



The Lawn Veterinary Centre  
Wise Vets for Special Pets

FREE  
E-BOOK

# Caring for your DOG



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# Welcome

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Here at the Lawn Veterinary Centre, we understand that a strong bond of affection soon grows between you and your dog and that in order to enjoy this bond for as long as possible, you must play an active role in maintaining your pet's health.



Left to right: The Lawn Veterinary Team – Anne, Evelyne, Paul, Michelle, Sam, Kirstie and Aida.

This free e-book will help you to keep track of all the most important healthcare measures, including those administered by your vet and those you need to perform yourself.

Please note that although this publication provides some key points to help you maintain your pet's health, it is not intended to replace professional advice from a Veterinary Surgeon or Veterinary Nurse. If you have any queries, particularly if you notice any changes in your dog's behaviour or health, please call us on 01793 644422.

“ We wish you and your pet a long and happy life together! ”

# *Lifetime Plan for your Dog*

- 6-8 WEEKS OF AGE:** Meet your Veterinary Nurse  
Free preliminary examination with nurse and nutrition discussion  
Discussion of preventative health care and behaviour/training
- 8 WEEKS:** Full health examination by one of our Veterinary Surgeons  
Start primary vaccination programme  
Discuss pet healthcare plan and insurance  
Discuss neutering and microchipping  
Discuss worm and flea control programme
- 10-12 WEEKS:** Further vaccination  
Discuss pet healthcare plan and insurance  
Discuss neutering and microchipping  
Continue worm and flea control programme
- 4-6 MONTHS:** Free adolescent development check with your Veterinary Nurse  
Review preventative healthcare programme including weight check, worm and flea treatment  
Discuss neutering  
Behaviour/training advice
- 9 MONTHS:** Young adult development check with your Veterinary Nurse  
Review preventative healthcare programme including weight check, worm and flea treatment  
Check weight and nutrition  
Behaviour/training advice
- 12 MONTHS AND EVERY YEAR THEREAFTER:** Full health examination by one of our Veterinary Surgeons  
Annual booster vaccination  
Review pet healthcare plan and insurance  
Continue worm and flea control programme  
Check weight and nutrition
- 6-MONTHLY INTERIM HEALTH EXAMINATION:** Health examination with your Veterinary Nurse  
Review Pet Healthcare Plan  
Check weight and nutrition  
Behaviour advice

# Vaccination

## KEY POINTS

- All puppies should be vaccinated and need yearly boosters (we will tailor the boosters to suit your dog's specific needs and circumstances).
- Elderly dogs still need vaccination.
- These diseases are still around, and they can kill.
- Most boarding establishments will not take your dog if their vaccinations have lapsed.
- Remember Kennel Cough if your dog is going to kennels (at least a fortnight before kennelling).
- Rabies vaccinations (and all the necessary tests and documentation) are available for pets destined to travel abroad.



Treatment of sick and injured animals is obviously a very important part of our work, but we are great believers in preventative medicine. Vaccination of puppies and adults plays a major role in maintaining your pet's health and we consider vaccination to be safe and necessary. Having said that, we are also keen to vaccinate only as often as we believe to be necessary for effective disease prevention.

Routine vaccination provides protection against life-threatening diseases which may be contracted from the environment or from unprotected dogs – Distemper, Parvovirus, Leptospirosis, Hepatitis and Parainfluenza. These diseases have been seen in unvaccinated dogs, and the heart-breaking fact is that they can be so easily prevented.

Infectious Bronchitis (Kennel Cough) is a condition that can result in a harsh cough and bronchitis and requires a separate intranasal vaccine for protection. Your dog may be at risk through attending boarding kennels, dog shows or mixing with other dogs but the risk is still present in the dog population at large. Kennel Cough vaccination should ideally be given no later than two weeks prior to kennelling.

Once puppies have had their initial vaccination course (between 8 and 12 weeks), it is really important for them to have an annual booster vaccination. It is also vital to maintain their immunity, as older dogs can still succumb to these killer diseases. There is no evidence that immunity lasts longer in older dogs. In fact, elderly dogs – like elderly people – are more likely to have a poor immune system, so it is best to continue with vaccination into old age.



At the Lawn Veterinary Centre, a full health assessment is included in the price of every vaccination appointment. This is always a good opportunity for us to examine your pet for any problems of which you may or may not be aware. Regular examination can lead to early diagnosis of a condition, which gives your pet a better chance of a successful outcome!

In summary, vaccination is a safe, reliable and cost-effective way of giving your pet the best chance of living a long and healthy life.

# Microchipping

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## KEY POINTS

- Microchips are the best method of permanently identifying your pet.
- They are safe, practical and effective.
- There is one database for all microchips.
- They can be implanted at any age.
- Implantation takes a few minutes and does not require sedation or anaesthesia.
- Microchips are required as part of the Pet Travel Scheme.
- Microchipping will be a legal requirement for dogs from April 2016.

