owner Health Check](#)
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[Sit](#)
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[Target Training/Touch](#)
[Walking on a Loose Leash](#)

+ others – just ask!

Puppy Pack – Recommended Reading

- [American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior Blog](#) is a free-access collection of articles written by some of the continent's most experienced behaviourists, on common behaviour and training topics
- American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) [position statements](#) on animal behaviour and training
- [Decoding Your Dog](#) (American College of Veterinary Behaviorists) on normal dog behaviour and common problem behaviours
- [Don't Shoot the Dog](#) (Karen Pryor) on positive training methods
- [Perfect Puppy in 7 Days](#) (Dr. Sophia Yin) and [other resources](#)
- [Fear Free Happy Homes](#) – a collection of helpful articles and resources on pet behaviour and welfare
 - [Dog Body Language Course](#)
- [Kong-stuffing recipes](#) for distraction and to help provide positive experiences and mental enrichment
- [Puppy Start Right: Foundational Training for the Companion Dog](#) (Dr. Kenneth Martin and Debbie Martin) on a series of helpful basic training techniques and troubleshooting
- [Puppy Training for Kids](#) (Sarah Whitehead) – a resource targeted specifically to children
- [Wag – The Science of Making Your Dog Happy](#) (Zazie Todd) – a great summary of current scientific research in dogs, their learning and behaviour, and how to make YOUR dog happy

For additional resources about specific health and behaviour topics, please ask your veterinary team.

Puppy Pack – Puppy Socialization

What is a Socialization Period?

- Although learning occurs throughout life, a puppy's socialization period is the **most influential learning period** of a dog's life.
- Primary socialization (3-5 weeks of age) – recognition of same species, learning canine communication
 - The brain is not fully developed – traumatic experiences at this age don't have a significant effect on later life.
- **Secondary socialization** – between 6-12 weeks of age – development of familiarity and comfort with the human world, including living and non-living components.
 - **Puppy socialization is about more than puppies playing with dogs, but also extends to introducing them to humans, other species, and their environment, in a positive way that leaves a good impression.**
 - Puppies are most willing to approach novel people, animals, and objects during this period.
 - Brain resembles that of the adult dog; therefore, **traumatic experiences can result in lasting fear and anxiety.**
 - Between 12 and 16 weeks of age, puppies become increasingly more hesitant to approach novelty without responding fearfully.

Why is socialization important?

- Poor socialization can affect lifelong behavioural health, and may result in aggression, anxiety and/or fear disorders.

Rules of Socialization:

- Socialization experiences must be **SAFE**
 - Socialization experiences should not risk your puppy's health – socialization should occur in clean, disease-free environments with healthy animals and humans.
 - The goal is for your puppy to enjoy being near to a variety of stimuli – **they do NOT need to interact directly**, particularly if direct interaction compromises your puppy's safety or the safety of others.
- Socialization experiences must be **POSITIVE**
 - Novel experiences should always be paired with **something positive – treats, play, petting, praise.**
 - **Avoid negative experiences.** Monitor for signs your puppy may be fearful or anxious when socializing, and withdraw from the novel stimulus until your puppy is more comfortable and can take treats. Only move towards the stimulus if your puppy continues to take treats, and is willing to do so.
- Socialization must be **DIVERSE** – see [socialization checklist](#)

Please see also - AVSAB's position statement on [puppy socialization](#).

Puppy Pack – Socialization Checklist

Adapted from *Puppy Start Right Socialization Checklist* and *Sophia Yin's Socialization Checklist*. **ENSURE SAFE SOCIALIZATION!**

How does your puppy respond to each stimulus? **Give them a score /5:**

1. Over-arousal or tries to get at (lunge, growl, nip, bark, struggle)
2. Avoid (struggle, hide, move away, won't approach, hesitant to approach)
3. Freeze (holds still but not eating, non-exploratory, moving slowly, acting sleepy when they shouldn't be tired)
4. Calm, Relaxed (explores, playful, focused on food)
5. Calm, Relaxed (explores, playful when NO FOOD)

Environment/Surroundings

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinary Clinic | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel | <input type="checkbox"/> Plane |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training Facility | <input type="checkbox"/> Airport/Train Station | <input type="checkbox"/> Tractor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kennel | <input type="checkbox"/> Sporting Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorbike |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Groomer | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Intersection | <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage Truck |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pet Store | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Area/Country | <input type="checkbox"/> Stairwells |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping Mall | <input type="checkbox"/> Acreage | <input type="checkbox"/> Elevators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work/Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Suburbs | <input type="checkbox"/> Elevated Walkways |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/Relative's House | <input type="checkbox"/> Car | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking Garage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Park/Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Bus | <input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalk Signs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campground | <input type="checkbox"/> Boat | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Train | |

People/Accessories

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infants | <input type="checkbox"/> Security Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toddlers | <input type="checkbox"/> Firefighter | <input type="checkbox"/> Varied Hairstyles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Mail Courier | <input type="checkbox"/> Moustache |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teenagers | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Uniform (football, baseball, soccer, hockey) | <input type="checkbox"/> Beard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Limp | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors | <input type="checkbox"/> Cane | <input type="checkbox"/> Varied Hats/Helmets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | <input type="checkbox"/> Crutches | <input type="checkbox"/> Masks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Walker | <input type="checkbox"/> Hoodies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> European | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair | <input type="checkbox"/> Backpacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African | <input type="checkbox"/> Jogger | <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves/Mittens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern | <input type="checkbox"/> Biker | <input type="checkbox"/> Costumes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Tall | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain Coat/Poncho |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous | <input type="checkbox"/> Short | <input type="checkbox"/> Winter Coat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Thin | <input type="checkbox"/> Boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technician | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police | | |

Animals

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Puppies | <input type="checkbox"/> Parrots | <input type="checkbox"/> Guinea Pig |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly Adult Dogs | <input type="checkbox"/> Ducks, Geese | <input type="checkbox"/> Ferrets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens | <input type="checkbox"/> Rodents | <input type="checkbox"/> Reptiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly Adult Cats | <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbits | <input type="checkbox"/> Horses/Livestock |

Experiences/Handling

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel - <30 Minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Touching/Squeezing Nose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel - >30 Minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Cradling Puppy on Back |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinary Visit with Vaccinations | <input type="checkbox"/> Holding Puppy in Lap |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors - <4 Visitors | <input type="checkbox"/> Holding Puppy Upside Down |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors - >4 Visitors | <input type="checkbox"/> Belly Rub |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Checking Ears | <input type="checkbox"/> Hugged |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Examining Mouth/Gums | <input type="checkbox"/> Pulling Collar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opening Eyelids | <input type="checkbox"/> Grabbing Puppy by Legs, Tail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squeezing Feet | <input type="checkbox"/> Wiping/Rubbing Body with Towel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handling/Trimming Toenails | <input type="checkbox"/> Putting on a Head Halter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pinching Skin | <input type="checkbox"/> Putting on a Harness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poking Skin with Capped Pen | |

Surfaces

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rough | <input type="checkbox"/> Mud | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slick/Slippery | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Grating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wet | <input type="checkbox"/> Grass | <input type="checkbox"/> Carpet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dry | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravel | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceramic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt | <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wobbly/Unsteady | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Puddles | <input type="checkbox"/> Turf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sand | <input type="checkbox"/> Snow | <input type="checkbox"/> Stairs |

Sounds

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistle | <input type="checkbox"/> Shower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hail | <input type="checkbox"/> Children Playing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hair Dryer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wind | <input type="checkbox"/> Screaming/Yelling | <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen Appliances |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thunderstorm | <input type="checkbox"/> Gunshots | <input type="checkbox"/> Dogs Barking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> Fireworks | <input type="checkbox"/> Police/Fire/
Ambulance Siren |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep Voices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loud Music
(Bass/Treble) | <input type="checkbox"/> Alarm Bell | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PA System | <input type="checkbox"/> Doorbell | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Washer/Dryer | |

Other

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Toys | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Hose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broom | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby Carrier/
Car Seat | <input type="checkbox"/> Sprinkler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mop | <input type="checkbox"/> Stroller | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn Furniture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pots/Pans | <input type="checkbox"/> Wagon | <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Mower | <input type="checkbox"/> Power Tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage Can | <input type="checkbox"/> Snow Blower | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Rake | <input type="checkbox"/> Rollerblades |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luggage | <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel | <input type="checkbox"/> Kayak/Canoe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ironing Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelbarrow | <input type="checkbox"/> Skis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Umbrella | | <input type="checkbox"/> Ladder |

Puppy Pack – Socialization at Home

Providing a variety of experiences for your puppy, when you yourself may be limited in your travels and interactions, poses a significant and novel challenge for all families during the pandemic and even now, in a post-pandemic world. Socialization by getting out into the world is best, but when that isn't feasible, here are a few suggestions on how to make it work:

- Screen your socialization list for activities you can modify – many items on the list are available from the comfort of your own home.
- Get outside – a significant portion of socialization involves being near, but not in direct contact with, other people and animals, so even walking or driving in the vicinity of others is beneficial.
- Create diversified environments and stage stimuli within your home – play dress-up with a variety of items you have on hand, scatter and rotate novel items throughout your home for your kitten to investigate, and play sounds on your computer for things you might not be able to expose your kitten to yet – all while offering treats and making the experiences fun!
- Don't forget crate and separation training – it is a significant concern for veterinary personnel and pet owners that we will see a wave of separation anxiety once you cannot be with your pet as much. Ensure you are practicing the skills required to have your pet spend time comfortably away from you.

