

Congratulations on your new puppy! Introducing a new family member into your home is always fun and exciting. Please take a few minutes to have a read through this information to see what the next few months will entail for your new pet at our veterinary clinic.

Vaccinations

Here is a list of the **vaccinations** we will consider for your new puppy. We may alter these vaccinations depending on any previous vaccinations administered by other veterinarians, discussion with you and based on the body weight and size of your puppy.

1. *Distemper/Adenovirus/Parvovirus/Parainfluenza virus* (DAPP)
This vaccination starts around 8 weeks of age, by injection, and continues every 3-4 weeks until 16 weeks of age. Therefore most puppies will receive 3 injections total, given 1 month apart. DAPP will be repeated 1 year later, then every 3 years ongoing
2. Infectious Tracheobronchitis (includes *Bordetella bronchiseptica*; (a.k.a. kennel cough)
This vaccination is given in the form of nose drops. It is given one time only, then repeated annually as an injection.
3. *Leptospirosis*
This vaccination is given twice, 1 month apart, by injection. It is repeated annually ongoing.
4. *Rabies virus*
This vaccination is given once by injection, then repeated 1 year later, then every 3 years ongoing. Rabies is special because it is so deadly and it can spread to humans. So when we vaccinate our pets we are also protecting the whole family.
5. *Lyme*
This vaccination is given by request only, normally in relation to tick exposure. It is not part of our regular vaccination schedule.
6. Coronavirus and Giardia
Sometimes you may see these on a vaccine card that came with your puppy. We do not recommend either of these for any puppies.

On occasion we will see a puppy that has received a DAPP vaccination by the breeder or shelter at 6 weeks of age. These pups will need to receive a DAPP vaccination at 9, 12, and 16 weeks of age. Also, if your puppy is first examined at an older age, there may be fewer doses required. We can explain this further at your appointment if this applies to you and your pup.

Avoidance of vaccine-preventable diseases until vaccination is complete

The biggest risks to your puppy in this list are Distemper and Parvovirus (in the DAPP shot). These diseases have a high mortality rate and are “out there” in the wildlife populations. Fortunately, we have this excellent vaccine. However, your puppy will not be well-protected until after that shot at 16 weeks of age, so until then you need to remain protective.

However, this does **not** mean your pup needs to avoid all other dogs. Remember, we have these great vaccines, so the loved family pet population (i.e. vaccinated dogs) are not the source of these. Until 16 weeks of age you **should** encourage contact (appropriately supervised) with the vaccinated dogs of friends, family and neighbours. There is a great benefit in terms of socializing your puppy. You **can** take him or her for walks outside on streets, sidewalks, shopping areas, school grounds, soccer fields, etc.

You should **avoid** more natural areas – trails, wooded parks, stream banks, etc. just until after that 16 weeks shot. Just think about whether a place looks like a good spot for a coyote or raccoon. If so, it's not a good spot for your puppy – and *vice versa*.

Deworming

Puppies are given a **deworming** tablet every 2 weeks until they reach 4 months of age, then monthly until 6 months of age. After 6 months we may recommend deworming every month, every 3 months, or annually, depending on the individual dog and your family. The medication we tend to reach for is called Interceptor Plus, which covers most of the gastrointestinal parasites your puppy may pick up.

Flea medication

Flea medication is typically recommended from June to November in North Vancouver. We can see fleas in the winter, but this is not common. We have several different treatments which your veterinarian can discuss with you. They vary from oral chewables to drops applied on the skin. We will often dispense this medication month-by-month as your puppy grows as the dosing is based on body weight.

Insurance

There are several different insurance companies accessible to pets in North Vancouver. While we cannot recommend an individual company, we do offer a 1 month free insurance trial through Trupanion pet insurance. Each insurance company offers a free online quote which may help in your decision making.

Spaying/Neutering

“**Spay**” refers to the sterilization of females by removing the uterus and ovaries (ovariohysterectomy). “**Neuter**” is the term we use for castration of males. Both are done under general anesthesia in the course of a one-day stay in our surgical facility. We find that our patients bounce back amazingly fast – usually hard to tell apart from normal at home by the next morning (but you will still have to keep them on leash and out of trouble for about 10 days).

We will recommend having your small-breed female puppy spayed at about six months of age to prevent not only pregnancy, but also breast cancer and uterine infections. For larger breed dogs, we can discuss some pros and cons of spaying at that age versus waiting until she is a little older. For males, there is greater flexibility for the age at which he should be neutered, though six months is also commonly a good time to get this taken care of. We will provide greater details as that age approaches.

Diet

Feeding your puppy a good quality puppy diet is crucial for optimal growth and wellbeing. Puppies should generally be fed THREE TIMES daily to ensure they are meeting their caloric needs, and to avoid drops in blood sugar levels throughout the day. There are numerous pet food companies in Canada and the task of choosing a diet can be overwhelming. Things to consider are:

1. Whether the diet is from a veterinary clinic, pet food store or a grocery store, as grocery store pet food tends to be of lower quality.

2. Pet store diets that have been analyzed to meet the minimum requirements needed for puppy growth will have a label that reads AAFCO Approved. Look for this when you are purchasing new pet food.
3. Avoid diets that are grain free. There have been a number of studies that point towards grain free diets leading to heart disease in dogs. The underlying problem is not well understood but it is likely that it will get figured out in the future. Once that happens, it should be possible for companies to make safe grain free diets for those who want that option. Until then, better safe than sorry.

House-training

1. Toilet training puppies can be tricky, but here are a few tips to consider. Take advantage of your puppy's instinct not to soil its "den". This instinct is already present. The trick is to teach him or her that all indoor areas qualify as "den". Use an open kennel with a comfy bed as an obvious den inside the house and limit the space around the kennel he or she can run around in. Hopefully your puppy will not want to eliminate so close to its den. Then enlarge this space progressively over the days and weeks so that eventually your whole home is included. If there is an accident, it will probably be some place away from the kennel. Shrink the accessible area back down for a while, before enlarging again when there have been no accidents for a while. Your puppy will likely need to go at predictable times: whenever they eat, when they are lively/playing/exercising, when they awake from a rest, and generally after it's been a couple of hours. Take advantage of these opportunities for a positive learning experience!
2. Treats, treats, treats! Lots of rewards when your puppy toiles outside is so important. That and high pitched excited voices!
3. If your pup eliminates inside the house, avoid showing them the accident and do not scold them. Instead simply clean up the mess and ignore it.

Vaccination Schedule

8 weeks of age:

1. DAPP vaccine
2. Deworming (2 doses, 2 weeks apart)
3. +- Flea medication

12 weeks of age:

1. DAPP vaccine
2. Bordetella vaccine
3. +- Leptospirosis vaccine
4. Deworming (2 doses, 2 weeks apart)
5. +- Flea medication

16 weeks of age:

1. DAPP vaccine
2. +- Leptospirosis vaccine
3. Deworming (2 doses, 2 months apart)
4. +- Flea medication
5. Rabies vaccine