## MICROCHIPPING

Microchipping is a quick, easy and painless one-off injection that places a tiny microchip under the skin of the scruff of the neck. There is no need for sedation or anaesthesia, although many people have their pets microchipped when they are anaesthetised for neutering. Each microchip carries a unique number that can be read by a portable scanner and will allow the authorities to contact you should your dog get lost.

## HOW CAN I BE TRACED IF MY PET IS FOUND?

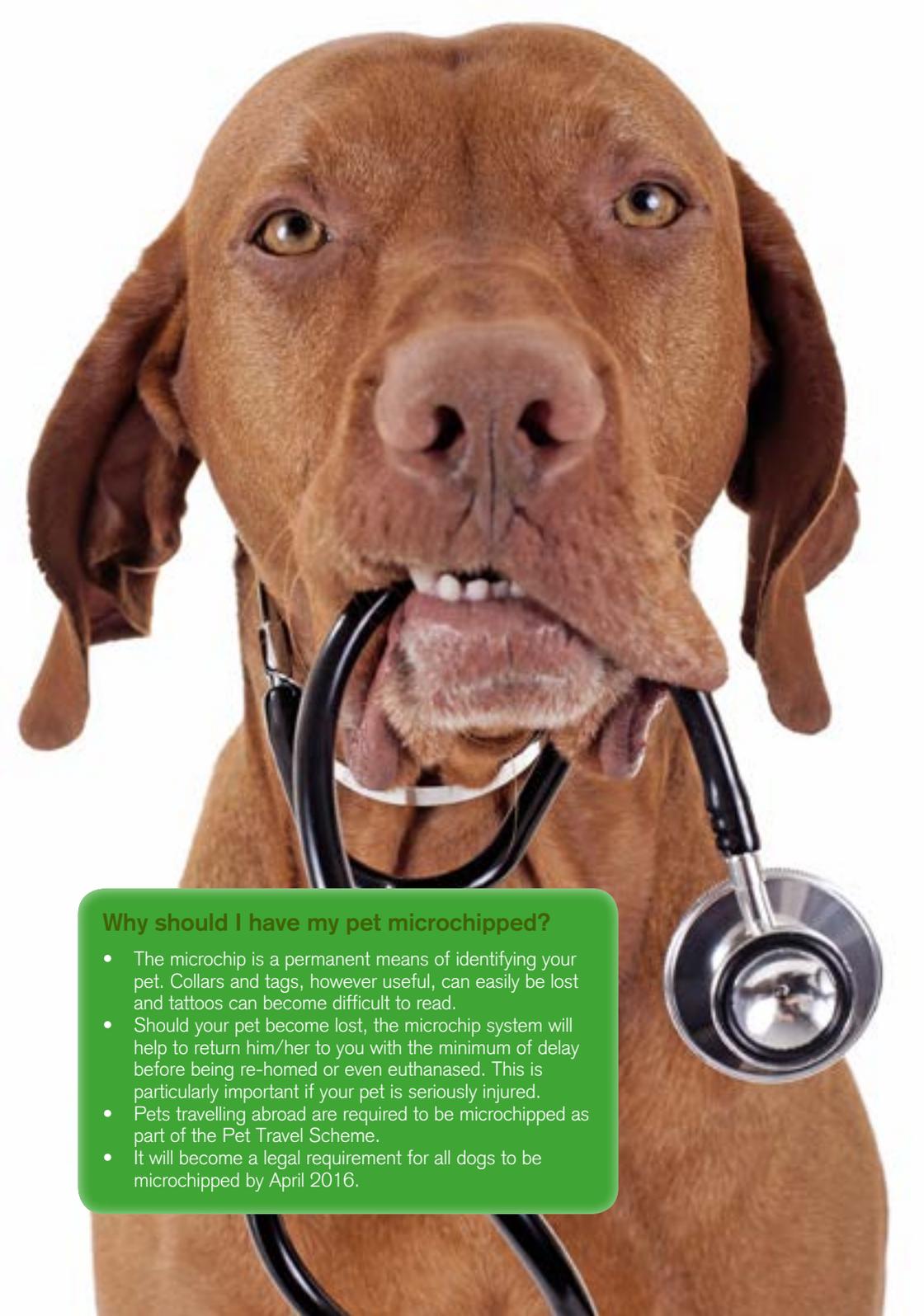
Your information is kept for life on our practice computer system and a national database and the fee for this is included in the cost of the implantation. If your pet is found and its chip number identified, it is a relatively easy matter to reunite you with your pet. The chips comply with the International Standard (ISO) and so can be recognised by scanners abroad.

## WHAT IF MY PERSONAL DETAILS CHANGE?

Whilst the microchip with its unique number will remain with your pet for life, it is possible to update your personal details on the national database as and when required.