Additional resources:

- [American Veterinary Medical Association tips for socialization during COVID](#)
- [American Kennel Club tips for socialization while social distancing](#)
- [Fear Free Pets – Pandemic Puppies](#)
- [How to socialize under-socialized dogs](#)

Puppy Pack – Canine Body Language

[This online course](#) can help you develop your dog-reading skills.

Please **monitor your puppy for the following signs of fear and/or anxiety.**

- lower body position (slight decline of the head/shoulders to major cowering)
- **licking lips/flicking tongue** when not anticipating food
- hypersalivation when not anticipating food
- **panting** when the room isn't warm and isn't thirsty (often mistaken for overheating or being thirsty, but declines offered water)
- furrowed brows, tight facial expression
- attention-seeking
- increased blinking
- looking away, turning away, moving away
- "whale eyes" (whites of the eye prominent)
- ears pulled back
- tail lowered
- trembling
- urination, defecation
- moving in slow motion
- **yawning**, acting sleepy when not having recently woken
- hypervigilance
- pacing, inability to settle down
- excessive vocalization
- excessive grooming, increased shedding, increased dander when compared to normal
- shaking off when not wet
- **refusal of treats or requiring higher value treats**
- **taking treats more aggressively**
- lifting paw (often mistaken for trying to shake a paw)
- hiding
- signs of pending aggression (freezing, stiffening, hackles raised, staring, growling, snapping, biting)

If you notice signs of fear or anxiety...

DO:

- **increase treat value and frequency, or bring out a toy and start a play session.** Your goal is to change your puppy's emotional state, and subsequently, his or her emotional response to the feared stimulus
- move away from the stimulus if your puppy won't take treats, until you find a non-stressful starting point where your puppy is willing to take treats
- **move closer at your puppy's pace** (not yours)

DON'T:

- **coddle your puppy** (eg. soothing talk, telling your puppy "it's okay") – this may result in your puppy having difficulty overcoming fear when you aren't present, and your behaviour may become a predictor in the future that something bad is about to happen
- withdraw from your puppy if they seek you when frightened
- **correct or yell at your puppy** – this is likely to worsen fear

Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering



More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



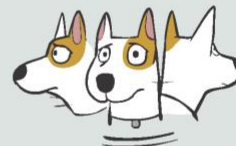
Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



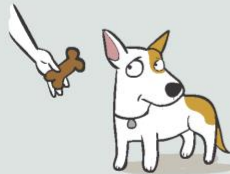
Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



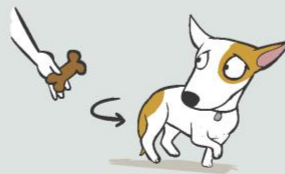
Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



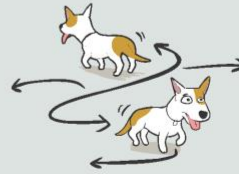
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing

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For additional Low Stress Handling information, posters, flyers, books, and DVDs, please visit our website at <http://DrSophiaYin.com>



CATTLEDOG PUBLISHING
drsophiayin.com
A VETERINARY CORPORATION



Questions@cattledogpublishing.com

(530) 757-2383 — P.O. Box 4516, Davis, CA 95617

Support@lowstresshandling.com

Puppy Pack – Basic Learning Concepts

Adapted from Puppy Start Right's Foundation for the Companion Dog.

Before training your puppy, it is important to understand the following:

- Dogs are **AMORAL** – they do not know right from wrong, and contrary to popular belief, they do not experience guilt or perform behaviour out of spite. They understand only what is safe, and what isn't. This is important in how we think about and respond to “bad” behaviour.
- Dogs are opportunistic and **EGOCENTRIC** – they are focused on what's in it for them, and will choose what is best for them over what is best for you if these are not aligned. This is important because we can create a learning environment where your puppy is motivated to perform “good” behaviour for his/her own benefit.
- Dogs are **SOCIAL** and enjoy companionship.
- Dogs are **ALWAYS LEARNING** – even when you aren't actively teaching, and you may not always be in control of reinforcements and punishments. A dog's behaviour should always be put into context of how it is reinforced or punished.
- Dogs explore their world with their **MOUTHS**.

Successful canine parenting relies on the following simple rules:

- **BE FAIR** – take into consideration your dog's perspective. Don't create unrealistic expectations for your puppy. If you catch yourself saying he or she “should know better”, re-evaluate the situation to determine why he or she didn't understand.
- **BE A GOOD TEACHER** – create an environment where your puppy is likely to succeed and guide him or her into making the right decision. Don't set your puppy up to fail, then be upset when he or she does.
- **COMMUNICATE CLEARLY** – mark and reward behaviour you want your puppy to repeat, so they might understand what you expect from them.
- **BE CONSISTENT** – avoid rewarding a behaviour one day and punishing it the next. Ensure family, friends, and guests have the same rules and expectations for your puppy.
- **GIVE YOUR PUPPY CHOICES** – allowing your puppy to choose (whether to interact, play, participate) decreases anxiety and improves confidence. This doesn't mean allowing your puppy free reign – you can still control the consequences of each choice.
- **BE YOUR PUPPY'S ADVOCATE** – be forever monitoring your puppy's body language and emotional state, and protect him or her from overwhelming or frightening situations by changing the emotional response or removing him or her from the situation, if needed.

Puppy Pack – Basic Learning Concepts

Rules for Successful Learning:

1. Consequence must be **IMMEDIATE**
> ideally, within a half second of the behaviour
2. Consequence must be **CONSISTENT**
> given every time the behaviour is performed
3. Consequence must be **SUFFICIENTLY DESIREABLE or AVERSIVE** to change the frequency of the behaviour
> strength required varies across individuals

General Recommendations for Training New Behaviours:

- Use an **upbeat** voice.
- Train when your puppy is **hungry**.
- ALWAYS have treats at the ready, and **reward liberally** with small treats.
- Start where distractions are at a minimum, and **gradually increase the number of distractions present**. Only change environments once the behaviour is consistently performed in the current environment. Start at home → yard → neighbourhood → dog park.
- Higher value treats may be needed in environments where more distractions are present.
- ID non-food reinforcers – toys, praise and other rewards can also be used with some puppies.
- Limit training sessions to 5 minutes – puppies have a short attention span.
- End training sessions if your or your puppy becomes frustrated – but **end on a positive**. For example, ask for a behaviour your puppy loves to do.
- Use a marker – this allows for 45% faster learning.
- Only **put a behaviour on cue once it is reliably performed** – avoid the temptation to say “sit” when first introducing the behaviour. **Visual cues (hand signals)** tend to work better than auditory cues, but both are effective.
- When first teaching a new behaviour, it should be rewarded every time BUT once a behaviour is learned and performed reliably, it should be intermittently rewarded. Behaviours that are consistently rewarded are more likely to become extinct (the behaviour is no longer performed – loss of learning) once the reward is no longer consistently given; however, **behaviours once learned that are then intermittently rewarded are more resilient**.

Puppy Pack – Basic Learning Concepts

Positive, force-free training, where reward-based training is emphasized and positive punishment or aversive consequences are avoided, is the preferred method of training by veterinary behaviour specialists and many certified trainers.

Positive, reward-based training methods are more effective because they:

- Give guidance on what TO DO;
- Help to strengthen the human-animal bond through positive experiences and promoting a trusting relationship;
- Motivate an animal to participate in learning activities; and
- Do no harm, even when used incorrectly.

Punishment and training based on “dominance theory”, including but not limited to yelling, hitting, leash corrections, alpha rolling, use of pinch collars, shock collars or any training method seen on the “Dog Whisperer” may result in successful learning and obedient animals in some situations, but has also been shown to make normal animals more anxious and fearful, and fearful animals aggressive. The type of training you use also contributes to the type of relationship you have with your dog – and how much he or she trusts you as a leader.

Punishment-based and forceful methods are not recommended because:

- They are more difficult to meet the rules for successful learning;
- They tell an animal what NOT to do, which does not help them understand what TO do;
- They can result in pets losing trust in their owners and/or becoming fearful of their owners, even when paired with reward-based training;
- They can promote learned helplessness (giving up); and
- When used incorrectly, ‘punishment’ with no effect on behaviour is effectively abuse.

Additional Resources:

- [AVSAB’s position statements on *dominance*, and *Cesar Milan 911*](#).
- [Training and Socialization 101](#)

Puppy Pack – Canine Enrichment

Did you know that puppies should sleep an average of 18 hours per day – and adult dogs sleep 14 hours per day? In order to exhaust a dog, we need to do more than exercise them. **We provide enrichment to our canine companions by engaging their minds and bodies.** This provides an outlet for normal canine behaviours, which can reduce boredom-associated behaviours and problem behaviours. It also provides physical and mental exercise; builds a positive association with different environments, which aids in socialization; and helps strengthen your bond with your puppy.

Rules of Enrichment

Enrichment should be **positive, productive, stimulating, and safe.** Start with easy enrichment activities, and work your way up in difficulty. Be creative, and seek inspiration from books, websites and other pet owners (e.g. “Canine Enrichment” group on Facebook). It is important to personalize enrichment activities to your puppy – if he appears frustrated, try a new activity that is better suited to him.

Signs your puppy is engaged:	Signs your puppy is frustrated:
oriented towards the activity	disengaged, distracted, wanders away
shows seeking and play behaviours	barks, whines; rapid, frantic movements
shows relaxed body language	shows tense body language
appears relaxed at end of activity	appears anxious/aroused at end of activity

Ideas for Canine Enrichment

Social Activities

- Build your relationship by teaching new tricks, petting, grooming or cuddling with your puppy
- Take your puppy to visit veterinary staff, grooming staff, friends
- Schedule a play-date

Physical Activities

- Fetch, tug, create a homemade agility-like obstacle course
- Water activities (swimming, add floating toys/treats to a baby pool)
- Formal sports and activities (agility, flyball, treibball, scent training, barn hunt)

Exploratory Activities

- Food puzzles, treat dispensing toys, foraging games
- Hide toys in a digging pit, hide treats inside cardboard boxes/other containers they can safely be shred
- Have “sniff breaks” on walks and let your puppy take the lead, bring home novel scents from places you can’t bring your puppy
- Explore a variety of environments (urban, industrial, grassland, woodland, water), encourage your puppy to go over, under, around and through objects
- Allow your puppy to watch the world from a window in your house or car, or while you sit on a bench

Consider your puppy’s breed when choosing activities

- Sporting breeds (retriever, spaniel, pointer) may like fetch or water games; while herding breeds (collie, heeler, cattledog) prefer games that allow them to navigate obstacles and guide objects; scent hounds (beagle, basset hound) tend to enjoy games using their nose, and terriers (jack russell, airdale, staffie) love games involving digging or tearing apart.

Puppy Pack – Housetraining

Reinforce for going in the RIGHT location - communicate clearly what you expect, and to give him a reason to want to follow the rules

- Let your puppy out as often as you are able initially, but particularly after sleeping, eating and playing; then slowly reduce frequency of outings over time.
- **Be consistent** - go outside with your puppy EVERY time, on a short leash. This can be a challenge in cold weather or for night outings, but it will allow you better consistency when reinforcing. This will also give you the opportunity to lead your puppy to a specific potty area outside, should you choose one.
- **Bring HIGH VALUE treats with you every time you go outside** – these treats should be exclusive to housetraining, and higher value than your typical training treats – consider small pieces of hot dog, cheese, or something else that is very smelly and easy to break into small pieces. If you only praise, or offer lower value rewards for potty breaks, your pup may not be sufficiently motivated to go to the right place next time.
- **Give IMMEDIATE rewards** – a dog only associates the activity they have JUST done with the reward, which means you need to give that high value treat to your dog within 0.5-1 second of your puppy going to the bathroom in the right place. If you offer a treat once they come back to you, or once they come inside, they will think THAT is the behaviour you are reinforcing, and not going to the bathroom.
- See also – [train your puppy to ask to go outside](#).

Prevent mistakes.

- When you are home, watch your puppy actively for evidence he may need to go to the bathroom. Take him outside immediately if it looks like he needs to go (is sniffing, circling, etc).
- When you aren't able to watch closely, consider restricting your puppy to a play pen, or practice umbilical training by tethering your puppy to you. This prevents your puppy from sneaking off for a pee in another room or behind furniture.
- Restrict your puppy's space when you are away from home or are sleeping – most puppies innately won't want to eliminate where they sleep or eat.
- If your puppy DOES make a mistake, do not admonish, but brainstorm how you can prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

A note on puppy pads – although it is tempting to incorporate the use of puppy pads to ease clean-up and protect your flooring, transitioning away from puppy pads can be confusing, as you've initially established it is okay to urinate and/or defecate in the house. I do not recommend the use of puppy pads, unless you intend for them to be a permanent part of your dog's elimination options. If you are already using puppy pads, I recommend you transition away from them promptly to reduce confusion.

Puppy Pack – Problem Solving and Prevention

Adapted from Puppy Start Right's Foundation Training for the Companion Dog.

Prevention:

- Manage your environment to set your puppy up for success. Actively **monitor** your puppy. **Puppy-proof** your house for when active monitoring cannot occur – baby gates, exercise pens.
- Create a consistent schedule and routine.
- Create consistent rules, which will be enforced by all family members and which will apply to all dogs equally.
 - Will your puppy be allowed on the furniture?
 - Will your puppy have complete, or limited, access to the house?
 - Access to kitchen, bedrooms, etc.
 - Will treats include human food, and will it be fed from the table, or at an alternative location?
 - Feeding from the kitchen or table promotes begging.

Problem Solving Model: This model can be used to solve many “problem” puppy behaviours, from chewing and nipping, to jumping, to counter surfing.

	Description	Example
IDENTIFY WHAT THE BEHAVIOUR IS, WHEN IT IS PERFORMED, AND WHY	<p>What is the puppy doing?</p> <p>When is he or she doing it?</p> <p>Why – what’s in it for him or her?</p>	The puppy is jumping up... when the family arrives home... because he or she receives attention – <i>the puppy is greeted with enthusiasm by the children, and pushed down by the adults – both forms of attention act as a reward.</i>
CONTROL THE WHEN AND/OR WHY	<p>Can the trigger be avoided?</p> <p>Can the current reward be removed?</p>	Family members need to come home at some point – but they can ignore the puppy when he or she jumps up.
REPLACE THE BEHAVIOUR	Can a more appropriate/ desirable behaviour be taught and rewarded?	The puppy is taught to sit . When the puppy sits, the family rewards the puppy with their attention .

An **extinction burst** is often seen once the previously rewarded behaviour is no longer rewarded (the behaviour initially increases/worsens) – be persistent, the behaviour will **initially increase, then stop**.

Puppy Pack - Nutrition

Which food?

The amount of information (and misinformation) available in regards to pet foods can be overwhelming. Here are some facts and considerations when making your decision.

1. IS IT SAFE?

The **manufacturer's name and contact information** should be easy to find, so you or your veterinarian can address questions and concerns to the manufacturer. See [link](#) for more information on questions to ask. **Raw food diets** come with significant risk to both human and pet health, including but not limited to food-borne illness and parasitism; therefore, they **should be avoided**. **“Grain-free” diets** are trendy but not nutritionally relevant, and may even increase risk of heart disease; therefore, they **should also be avoided**.

2. IS IT NUTRITIOUS?

AAFCO Statement. There is little regulation in pet food labelling, but the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) provides some basic standards for labeling in the industry. **Choose a diet with an AAFCO statement of balance - absence of any AAFCO statement is a red flag.**

Marketing. A great deal of marketing for pet foods involves strategic use of labels and ingredients, which can be misleading. For example, terms like “corn-free” or “gluten-free” implies that these ingredients don't have nutritional value or may be harmful, which is nutritionally inaccurate. See [link](#) for more information on fact vs. fiction.

Raw food diets and **homemade diets** are also a common trend. Dogs aren't wolves, nor should they be fed, or treated, like wolves. Although individual dogs may do well on alternative diets, they are often not properly balanced, requiring additional supplementation at the advisement of a veterinary nutritionist. This is of particular concern for growing puppies, as many **raw diets and homemade diets can result in nutrient deficiencies and abnormal bone development.**

3. IS IT RIGHT FOR **THIS** PET?

Nutritional requirements vary with age. This means that an adult food may not provide enough energy or protein for a growing puppy, but a puppy diet may have too much for an adult, causing problems such as weight gain. **A puppy-specific diet is strongly recommended during growth.** *“All life stages” diets are not recommended.*

Nutritional requirements may also vary across breed/size, especially in dogs, where there is considerable variability in size, growth and conformation. In particular, **a large-breed specific diet is recommended for large breed puppies.**

Therapeutic diets are available for specific health conditions, such as allergies, kidney disease, and obesity. These foods **should only be fed under the supervision of a veterinarian,** following a veterinary diagnosis.