## CAN MICROCHIPS HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

A European reporting system which monitors reactions to microchip implantation has failed to identify any significant problems in the last 6 years.



### Why should I have my pet microchipped?

- The microchip is a permanent means of identifying your pet. Collars and tags, however useful, can easily be lost and tattoos can become difficult to read.
- Should your pet become lost, the microchip system will help to return him/her to you with the minimum of delay before being re-homed or even euthanased. This is particularly important if your pet is seriously injured.
- Pets travelling abroad are required to be microchipped as part of the Pet Travel Scheme.
- It will become a legal requirement for all dogs to be microchipped by April 2016.

# Fleas

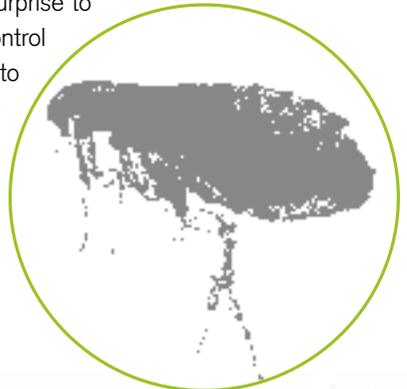
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## KEY POINTS

- Almost all dogs and cats pick up fleas.
- Fleas are present all year round.
- Your house may provide a supply of developing fleas to attack your pet.
- Fleas are a health hazard to you and your pets.
- Effective control involves treatment with the correct products throughout the year.

## WHERE DOES MY DOG GET FLEAS FROM?

Fleas are potentially a year-round problem. Typically, dogs pick up adult fleas when outside in the garden or when out for a walk during spring, summer and autumn. Fleas may be identified either by seeing adults moving around on your pet or by the presence of flea faeces, also known as flea dirt. Check for little black specks of flea dirt in the coat. If you are not sure if what you find is flea dirt, then place the sample on a white piece of paper and add a drop of water. If you see the sample dissolving or red coming from the edges, then this is positive for flea dirt. The fleas lay eggs, which drop off as your dog walks around your house, seeding your home. Warm, humid conditions favour the development of the eggs into larvae and then into pupae. The pupal phase is the stage when the developing flea is wrapped up in a protective cocoon and this is an important stage when it comes to treating flea infestations. The bad news if you see fleas on your dog is that this represents only 10% of the problem; the remaining 90% (eggs, larvae and pupae) are in your house (carpets, furniture, your dog's bed and even your bed if your dog is allowed on it). Interestingly we see a lot of fleas on dogs during November and December. This often comes as quite a surprise to owners but can usually be traced back to a failure to control fleas earlier in the year which allows the owner's home to become contaminated. When the outside temperature starts to drop, owners turn on the central heating and this favours the rapid development of the fleas' life cycle and the pupae hatch out and the adult fleas jump onto your dog.



## WHAT CAN FLEAS DO TO MY PET?

Adult fleas live on your pet and feed on their blood. Heavy infestations in young puppies and debilitated animals may cause them to become anaemic and potentially very unwell. Some dogs can live with fleas showing minimal or no signs, whilst others may develop an allergic reaction to being bitten by them. Dogs that are unfortunate enough to react to the flea's saliva, develop skin irritation, which can be extremely unpleasant for them. Owners may also suffer from allergic reactions to flea bites, developing raised, inflamed, itchy lesions on their lower legs. Dogs may also develop a tapeworm infestation by ingesting fleas whilst grooming (small children can also pick this tapeworm up if they were to ingest a flea).

## FLEA CONTROL

Fleas breed throughout the year in centrally heated homes, so it is important to maintain a flea-control programme throughout the year, killing adult fleas and preventing a build-up in the environment.

### How can I control the flea problem?

- Please discuss this with your vet or Veterinary Nurse - in our experience, non-prescription preparations simply do not work well enough to achieve effective flea control.
- It is almost impossible to prevent your pet coming into contact with fleas so regular treatments are necessary to control the problem and prevent a build-up within the home.

## Environmental Treatments

Regular hoovering and washing your pet's bedding is very helpful. This needs to be combined with environmental insecticidal and insect growth-regulating sprays, which will kill the eggs and larvae but often have limited or no effect on the fleas that have already reached the pupal phase. Those pupal fleas can often only be killed using a pet treatment see below, once they've hatched into adult fleas and jumped onto your dog.

## Pet Treatments

Prescription spot-on applications are applied on to the skin in the neck region and quickly kill adult fleas. If applied regularly every month, they can give excellent long-term control of fleas, even in dogs that are allergic to them. Many of them also have the advantage that if your dog likes to swim or if they need a bath, it will not lose its efficacy.

## TICKS

Some spot-on treatments can also kill and prevent diseases caused by ticks. Ticks are a very common parasite in some parts of the UK and, if untreated, can lead to diseases such as Lyme disease which can cause lameness, lethargy, anorexia and pyrexia.