I'm still overwhelmed by my choices – just tell me what to feed! Although there are many diets that may be a good fit for your pet, I personally like **Royal Canin Development** which comes in small breed, medium breed, large breed kibbles and canned varieties, or **Purina Essential Care Puppy** which also has large breed options. Note - these diets have undergone feeding trials with strict quality control, and as such is only sold through licensed veterinary clinics.

Puppy Pack - Nutrition

How much?

Just like in humans, there is an incredible amount of individual variability in a dog's energy requirements and their metabolism. Additionally, different foods vary considerably in caloric density, so 1 cup (or gram) of one food is not equal to that of another. Finally, **obesity is a significant, and common, medical concern in dogs – and if a puppy becomes obese during growth, they are likely to struggle with obesity for the remainder of their lives.**

1. Choose a starting point.

- **Bag Recommendations.** Try feeding the amount recommended based on your pet's weight. This is a good starting point, especially if you don't enjoy math, and is often appropriate for puppies (though it may be excessive for adults).
- **Calculating Energy Requirement.** A more scientific means of determining how much food your pet should eat is by taking your pet's ideal weight and developmental stage, and calculating their energy requirements. This will require knowledge of your food's kcal/cup or, better yet, kcal/g, as **measuring by weight of food is often more consistent and more accurate than measuring by volume.** See [this box](#) for calculations.

2. Evaluate.

- **Weigh your pet every 2-4 weeks.** Your veterinarian can also teach you how to body condition score your pet to help you determine whether your pet is at their ideal weight, or whether they can stand to gain or lose some weight. See [this chart](#) to help you score your pet at home.

3. Modify and Re-evaluate.

- **A diet plan often needs to be adjusted.** If you find your pet is gaining or losing weight when they shouldn't, or aren't when they should, modify the amount of food you are giving accordingly, by 5-10%, and recheck in a month. **Need some help?** Stony Plain Veterinary Clinic offers complimentary weight checks and consultations – all you need to do is ask!

Don't forget treats, including human scraps! **Treats should only make up 10% or less of your pet's daily caloric intake.** If you don't know how many calories a food item is, you shouldn't feed it.

How often?

This is an easy one – **the more often, the better.** Determine how much your dog needs in a day, then divide that total amount into 2-4 servings per day.

By what method?

Offering alternative methods for feeding (ie. other than a bowl) can be a good way to enrich a dog's feeding experience, to challenge the mind, and to slow down speedy eaters. You can start by hiding individual kibbles around the house or yard for your dog to locate. You may be amazed at how well he tracks them down with his nose. If you want to make things more interesting, there are many commercial feeding puzzles and toys available – see [link](#) and/or ask your veterinary professional for suggestions.

Where to look (see diagram)	1/9	2/9	3/9	4/9	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9					
Ribs (red star)	Easily visible at a distance	Easily visible	Can be felt easily	Can be felt easily	Felt w/ gentle pressure	Felt w/ pressure	Felt w/ heavy pressure	Cannot feel	Cannot feel					
Lower spine (blue circle)	Easily visible at a distance	Easily visible	Visible	Can be felt easily	Felt w/ gentle pressure	Felt w/ pressure	Difficult to feel	Cannot feel	Cannot feel					
Hip/Pelvic bones (green star)	Easily visible at a distance	Easily visible	Becoming visible	Not visible, can be felt	Not visible, can be felt	Not visible, can be felt	Cannot feel	Cannot feel	Cannot feel					
Body fat	None seen or felt	None seen or felt	Very little felt	Very little	Mild	Moderate – in excess	Noticeable – ribs, flanks, tail	Thick – ribs, flanks, tail	Thick – ribs, belly, flanks, tail					
Muscle of legs, alongside spine	Obvious loss of muscle	Minimal loss	Minimal loss	Good muscle tone	Good muscle tone	Good muscle tone	Becoming difficult to feel	Cannot feel	Cannot feel					
Waist from above (purple arrow)	Severe	Severe	Moderate	Easily seen	Easily seen	Visible	Absent – sides parallel	Waist pushing out	Waist pushing out					
Belly tuck from side (orange arrow)	Severe	Severe	Moderate	Easily seen	Easily seen	Visible	May be seen	Belly distended	Belly very distended					
UNDERWEIGHT					IDEAL					OVERWEIGHT				

Handout by Dr. Kayla Bilsborrow
 Pictures from WSAVA Canine BCSC Chart

Puppy Pack – Nutrition & Resources

Additional Puppy-Specific Resources:

- Wondering if your puppy is on track? See these [puppy growth charts](#).

Additional General Nutritional Resources:

$$\text{Resting Energy Requirement (RER, in kcal/day)} = 70 \times (\text{ideal body weight in kg})^{3/4}$$

Note – this equation may be modified if your pet is underweight or overweight. A veterinary professional can help you with this.

- Puppy 0-4 months (kcal/day) – multiply RER by 3
 - Puppy 4+ months (kcal/day) – multiply RER by 2
 - Neutered adult (kcal/day) – multiply RER by 1.6
 - Intact adult (kcal/day) – multiply RER by 1.8
 - Volume to feed (cup/day) = (kcal/day) / (kcal/cup of food)
 - Weight to feed (g/day) = (kcal/day) / (kcal/g of food)
- To ensure your pet’s stool is normal, use this [fecal chart](#). An ideal fecal score may range from 2-3. Abnormal fecal scores (diarrhea, or hard stools) can be a marker of infection (e.g. parasites), disease (e.g. inflammatory bowel disease), dietary intolerance (e.g. food allergy), dietary indiscretion (e.g. having eaten something that is not edible) or a sign that the pet is being transitioned to a new diet too quickly.
 - Resources for [human foods](#) – search database to review nutritional information on common human foods. This database may be useful in searching for caloric information.

Puppy Pack – Common Food Toxicities

Most Common Dangerous Human Foods:

CHOCOLATE Contains “theobromine”, which may cause heart arrhythmias, tremors and seizures. Types vary – bakers chocolate and dark chocolate are the worst.	CAFFEINE Can cause increased heart and respiratory rates, and/or muscle tremors. At high doses, no antidote is available and it may be fatal.	BONES Can result in broken teeth, and/or gut blockage or rupture if swallowed. As a general rule, don’t give your dog a bone you can’t comfortably whack your knee with.	GRAPES, RAISINS Very small amounts can cause acute renal failure in some dogs – but we can’t predict which ones, so best to avoid them altogether.
ONIONS, GARLIC Can rupture red blood cells, resulting in anemia (weak, pale), blood coloured urine. Beware as some baby foods also contain onion powder.	AVOCADO Contains “persin” which leads to gut irritation, including vomiting and diarrhea.	RAW EGG WHITES Contains “avidin” which interferes with absorption of “biotin” (vit B7). May result in poor growth, lethargy, & skin problems.	RAW MEAT (incl. eggs) May contain Salmonella, E. Coli, and other harmful bacteria and parasites. Human health AND pet health risk.
MACADAMIA NUTS Even very small amounts result in locomotory problems (weakness, tremors, paralysis of hind legs), vomiting, elevated heart rate and temp.	XYLITOL An artificial sweetener found in candy, gum, toothpaste, baked goods, peanut butter, etc. Results in very low blood sugar, seizures and liver failure.	FATTY MEATS High dietary fats, particularly in meat, can cause pancreatitis in dogs. A very common problem after the dog gets into garbage, when last night’s dinner included pork chops.	SWEET BISCUITS Although not directly toxic, sweet biscuits are high in fat & sugar with low nutritional value, resulting in obesity and secondary problems.

Check out <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/pet-owners/> for more information on common toxicities and how to prevent and treat them.

If you suspect your pet may have eaten one of the above, or another toxin including human or pet medications, poisons, and non-edible items, please contact your veterinarian immediately.

Puppy Pack – Oral Health Care

Why practice preventive oral health care in your puppy?

- Your puppy’s adult teeth don’t come in fully until around 5-6 months, so why protect teeth that are just going to fall out?
- Introducing teeth brushing in puppies is about **training them to enjoy the process**.
- Once adults, **brushing your dog’s teeth is the single most important thing you can do to maintain your dog’s oral health**, and it’s easy if you teach it right.
- It can also save you money in the long run, by reducing the frequency your pet requires dental procedures with your veterinarian (tooth cleaning, removal).

How to introduce tooth brushing:

- It’s all about introducing brushing in slow steps, rewarding each phase so she associates brushing with good things, and never pushing your puppy to the point of discomfort. The goal is for her (and you) to look forward to tooth-brushing time.
- **Brushing must be done AT LEAST every 1-2 days**, or else plaque progresses to the point where brushing won’t remove it. Here’s how you start:

1. Place a bit of a **flavoured, pet-specific toothpaste** on your finger and offer it to your dog. Don’t put your finger in her mouth just yet – let her lick the toothpaste off your finger like a treat. You can also spread a small amount of toothpaste on a kong toy like you might with peanut butter, and experiment with different flavours to find her favourite.
2. Once she eagerly seeks the toothpaste, try placing some on your finger and rubbing it gently on her gums. Keep it to a few seconds at first, then gradually increase the amount of time and area that you cover.
3. Next, so long as she happily accepts the previous step, place some toothpaste on a **soft-bristled baby toothbrush**, and let her lick it off on her own.
4. Finally, you can introduce the toothbrush into her mouth. As with finger brushing, start with a few seconds and gradually progress to brushing.

See [video](#) of this training process.

Troubleshooting:

- **If she is resisting brushing, you’re moving too quickly**, or she doesn’t like the toothpaste flavour enough. Try spending more time on previous steps or break into smaller steps, and if that doesn’t help, try a different flavour.
- Note: Although some toothpastes are enzymatic (help to break down tartar), the primary purpose of a pet toothpaste is to provide a reward – it’s the mechanical brushing that removes plaque. This is why using a rubber brush, washcloth or your finger may have some benefit, but it is not as good as a toothbrush. You can try adding other things (eg. chicken broth) to the toothbrush if your pet doesn’t take to the commercially available toothpastes.

Puppy Pack – Oral Health Care

How can you tell if your pet has periodontal disease?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| • bad breath | • difficulty eating, | Many pet owners |
| • red, swollen gums | dropping food | notice no change , |
| bleeding gums | • abnormal chewing | particularly if they do • |
| visible plaque, calculus | • pawing at or rubbing mouth | not examine their pet's • |
| loss of gums | • less playful, especially with toys | mouths regularly – but this doesn't mean they • |
| • movement of teeth | • excessive drooling | aren't uncomfortable – |
| | • discharge from the nose/mouth | just that they're used to it. |

What can happen if periodontal disease is not addressed?

- worsening of above signs and **increased discomfort**
- **loss of teeth**
- creation of abnormal holes between the mouth and nose or other areas of the skull (oro-nasal fistula, oro-antral fistula)
- **spreading of disease** within the tooth itself (eg. to the inside of the tooth)
- progression of painful inflammatory diseases
- **increased cost of treatment** (increased length of anesthetic, increased invasiveness, increased number of teeth needing to be removed once dental cleaning is performed)

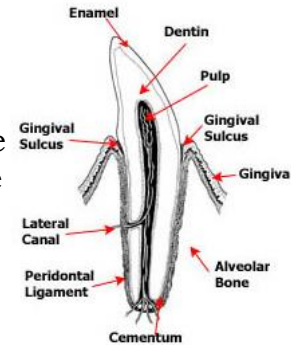
What treatments are recommended?

- The primary goal of treatment is **removal of plaque and tartar**.
- In between veterinary visits, owners can practice at-home management, including **tooth brushing, [oral antimicrobial rinses and gels, and specialized dental chews and diets](#)**. Your veterinarian can help you develop a plan that works best for you and your pet.
- Most of the time, at-home management needs to be supplemented with dental cleanings at your pet's veterinary clinic, but **proper management at home helps to reduce the number, length, invasiveness, and price of dental procedures**.
- **Anesthesia-free dental cleanings are not recommended** – at best, they may give you a false impression that the mouth is clean, and at worst, they may worsen condition of the teeth. There are many resources detailing why these services should be avoided ([American Veterinary Dental College](#), [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#), [Alberta Veterinary Medical Association](#)).

Puppy Pack – Oral Health Care

What is periodontal disease?

- Periodontal disease refers to disease of the structures *Around* the teeth. This includes the **cementum** (hard coating of the part of the tooth under the gumline), the **periodontal ligament** (the structure that attaches the tooth to the bone of the jaw), the **alveolar bone** of the jaw, and the **gingiva** (gums).



What causes periodontal disease?

- “**Plaque**” builds up on the tooth’s surface, which then affects nearby structures. Plaque is comprised of many things, including bits of food, bacteria, and the harmful products made by bacteria. It can exist not only over the part of the tooth you can see, but deeper under the gums too – what you can see is only the “tip of the iceberg”.
- If left on the teeth for ~48 hours, plaque will mineralize (become harder), progressing to “**calculus**” (tartar). This material **irritates the gums and nearby structures, protects deeper plaque, maintains an environment that bad mouth bacteria love, and can prevent healing of already diseased gums.**

Who gets periodontal disease?

- EVERY pet will develop some level of periodontal disease with time, but some are at higher risk of developing more serious disease, faster:
 - pets with **abnormal spacing or relationships between teeth** (eg. Bulldogs and other smushy-faced breeds, **small breed dogs**) – normal chewing can help remove plaque from teeth, but when the teeth don’t line up properly, this doesn’t work; and
 - pets with **other diseases** (eg. diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, immunosuppression).

Puppy Pack - Vaccinations

When to vaccinate:

- **DA2PP Vaccine:** Core vaccine targeting **D**istemper virus, **A**denovirus **2** (with cross-protection against Adenovirus 1), **P**arvovirus and **P**arainfluenza virus.
 - If starting at <12 wks of age = one vaccine, repeated every 3-4 wks until at least 16 wks old...
 - If ≥12 wks of age = one vaccine, one booster after 4 wks...
 - If ≥20 wks of age = one vaccine +/- one booster after 4 weeks depending on risk...
 - ...then repeated after 1 yr, and subsequently repeated annually or every 3 yrs (depending on the brand of vaccine used).
- **Rabies Vaccine:** Core vaccine targeting the Rabies virus.
 - one vaccine given at or after 12 wks of age...
 - ...then repeated after 1 yr, and subsequently repeated annually or every 3 yrs (depending on the brand of vaccine used)
- **Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease Vaccine:** Optional vaccination against the most common agent(s) causing 'kennel cough', given to dogs who frequently come into contact with other dogs (groomer, kennel, dog park, on walks etc.)
 - one vaccine given at or after 12 wks of age...
 - ...then every 6-12 months thereafter (depending on risk)

Note: Other vaccinations are available but are not commonly given, usually due to decreased efficacy or minimal/absent local risk for the disease they target.

Puppy vaccine schedules.

- A puppy's '**maternal immunity**' wanes between **8 and 16 weeks**.
- Puppies cannot respond to a vaccination when their maternal antibodies are present, but are **unprotected when maternal immunity and immunity provided by vaccination are both absent**.
- Different vaccines affect a puppy's immune system differently, resulting in variable boosting schedules for different vaccines.

Adult vaccine schedules:

- Studies indicate that **immunity provided by vaccination wears off more quickly in some dogs**, while in others the immunity persists for many years. **It is difficult to tell what kind of response your pet will have; therefore, vaccine schedules ensure all dogs are maximally protected.**
- Titer assessments are available but can be cost-prohibitive, and there is little research to determine what titer is 'protective'.
- Vaccines are safe and adverse effects of vaccination are minimal for mass majority of animals, while more severe effects are monitored for, and can be treated and prevented. Vaccination, even if it is given more frequently than required, is more cost-effective and provides owners with a greater sense of security knowing their pet is protected, regardless of individual variability in persistence of immunity.
 - **Vaccine reactions in dogs most commonly include gut upset (vomiting, diarrhea) or skin changes (swelling of the face, hives).** Vaccine reactions are most commonly seen 1-2 hours after vaccination but may be delayed by up to 48 hours. If seen, your veterinarian should be contacted to determine if treatment is required.

Puppy Pack - Vaccinations

Why vaccinate? To prevent these very serious, and very preventable diseases.

DISTEMPER: This disease is **common** in some populations (especially communities without vaccination), and can be **fatal**. Distemper virus **affects many systems**, including the gut (vomiting, diarrhea), respiratory system (nasal discharge, pneumonia), skin (thickening of the flat part of the nose and pads of the feet), and nervous system (circling, twitching, paralysis, seizures). **Treatment**, especially when the nervous system is affected, is **often unsuccessful**.

ADENOVIRUS: 1: Also called **infectious canine hepatitis**, this disease is most common where vaccination is not available, and is **fatal** if untreated. It primarily affects the **liver**, but as the liver contributes to the body's ability to stop bleeding, can result in **hemorrhage** throughout the body. Fever, decreased white blood cells, blue eyes and reddening/red spotting/bleeding of gums and other mucous membranes, in addition to effects of bleeding in other organs, may be seen.

PARVOVIRUS: This disease is most common in **puppies, especially unvaccinated ones**. It is **very common**, and as it is able to live in the environment for long periods of time, it is **likely a puppy will come into contact with it**. It causes severe, bloody diarrhea, dehydration, and a significant decrease in white blood cells, resulting in secondary infections. It is **very expensive to attempt treatment** and, even with treatment, may be **fatal**.