Ticks are oval-shaped insects which attach to your pet's skin in order to feed. They can resemble a wart-like lump, so if you are unsure, always ask a qualified member of our staff to take a look. Never pull a tick off – you may leave the mouth parts of the tick under the skin, causing infection, so you must kill it first and use an appropriate device and technique to remove it. To kill a tick, use a suitable veterinary product dabbed directly on to it. It will wither and drop off in a few days. Alternatively, vaseline or butter can be applied over the whole tick can stop it breathing and it will be forced to remove itself from your dog.

Please ask your vet or Veterinary Nurse for more details – they will be happy to advise on products which do not contain organophosphates and are extremely safe (much more so than most of the other products available, particularly the non-prescription pet shop treatments).

# Worms

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## KEY POINTS

- Worms are a threat to the health of your family and your pet.
- Regular worming is necessary to control infestations.

## WHAT ARE WORMS?

Adult worms are parasites generally found within the intestines of your dog, though some species of worms can be found in other locations. Roundworms look like pieces of string. Tapeworms are long and flat with segments which look like grains of rice and can be mobile. They can occasionally be seen on the hair around the anus. Worm eggs remain infective in the environment for years. Lungworm is an emerging threat if your dog eats slugs or snails, or if their toys or water bowls are left in the garden and become contaminated by their slime trails.

## WHAT CAN WORMS DO TO MY DOG?

Heavy infestations can result in vomiting and severe diarrhoea and cause a loss of blood, weight and condition. Worms weaken the immune system, and by migration through major organs can cause illness, e.g. pneumonia. Whilst pets with lighter infestations may show no external signs, they are still a possible source of infection to others, including humans.

## WHAT CAN WORMS DO TO MY FAMILY?

The greatest threat to human health is the larvae from the roundworm *Toxocara*. *Toxocara* worms produce infectious eggs, which dogs can pass in their faeces. These eggs can remain in garden soil, public parks or in sandpits for up to two years and still be infectious to people as well as pets, if the eggs are transferred to the mouth and swallowed. They may be picked up from the environment by children playing and then putting their hands in their mouths or eating if they forget to wash their hands first. Although serious consequences are quite rare, these worms can cause blindness, heart problems and epilepsy in children. The tapeworm *Echinococcus* can occasionally be fatal to humans if ingested.

## HOW WOULD MY PET GET WORMS?

Puppies can be born with worms or they may pick them up through their mother's milk. Worm eggs are left behind on the ground when infected animals pass faeces, then picked up on the fur of the muzzle and paws. These eggs may then be swallowed while grooming. Pets that hunt

can pick up worms by eating rabbit, deer, sheep or cattle offal. Some worms can get into the body through the skin. Tapeworms can be picked up when pets groom and swallow fleas that are infected with tapeworm eggs.

## HOW CAN I CONTROL THE PROBLEM?

Your vet or Veterinary Nurse will be able to recommend a suitable treatment to keep your dog completely free from roundworms, tapeworms, hook and whip worms. Worming treatments can also be used to prevent heart and lungworm infestations. If your dog is being wormed regularly, they will be healthy and there is no chance of them putting your family at risk by passing worm eggs in their faeces.

There are different ways to treat your pet for worms such as tablets, oral liquids/pastes and – easiest of all – prescription spot-on treatments that you just squeeze onto your dog's neck.

The important thing is planning. We have parasite protection plans that enable you to protect your dog, your home and your children.

Please feel free to discuss any aspects of parasite control with a vet or one of the healthcare nursing team.



# Nutrition

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## KEY POINTS

- Poor nutrition may lead to health problems.
- Different life stages have different nutritional requirements.
- A natural diet needs to be carefully formulated.
- Always make fresh water available.
- Do not exercise your pet after feeding, as this could lead to a life-threatening twisting of the stomach.

## HOW IMPORTANT IS PROPER NUTRITION?

Feeding your dog the right diet is vital to keeping them fit and healthy. Poor nutrition accounts for a remarkably high percentage of the health problems we see. These include vomiting, diarrhoea, flatulence, obesity, dental problems, growth deformities, heart, liver, kidney/bladder and skin problems.

## WHAT TYPE OF DIET SHOULD I FEED?

Breeders will often prepare diet sheets and these can vary considerably in terms of their suitability, including raw/cooked mince, scrambled egg and most commonly Weetabix and milk. Cow's milk is not suitable for dogs and often causes vomiting and diarrhoea. In general, if a breeder has recommended a sensible diet, it makes sense not to change your puppy's feeding regime for their first two weeks with you. A new home, a trip to the vets, worming medications and so on are obviously necessary and unavoidable, but will stress a puppy. This can cause an upset tummy. By avoiding any unnecessary dietary changes at this time, you can reduce the likelihood of sickness and diarrhoea.