ADENOVIRUS 2, PARAINFLUENZA and BORDETELLA: These pathogens are **contagious**, and contribute to **respiratory disease**. Mild disease is more common, but vaccination is cheaper than treatment, and more serious forms can be fatal.

RABIES: This disease is less common, but it can be transmitted between many species, including **humans**. It is **fatal in all cases**, and there is **no treatment** available. Additionally, unvaccinated pets who experience potential or confirmed exposure to Rabies may need to be quarantined or euthanized.

Puppy Pack - Parasite Control

Why Give Parasite Control Products?

Protect your furry family members:

- Parasites can be transmitted between pets, and pets can re-infect themselves.
- Adverse effects of parasitism range significantly from minimally affected to severely affected, **depending on age and immune status**. Possible complications of parasitism include but are not limited to anemia (decreased red blood cells), discomfort from intense itching and damage to skin, gastrointestinal disease (vomiting, diarrhea, pot-belly, GI bleeding), and organ malfunction or failure.

Protect your human family members:

- Several pet parasites can infect humans (**zoonoses**)
- Some human groups are more at risk for developing disease
- **Pregnant** women or women who may become pregnant (internal parasites can cause abortion, birth defects if parasites migrate into the fetus)
- **Children <5 years** (in general, children are more likely to come into contact with, ingest and become infected with internal parasites)
- Immunosuppressed individuals (pregnant, **elderly >75 years**, individuals who are **HIV+**, who are undergoing **dialysis** or who are receiving immunosuppressive therapy such as **cancer patients** or **transplant patients**)

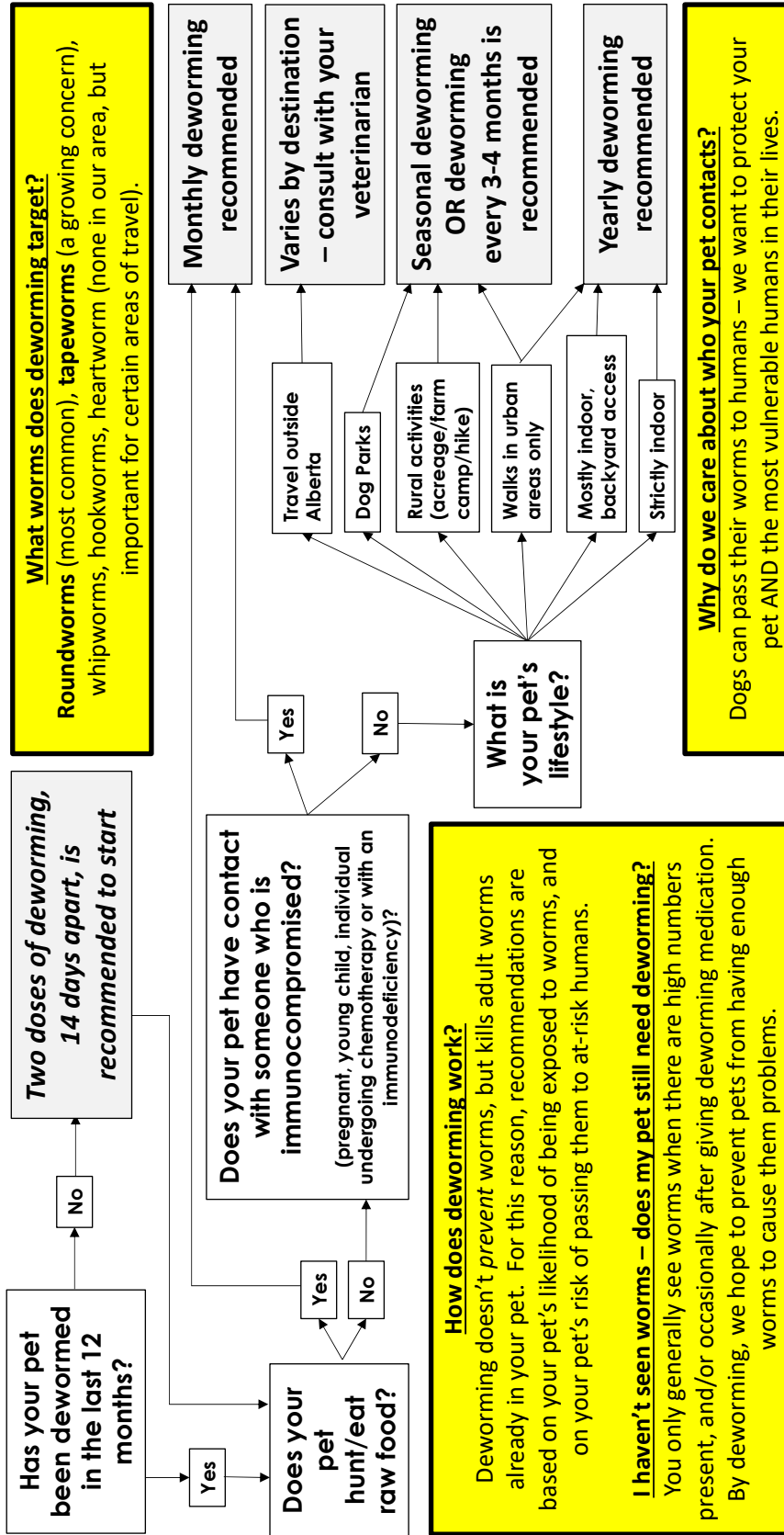
General Recommendations

- Practice **good sanitation** – pick up after your puppy immediately, wash your hands, and clean your puppy’s toys and bedding regularly.
- Focus on prevention for internal parasites - **deworm puppies every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age, then [discuss the best future deworming schedule for your puppy’s lifestyle with your veterinarian.](#)**
- **Prevent fleas/ticks during warm months**, treat lice and mites once infected or if risk of exposure is high.
- Increased or altered parasite prevention schedules may be required when your pet will visit an environment with higher parasite load, such as the dog park or **kennel**; or **when your pet travels outside the province**, where parasites uncommon at home are more prevalent.

Parasite Name	Life Cycle	Common signs of Infection	Important Facts
Sarcoptic Mite (<i>Sarcoptes scabiei</i>)	Transmitted between dogs in contact Lives full life within tunnels under the skin	Severely itchy skin , hair loss (esp. at margins of ears and on sides of elbows and ankles) <i>Can be detected in a deep skin scraping</i>	-ZOOONOSIS (mild itchy skin lesions that do not require treatment)
Demodectic Mite (<i>Demodex canis</i> , others)	Present in normal animals in small numbers, host specific; no transmission, immuno-suppression allows for overgrowth and disease Lives full life on/in skin	Patchy hair loss (with or without itchiness) <i>Can be detected in a superficial skin scraping</i>	-In dogs often resolves on own or with parasite control; infection in adults requires treatment and veterinarians need to look for an underlying immunosuppressive cause
Ear Mites (<i>Otodectes cynotis</i>)	Transmission occurs readily between animals in close contact	Headshaking, scratching at ears, discharge from the ears	-More common in cats -VERY contagious – need to treat all in-contact pets
Lice (chewing louse: <i>Trichodectes canis</i> ; sucking louse: <i>Linognathus setosus</i>)	Transmitted between dogs in close contact Lives full life on surface of the skin, is host specific, can live short-term on objects	Itchy skin <i>Can be detected on skin scrapings/hair</i>	-Most common in young or old animals or those in unclean environments -Need to treat animal and clean/dry environment
Ticks (several species)	Transmitted to dogs by attaching as they pass through long grasses Lives most of life in the environment (survives in >4°C)	May have no signs or may be itchy, anemic (weak, pale) <i>Some species more common in other parts of the world can cause paralysis</i>	-Can transmit disease (eg. Lyme Disease) -Prevention > treatment (tick prevention products, check for attached ticks regularly)
Fleas (several species)	Transmitted to dogs in an infected environment Lives most of life in the environment, can live in environment for long periods of time	Itchiness ; anemia (weakness, paleness) when in higher numbers on smaller animals	-Can transmit disease (eg. tapeworm); may induce Flea Allergic Dermatitis -Must treat animal and eliminate fleas from the environment

Parasite Name	Life Cycle	Common Signs of Infection	Important Facts
Roundworms <i>(Toxocara canis, Toxascaris leonina)</i>	<p>Eggs are ingested from the environment or are passed from mother to offspring</p> <p>Worms live in the gut and steal nutrition from within the gut</p> <p>Eggs are passed in poop</p>	<p>May show no signs → vomiting, diarrhea, poor growth or bellied appearance</p> <p><i>Can be detected in poop testing</i></p>	<p>-Most common</p> <p>-Dogs can die from high worm numbers</p> <p>-ZOONOTIC (lung, liver, brain, eye disease)</p> <p>-Worms can migrate to lungs causing respiratory disease</p>
Hookworms <i>(Ancylostoma caninum, Ancylostoma braziliense, Uncinaria stenocephala)</i>	<p>Larvae in the environment penetrate into the skin or lining of the mouth or are passed from mother to offspring</p> <p>Worms live in the gut and suck blood from the gut</p> <p>Eggs are passed in poop</p>	<p>Anemia (weakness, paleness), poor growth or weight loss, dehydration, dark tarry feces (digested blood)</p> <p><i>Can be detected in poop testing</i></p>	<p>-Dogs, esp. small dogs with high worm numbers, can die from blood loss</p> <p>-Worms can migrate to lungs causing respiratory disease</p> <p>-ZOONOTIC (skin itchiness, gut disease)</p>
Whipworms <i>(Trichuris vulpis)</i>	<p>Eggs are ingested from the environment</p> <p>Worms live in the gut</p> <p>Eggs are passed in poop</p>	<p>May show no signs to bloody diarrhea, weight loss, anemia</p> <p><i>Can be detected in poop testing</i></p>	<p>Less common locally</p>
Tapeworms (many species)	<p>Larvae are ingested when an intermediate host (for example, a flea) is ingested</p> <p>Worms live in the gut and steal nutrition from within the gut</p> <p>Eggs are passed in poop</p>	<p>May show no signs to vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss</p> <p><i>Can be detected in poop testing or seen with the naked eye (like rice grains)</i></p>	<p>-Most common in dogs with external parasites or in those who hunt other animals</p> <p>-Some species are ZOONOTIC, though these forms are less common</p>
Heartworm (Dirofilaria immitis)	<p>Baby worms (microfilaria) are in the blood stream of an infected dog → picked up by mosquitoes → transmitted to a healthy dog → migrate to the heart and major vessels and grow to mature worms</p>	<p>May show no signs → cough, decreased energy, weight loss, difficulty breathing, death</p>	<p>-Not present in AB, but of concern when travelling outside the province</p> <p>-Blood testing</p>

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I DEWORM MY PET?



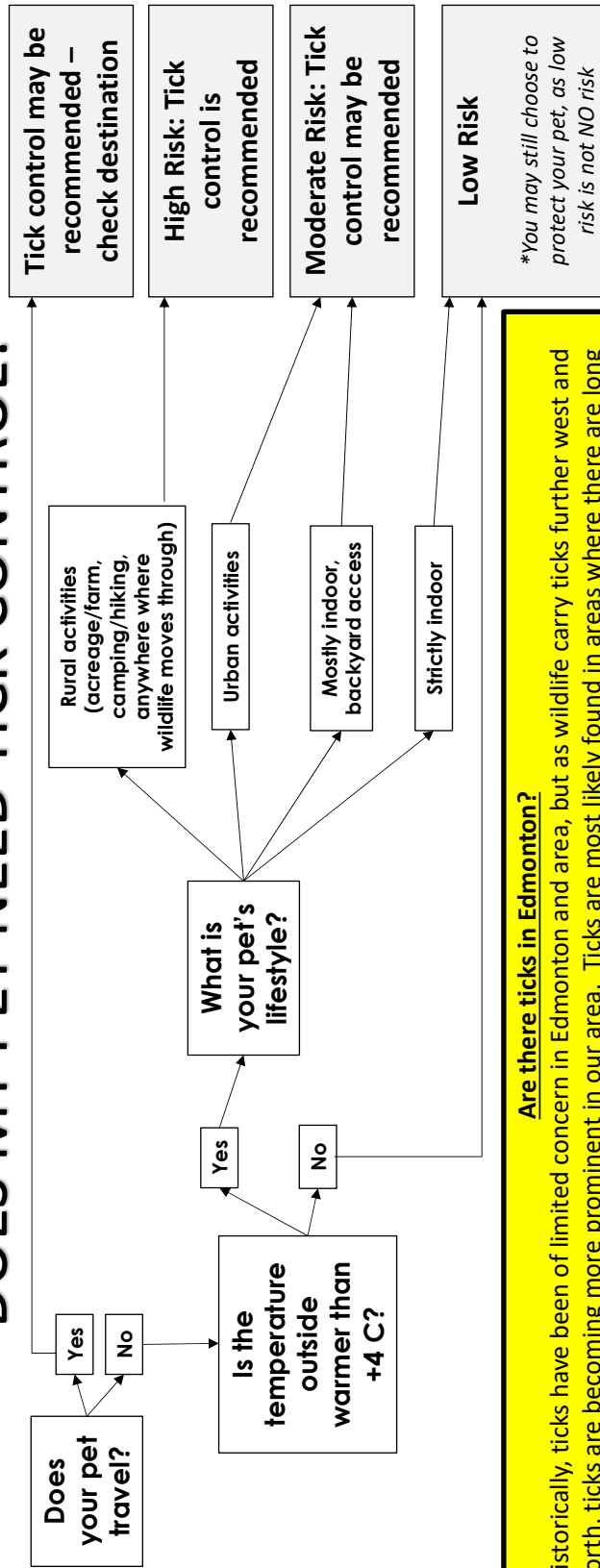
What worms does deworming target?
 Roundworms (most common), tapeworms (a growing concern), whipworms, hookworms, heartworm (none in our area, but important for certain areas of travel).

Why do we care about who your pet contacts?
 Dogs can pass their worms to humans – we want to protect your pet AND the most vulnerable humans in their lives.

How does deworming work?
 Deworming doesn't prevent worms, but kills adult worms already in your pet. For this reason, recommendations are based on your pet's likelihood of being exposed to worms, and on your pet's risk of passing them to at-risk humans.

I haven't seen worms – does my pet still need deworming?
 You only generally see worms when there are high numbers present, and/or occasionally after giving deworming medication. By deworming, we hope to prevent pets from having enough worms to cause them problems.

DOES MY PET NEED TICK CONTROL?



Are there ticks in Edmonton?

Historically, ticks have been of limited concern in Edmonton and area, but as wildlife carry ticks further west and north, ticks are becoming more prominent in our area. Ticks are most likely found in areas where there are long grasses, and where wildlife pass through, such as the river valley, parks, and rural landscapes; however, they can also be in well-groomed neighbourhoods and backyards. They cannot survive our cold winters, so they are primarily a concern in spring through fall.

Why do we care about ticks?

Ticks feed on blood and in large numbers can cause blood loss. We are particularly worried about ticks because they can carry and transmit disease, such as Lyme disease.

Puppy Pack – Positive Veterinary Care

Historically, we have accepted that pets are fearful of the veterinarian – they spend only a small portion of their lives there, and more often than not, pets freeze or shake in fear, which is easy to accept for short periods of time. Those that react with “fight” more than “flight” had been forcefully restrained, muzzled and held to accept veterinary procedures, because we are bigger, stronger, and smarter than our pets – and we’re doing what is best for them, or so we thought.



We know better now. The new generation of veterinary care, through such programs as Low Stress Handling® and Fear Free®, aims to make the veterinary visits not only low stress, but also positive – if we can make your puppy look forward to veterinary visits, we will! For some owners, this is a welcome change, but for others, we meet resistance, because sometimes low-stress and positive means lots of treats, going slower than you may be used to and taking more time rather than “just getting it done”, coddling pets, potentially repeated visits (eg. returning to the veterinary clinic after a break if a procedure is too stressful, giving anti-anxiety medications, and in some cases), sedation.

We aim to change the veterinary experience for our young patients by starting them off right. Positive experiences with lots of treats while in the veterinary environment helps to create positive memories in a setting that may otherwise be scary. Socializing puppies to veterinary procedures, with positive reinforcement to create a positive association, helps to prevent fear and anxiety in the future. **Identifying early signs of excessive fear or anxiety in puppies is also very important in early intervention for our young patients.**

Although we’re not yet commonplace, the veterinary industry is also working on strategies for “[Cooperative Care](#)”, where pets are trained proactively to offer themselves for veterinary procedures willingly, to not only to CHOOSE to be involved but enjoy doing so.

Positive Veterinary Care can only be successful with the support of pet owners like you! Performing exams at home can not only help identify concerns earlier, but also gets your puppy familiar with being handled in this way.

Nail Care and Grooming

Many pet owners find nail care stressful, whether it be because they don't know where to start, or because their pet is fearful or aggressive for nail care. We hope to set you and your pet up for success and provide you with the confidence to maintain your pet's nails.