Commercial, quality dog foods are convenient and nutritionally balanced. There is a huge variety in the quality, digestibility and consistency of pet foods. It is important that a dog receives a balanced, nutritional diet. Fat, protein and minerals like calcium and phosphorus help build strong bones and muscles. They also provide plenty of energy for growth and play. Puppies come in many different shapes and sizes, so their nutritional requirements vary. Some commercial foods are based on breed size and reflect the requirements of different breeds with different rates of growth. The best advice is to feed your puppy a good quality food, which meets their needs at their stage of life. Cheaper foods often have a higher fibre content which is undigestible, resulting in a higher faecal volume (or to put it another way, you'll be picking up more after them). Although the better foods cost more, by needing smaller portions, they are often more economical to use.

Homemade diets can be very effective but do require more care. Please speak to us if you need help with feeding a non-commercial, natural diet.

## **IS TINNED OR DRY FOOD BETTER?**

Dry food is cost-effective, hygienic and very convenient. It can also help in keeping your dog's teeth clean.

Tinned food has a much higher water content – often 80% – which means that more is required to satisfy your pet's appetite. It therefore tends to be a more expensive method of feeding, especially if you have a large breed dog. However, some pets find tinned food more palatable and easier to digest.

## **HOW OFTEN SHOULD I FEED?**

A young puppy requires several small meals per day, whilst adult dogs can be fed once or twice daily. Your puppy and adult dog should be encouraged to settle after a meal. Exercise and energetic play before or just after a meal can, especially in deep-chested breeds, cause the stomach to rotate (gastric torsion). This is life-threatening and requires immediate and emergency surgical correction.

## **HOW MUCH SHOULD I FEED?**

When feeding commercial foods, the manufacturer will typically have printed some feeding guidelines on the packaging. These should be regarded as a guideline and are often rather generous, particularly for adult dogs. The best advice is to monitor your pet's weight by regular (monthly) weighing and appropriately adjust the amount you are feeding depending on how their weight changes over time. We offer free weight monitoring clinics, so if you have any difficulty weighing your dog, please contact us.

## **WHICH BRAND SHOULD I CHOOSE?**

Premium dog-food producers offer a high-quality range of diets for dogs that are tailored to meet their individual nutritional needs. Our Veterinary Nurses would be happy to advise you on the best diet for your dog.

**Growth stage** – These foods are designed to provide the extra nutrients needed by growing puppies, yet also avoiding the excesses that often lead to obesity, as well as bone and cartilage deformities that larger breed dogs are particularly prone to.

**Adult stage** – These diets provide all the nutritional requirements of an adult pet, while reducing the risk of obesity, dental and kidney disease later on in life. They also come in an 'Adult Light' formulation for obesity-prone individuals. Variations are also available for pets with sensitive skin

or stomachs. For pets prone to dental problems there are 'Oral Care' diets which typically use fibre technology to 'clean' the teeth while eating, equivalent to once-weekly brushing.

Senior stage – These diets are designed for pets over 8 years old. They cater for the more relaxed lifestyle of the older pet, helping them to remain in good shape while keeping the skin, coat and internal organs in good health.

# Neutering

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## WE RECOMMEND:

- **All male and female dogs are neutered (unless intended for breeding, of course).**
- **Monitoring weight and food intake post-operatively.**

## WHAT IS NEUTERING?

In the female, the operation is commonly called spaying, and both ovaries and the womb are removed.

In the male, this is called castration, and simply involves removing both testicles.

## WHY IS IT GOOD TO SPAY YOUR YOUNG BITCH?

Apart from the obvious advantage of preventing unwanted litters, spaying provides some definite practical and health benefits. Your pet will no longer have seasons, so will not bleed for up to 3 weeks every 6 months, nor will she try to escape to find a mate and male dogs won't be attracted to her. Neither will she experience pseudopregnancy (false pregnancy). This is when some bitches may appear off colour, produce milk, build nests, guard inanimate objects and in some cases behave very aggressively. Future life-threatening diseases of the womb (pyometra and cancer) will be prevented, and the risk of mammary tumours will be very much reduced.

## WHY IS IT GOOD TO NEUTER YOUR MALE PET?

In older dogs, testicular tumours, anal tumours, perineal herniation and diseases of the prostate gland are common. Castration is a valuable preventative measure against these problems. More importantly, castration is frequently performed to reduce problems such as wandering, aggression, hypersexual and territorial behaviour.

## WHEN SHOULD THE OPERATION BE PERFORMED?

Males: Can be neutered from around 6 to 9 months of age.

Females: Can be neutered from 6 months of age. In the vast majority of cases, we recommend spaying before the first season.