General tips for introducing nail care:

1. Introduce nail care early.
2. Break the process of nail trimming into small components, and progress through the steps **SLOWLY, and at your pet's pace**. [This video](#) and [this handout](#) break down the steps for you.
3. Use reinforcement (food/treats work best) whenever handling feet and trimming – **treats should start before you start, and end after you are finished, such that your pet is engaged in a treat for the entire duration of nail care**, including handling and trimming.
4. **Incorporate nail care into your everyday life**, so it does not feel like a chore, and so that you are able to perform nail care regularly. For example, perform nail care while watching TV in the evening.
5. Less is more – **use the least amount of restraint possible** – ideally, none.
6. For nail clipping, **have your veterinary team perform a demo** for you, to familiarize yourself with the best tools and technique to use on your pet. If you choose to use a dremmel, [this video](#) reviews technique nicely. Ensure you choose a quiet, pet-specific dremmel including a hair guard to avoid pulling hair.
7. **Improve your visibility** by holding back or trimming the hair around your pet's nails. Consider a head lamp – but be careful not to shine it in your pet's eyes!
8. Listen to your pet, and be their advocate. **If your pet shows ANY resistance towards nail care, STOP – DO NOT PUSH!** This goes for others providing your pet with nail care too – such as the groomer or veterinary team. The temptation to “just get it done” is common in pet care and particularly in nail maintenance – but even a single negative experience can poison your pet to future nail care, and make it significantly more difficult in the long run. **Signs you may need to take a step back, increase value of treats, change your strategy, or seek advice from your veterinary team/a trainer include:**
 - i. Exhibiting signs of anxiety (lip licking, yawning, moving away, looking away, fidgeting, no longer taking treats readily or taking more roughly) when nail equipment is brought out and/or during nail care;
 - ii. Pulling back on the foot when it is held or reached for; and/or
 - iii. Attempting to lick/mouth the nail trimmers/dremmel/file or you.
9. **Ask for help** –if you or your puppy are struggling, or if you simply aren't comfortable performing nail care on your own, your veterinary team is here to support you.

Grooming

While some breeds may have low-maintenance coats, others require regular brushing, and many benefit from regular visits to a groomer. If you aren't sure which your pet is, consult with your veterinary team. As with nail care, grooming should be introduced early, positively, and at your pet's pace. If your pet is likely to need professional grooming throughout their lives, schedule short puppy visits with the groomer of your choice, and ensure they introduce grooming in a positive way, without pushing pets through negative emotions to get the job done.

Bathing requirements are variable across individuals. Many pets only require a bath after becoming dirty or smelly. Others, such as those who develop skin disease, may need baths more frequently. Make bathtime fun with your puppy – invest in a lickable mat that can be suctioned to the bath wall, bring treats and toys, and make it a party!

The “Dramatic” Pet

A pet's reactions to attempts at grooming and nail care can seem disproportionate to what is being done. *Why do so many pets fight "spa" procedures?* In order to understand this, we first need to understand our pets' perspective – this allows us to proactively manage common challenges *before* they become a problem. There are many reasons why pets may seem "dramatic", but remember: their responses are entirely proportionate to what they are experiencing from their perspective.

- ❖ **The paws and face of pets are extremely sensitive** – there is a high number of touch sensors in the paw, and near the ears, eyes, nose and mouth. This increased sensation helps to protect important senses. They may be ticklish, and if they are touched suddenly, or if anything uncomfortable or painful occurs in these areas, the intensity of these sensations is significantly higher than anywhere else.
 - Start touch at the neck, shoulder or hip, where pets are less sensitive, and slide touch gently towards more sensitive areas.
 - Handle sensitive areas gently and considerately. Avoid squeezing or pinching. Take care not to bend whiskers or pull hair.
- ❖ Traditionally, we've placed pets in positions that are more comfortable to us and not the pet. **Limbs may be pulled or bent in unnatural ways** in order to visualize the nails better, and **excessive restraint** may be used to keep the pet still. **Lifting or handling limbs may make a pet feel they are off-balance**, or that they are **disabled from escaping** if they become overwhelmed.
 - Perform nail care and grooming in a position your pet finds comfortable and natural. Do not physically place or force your pet into position – use cues or lure with treats instead. While some pets are comfortable lying on their side and will get into this position on their own, many pets prefer to remain standing.
 - Hold limbs in natural positions – avoid pulling limbs sideways from the body; bring limbs forward or backward (like a horse), and gently.
 - Ensure the surface you're working on has traction – avoid slippery surfaces or cover with runner mats, yoga mats or bath mats. Support the pet's body weight when a limb is lifted to provide stability, and limit consecutive time a limb is held up. Consider releasing feet between nails or intermittently when grooming.
 - If your pet shows any struggle, release them – they'll feel like they can escape if they need to, and are more likely to voluntarily stay put.
- ❖ **Grooming tools** aren't scary at first, but may **become scary** once they are associated with scary sounds or previously negative experiences. We know pets are significantly **more sensitive to sound** than we are, and the sound of nail trimmers, dremmels, bathing, blow driers and clippers can be frightening if not introduced with a positive association. The sight of these tools may predict scary things to come.
 - Introduce grooming tools when off and not in use – place the tool where your pet can approach and investigate them freely, and reward when they do.
 - Introduce noises at a low intensity (farther from the pet) and offer rewards to create a positive association, then bring the tools closer at the pet's pace. *Tip – nail clippers cutting uncooked spaghetti resembles the sound of clipping nails nicely.*
- ❖ **Overgrown nails are even more sensitive**, as they are painful to walk on and become hypersensitized to any sort of touch. Similarly, prolonged lack of grooming can result in matings which pull and pinch when manipulated, and skin ailments. This can also affect how they walk or move, leading to orthopedic issues, and the pet may develop a fear of being touched in any way, as touch may inadvertently result in pain. Grooming and nail care becomes a worsening cycle where pain → worsening resistance to being handled and trimmed.
 - Start grooming and nail care early, and perform as often as you are able. This may mean trimming one nail or brushing for a few minutes per day for some pets – and that's okay.

I already have a pet who is fearful or resistant to grooming, nail care, or both – now what?

- ❖ **Change the tool, environment, or predictors and start over** – for example, one pet who is fearful of nail trimmers may do better with a dremmel.
- ❖ **Work on [desensitization and counter-conditioning](#)** – this involves changing your pet’s emotional response to grooming and nail care from negative to positive. This process is similar to that of initial introduction, but may require smaller steps, and often is a slower process to undo previous negative experience.
- ❖ **Train your pet to enjoy wearing safety gear** – [training to enjoy wearing a muzzle](#), gentle leader, [cone](#), or to place their heads through a towel loop, allows you to back off on the restraint and give your pet more freedom, while reducing the risk of human injury. Safety tools should only be used when your pet is calm, comfortable and happy when the tool is in place – they should be cooperative in placement of the tool. It is important to continue to monitor and respect your pet’s body language – safety tools should NOT be a means of ignoring body language.
- ❖ **Introduce [cooperative care training](#)** – pets are more willing to participate in grooming and nail care when they have a choice and a means of communicating “stop, I am overwhelmed” or “continue, I am comfortable”.
 - Create a Treat-Ment Station ([video](#)), [Train a Chin Rest \(video\)](#), [Train a Bucket Game \(video\)](#), [Train Zen Down](#) for positioning lying down
- ❖ **Teach your pet to use a nail board** – this method of nail care takes time to train, but doesn’t involve handling, trimmers or dremmels.
- ❖ **Involve an [experienced, positive trainer](#)** – all above strategies are most successful when pursued with the guidance of a good trainer.
- ❖ **Involve your veterinary team** – nails can be trimmed back thoroughly using pre-visit medications or supplements, pain medications, and/or sedation, while working on a plan to make nail care more regular.

Spay/Neuter

Traditionally, veterinarians have recommended spaying and neutering be performed from 5-6 months of age. However, **research suggests these recommendations should vary by patient, their future lifestyle, and their owner's preferences.** In general, I recommend:

- Female dogs be spayed prior to their first heat, or between their first and second heat cycles.
 - First heat timing varies by breed.
 - The mom's age of first heat is a good indicator, if this information is available.
 - Smaller breeds may go into heat at 5-6 months, while larger breeds may not go into heat until 8-10 months.
 - Most significant **decreased risk mammary cancer** when spayed prior to first heat; moderate decreased risk when spayed between first and second heat.
 - 50% mammary cancer in dogs is malignant, or can be transferred to other parts of the body such as the lungs, and may become fatal.
 - **Increased risk of orthopedic disease**
 - Inconvenient, can be expensive, but rarely fatal.
 - Should be considered for dogs intended to compete in highly competitive sports – owners may elect to spay once their pet is fully grown for this reason.
- Male dogs be neutered once they are fully grown.
 - **Decreased risk orthopedic disease without increased risk mammary cancer.**
 - Consider earlier neutering if undesirable testosterone-related behaviours develop (marking, humping, aggression).
 - Neutering does not resolve this behaviour in all cases, but earlier neutering may increase chance of resolution.