## Spay Chart

Age when spayed	Percentage of bitches who subsequently develop breast cancer
Before first season	0.5%
After first but before second season	8.0%
After two or more seasons	26.0%

### ARE THERE ANY DISADVANTAGES OF NEUTERING?

Neutering is a surgical procedure and involves an anaesthetic, so there are small risks. However, in a young healthy animal, these risks are minimal. Vulval fold pyoderma (skin infection around the vulva) and urinary incontinence can occasionally be seen. These conditions are perhaps slightly more common in bitches spayed prior to their first season, though both conditions can be seen in bitches spayed after their first season and can also be encountered in unspayed bitches. Both of these conditions are much easier to manage than the breast cancers and pyometras in unspayed bitches.

Neutered animals have a reduced metabolic rate, and so there may be a tendency to put on weight if the same quantity of food is given. However, a reduction of food intake or a light diet should prevent this. Proper nutrition and exercise will help to maintain a healthy weight for your pet, and one of our healthcare nursing team would be happy to discuss any queries with you.

# Dental care

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## KEY POINTS

- Monitor young pets for abnormal development of teeth and jaw bones.
- Brush daily to maintain good oral health.
- Start brushing as early as possible.
- Feeding some natural food (raw, meaty bones) can help keep teeth clean but can also cause problems such as tooth fracture and intestinal blockage if swallowed. Rawhide chews and raw carrot are safer alternatives.

Dental disease is one of the most common problems we see. Much of the dental work we perform could be prevented by appropriate dental care at home.

## WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

- ◆ Temporary teeth in young animals sometimes fail to fall out by 6-7 months of age, resulting in misalignment of the permanent teeth. They can also create pockets in which food, hair and other debris accumulate, leading to gum infection. Temporary teeth can be removed (under anaesthesia) if they cause a problem and this is often something that is performed when they're being neutered.
- ◆ Abnormal jaw development can lead to irregular growth of teeth. Any food which leaves food residue will promote dental disease. Some foods recommended by your vet are designed to provide top-quality nutrition, as well as leaving little or no food residue for this reason.
- ◆ Dental disease is very common in dogs. As in humans, it is just as painful and is largely preventable with routine care. Unfortunately, dogs don't have the ability to communicate their discomfort so dental hygiene is often overlooked. In humans, the most common dental problems are caries (cavities) and decay. This is due to demineralisation (loss of calcium) from the enamel and dentine, and results in painful, infected cavities. In dogs, decay only represents around 10% of dental problems, the majority of which are caused by periodontal disease.
- ◆ Plaque is made up of bacteria and food debris, which builds up on the teeth throughout the day. The dog's mouth is a very unhygienic environment housing millions of bacteria. Approximately 85% of dogs over the age of 3 years will suffer some degree of periodontitis,

making it the most common oral disease. Many bacteria will breed on the surface of the tooth and form an invisible layer called plaque. Some of this is removed by the dog's tongue and chewing habits but if allowed to remain, the plaque will thicken. Plaque then mineralises and is visible as tartar. Accumulation of tartar on the teeth will cause the gums to recede from the base of the tooth, infection soon follows and due to the inflammation of the gums (gingivitis), the gum soon recedes. Untreated infection spreads into the tooth socket, resulting in the tooth loosening and falling out due to failure of the periodontal ligament that holds the tooth in place. This process often leads to infection of the surrounding gum and bone, causing pain. As the infection in the mouth increases, tonsillitis and pharyngitis can also occur. The bacteria are absorbed into the bloodstream and can be carried to other organs.

Dental disease can be a source of bacteria and toxins which travel via the blood to other parts of the body, including the heart and kidneys.



As with humans, the crux of good dental hygiene lies in the daily removal of plaque. Whilst genetics has a part to play, the major cause of dental disease is the lack of prophylactic dental care.

To prevent any of this happening, we would suggest brushing your pet's teeth. Here are some tips:

- ◆ Start young so that brushing becomes part of your normal daily routine.
- ◆ Spend a few moments every day touching in and around your pet's mouth. Progress to rubbing the outside surfaces of the teeth with your finger. Next, cover your finger with a damp cloth and rub the teeth. Once your pet is comfortable with this, move onto a finger brush and then to a toothbrush with pet toothpaste (not human toothpaste).
- ◆ Don't rush it. Remember – always quit while you're ahead!
- ◆ End on a high by praising your pet when it's all over.
- ◆ Our pet health advisor will be very happy to demonstrate.

### **WE RECOMMEND:**

- ◆ Daily brushing with a toothbrush, finger brush or finger and toothpaste, never use conventional human toothpaste as it is far too harsh on the enamel and is designed to be 'spat' out. Doggie toothpaste is specially designed to be eaten...and tastes good too!
- ◆ Prescription diets are complete, balanced diets that use unique fibre technology to clean the teeth while eating. This is equivalent to brushing once a week.
- ◆ Good quality dental chews. Our Veterinary Nurses would be happy to advise you on our routine dental hygiene plans. We recommend regular preventative care for a healthy mouth.

# Behaviour & Training

## KEY POINTS

- Be consistent in your training.
- Socialise your puppy as soon as possible.
- Get used to handling your puppy.

A well-behaved dog is a joy to have around. To ensure good behaviour throughout its life, training should start as early as possible, and your dog should be fully socialised. We can put you in touch with local training clubs. The following are basic tips on training and behaviour – there are many good books that give more in-depth advice if required.

## PACK BEHAVIOUR

Over the last few years, behaviourists have been studying domestic dogs and have come to the conclusion that the 'pack' and 'dominance' theory of domestic dogs is a harmful theory. It prevents many owners understanding their dogs and can cause untold misery for both.

Family life can also be remarkably inconsistent for a pet, and dogs may focus their efforts on resources that are extremely important to them, but not necessarily to the owner. Lack of consistency proves to the dog that they are capable of deciding the outcome of many, albeit small, interactions.

## MOUTHING AND BITING

Puppies mouth & bite as they explore their environment. They also learn the rules of play with other dogs & puppies, in part, through play biting. It is important that puppies learn the skill of bite inhibition with people, as well as other dogs.

When the puppy play bites, give a sharp, high pitched cry of 'ouch' in the way that another pup would if it was hurt by a bite. If the puppy stops biting reward him/her. If the puppy continues, walk away and ignore him/her. Leave the room if you need to. In this way, teach the puppy that no bites are allowed on either human skin or clothing. Above all, be consistent.

## CHEWING

Correct your puppy/dog when he chews the wrong things. If you notice your dog is about to chew something prohibited, quietly direct attention onto an acceptable chew, and make a huge fuss when he/she begins to chew on it. This will encourage your dog to select the items you want to be chewed.

## NERVOUS DOGS

Some signs, when nervous, may be subtle and go unnoticed. The dog may lick lips, look away, yawn or try to back away and hide. If you notice these signs, prevent increasing the nervousness by either moving your dog away from the situation or doing something else your dog enjoys to help distract them. This also helps your dog to associate the situation with something pleasant.

## HOUSE TRAINING

Puppies should be let out at least every 2 hours. They should be rewarded for toileting outside but ignored when they foul inside. Always let your puppy out first thing in the morning, last thing at night and after every meal. Expect accidents in the first few weeks!

## SOCIALISING

At the start of every dog's life there is a uniquely sensitive period in which they can absorb many new experiences without fear. It is very important to introduce puppies to the outside world as early as possible. Therefore it is essential that until your puppy is fully vaccinated, you should take them out in your arms every day for a walk around the neighbourhood to experience the day-to-day sights and sounds of people, cars, children, bikes, pushchairs and so on. Although it is perfectly reasonable, and a good idea, to allow them to meet healthy, vaccinated dogs in your home or those of friends and family, please remember that your puppy will not have full cover against disease until a minimum of 12 weeks old and should be carried at all times.

## HANDLING YOUR DOG

It is worth getting used to handling your pup. Every day, try opening the mouth, touching the face, gums and teeth, feeling the ears, paws and claws. This will reduce the stress of being examined and treated in the future. It will also help you to recognise what is normal for your dog and to pick up problems early.

## BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

It's not uncommon for adolescent dogs to go through a rebellious teenage phase when their training seems to regress. This type of behaviour is often more noticeable in young male dogs as their hormones start to kick in and is perhaps more obvious in some breeds than others. This phase can last a variable period of time from a few weeks or – if you don't act appropriately – for the rest of their lives!

## DOG TIPS

- ◆ Remember to reinforce good behaviour with attention and praise – don't fall into the trap of ignoring your dog when it's behaving well, and telling it off (i.e. giving it attention) when it is not.

- ◆ Avoid the use of harsh training techniques. Your dog will respond much better to kind treatment.
- ◆ Systematically socialise your puppy early and get it used to its new environment – different noises and types of people as well as cars, bikes etc. Attend puppy socialisation classes – they are good fun for you as well as your dog.
- ◆ Keep young children under control – a dog can only put up with being pestered for so long and hasn't got the ability to say, "You're stressing me, please leave me alone!"
- ◆ Attend reputable training classes (members of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, APDT, use only kind and fair training methods) and remember to practise at home.
- ◆ Encourage your dog to play games. Different breeds respond to different games – find out what your dog enjoys the best.
- ◆ Dogs should be exercised daily. Two reasonable walks a day are better than just one 3-hour walk at the weekend!
- ◆ Periodically call your dog back to you when out walking. Place it on a lead and reward it with a brief game or a tasty bit of food and then let it off the lead again. Your dog will then learn that coming back to you is good news and that being placed on the lead does not mean the end of the walk!
- ◆ Give your dog something to do when it is left at home on its own. An activity toy stuffed with some tasty food will help to keep it occupied.



# *The Wise Pet Care Plan*

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## **WHAT IS THE WISE PET CARE PLAN?**

Here at the Lawn Veterinary Centre, we believe in preventative care for your pets. So much so, that we have designed the Wise Pet Care Plan to help protect both your pets and your pocket should any illness occur. Used in conjunction with a pet insurance policy (see below), membership of the plan will help you to take an active part in your dog's wellbeing and keep them healthy and happy for as many years as possible.

The Wise Pet Care Plan includes:

- **Boosters**
- **Health checks**
- **Flea products**
- **Worm products**

as well as discounts on:

- **Neutering**
- **Microchipping**
- **Dental work**
- **Food**

## **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Membership of the plan is quick and convenient. By spreading the cost of preventative treatments across the year and paying by monthly Direct Debit, it offers affordability and peace of mind. There is no registration fee and membership can start immediately. To find out more about prices, contact us today.

## **HOW DO I REGISTER?**

To become a member of the Wise Pet Care Plan, just give us a ring on 01793 644422 or pop into the surgery, where our staff can give you more details and answer any questions you may have.

# *Pet Insurance*

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## KEY POINTS

- Some medical problems can be very expensive to treat.
- The daily cost of insurance is relatively low.
- Tailor your cover to your needs and your means.
- Start your insurance early before your pet develops any problems to avoid any exclusions.
- Never cancel or change your policy without speaking to your vet first.
- Always read the small print of your policy and seek advice. If you are unsure about anything – it may be too late once your pet has an illness or injury.

**Here at Lawn Vets, we choose 'cover for life' policies for our pets.**

## PET INSURANCE

One pet in three will require veterinary treatment this year.

Perhaps this treatment will be a 'one-off' problem like broken bones after a road accident. It may equally be an ongoing problem like diabetes, a skin allergy or arthritis.

Veterinary medicine has become increasingly sophisticated. We are able to diagnose and treat many conditions that a few years ago would have remained undetected, often with fatal consequences.

The advancement of diagnostic testing, medical and surgical treatment, has inevitably led to the cost of first-class veterinary care increasing and in some cases an owner's finance can become a limiting factor.

But it is possible to insure your pet against accident, illness and injury.

Vaccination, elective procedures like neutering, pregnancy, diets, most preventatives (e.g. flea and worming products) and pre-existing conditions are excluded. Some companies offer a pensioner or multi-pet discount. Like your home and car insurance, pet insurance will have an excess whereby you will pay for each condition being treated, and the rest is paid by the insurance. In this way, your pet gets the very best treatment that money can buy. Depending on the policy and the company you choose, it may be possible for us to claim treatment costs directly from the insurance company, but please discuss this first with a member of staff.

Without insurance, owners have to fund the cost of their pet's treatment themselves and if their finances are limited they may have to opt for the second best treatment available for their pet. Pet insurance provides you with peace of mind.

## SELECTING A POLICY

It's vital to make sure that you understand the cover you are getting and, even more importantly, what will not be covered.

### Three basic types:

- ◆ Time-capped – Where conditions are only covered for 12 months. These policies are often cheaper, but we don't recommend you take them out. This is because after 12 months, the condition will no longer be covered and you will have to fund further treatment. Please note that taking out a new insurance with a different company won't give you more cover, as the new company will exclude the problem as a pre-existing condition.
- ◆ Maximum benefit – Where you have an amount specified in your cover that can be spent treating the condition. There are no time restrictions on these types of policy, but once the total amount available has been paid out, the insurance cover stops and you will have to personally fund any further treatment costs. Once again, please note that taking out a new insurance policy with a different company won't give you more cover, as the new company will exclude the problem as a pre-existing condition.
- ◆ Cover for life – These policies typically provide a specified amount of cover that can be claimed in any year, which is renewed each year along with the policy (remember you will have to pay excess fees each year) and hence your pet is covered for life.

Subject to current legislative restrictions, we can give general advice regarding pet insurance. We would always recommend discussing insurance with us first, since pet insurance companies vary considerably in terms of the ease with which claims are dealt with and we will be well aware of those that are currently good and others who can be more challenging for owners to deal with.

Generally, the best advice is to take out 'cover for life' pet insurance with an appropriate level of cover as soon as you get your puppy. Choose a reputable company and renew each year, keeping the same policy with the same company. If you change your policy in any way (even with the same company) or if you renew with a different company, then you must remember that any previous conditions or related problems (even if you haven't previously made a claim and including conditions that haven't even been treated), will not be covered by the new policy.

Be aware that some policies will only cover an illness for 12 months before cover stops, while others provide life-long cover for ongoing conditions. Chronic conditions can go on for life, not just for 12 months. Make sure the vet fee is renewed every year and not a fixed amount. Check that there is no limit on how long you can claim for each illness. Finally, check that your dog will be covered in later years when they are older.

Leaflets with further information are available in reception.

We recommend combining the Wise Pet Care Plan with an insurance policy to give you absolute peace of mind for all your pet's healthcare needs.





“ Call us on  
01793 644422 ”

