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PUPPY/DOG CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

Vaccinations: Continue vaccinations every 3-4 weeks until 16 weeks old. The final 2 boosters should be given after 12 weeks of age to ensure a strong immune response.

Internal Parasites:

- Puppies should be routinely dewormed every 2- 4 weeks for at least 4 treatments to eliminate common internal parasites. Please give the Strongid dewormer as prescribed.
- Please bring a fecal sample in the coming week for analysis to ensure all parasites are being treated.

Nutrition: We recommend Hill's Ideal Balance or another high-quality puppy food. Feed measured quantities three times daily to maintain lean body condition (Can transition to twice daily feeding at 4-months of age). Adjust food to keep puppies in lean-body condition throughout their growing stage. This will help prevent adult obesity and is critically important in minimizing joint problems in large-breed dogs.

Flea/Parasite Control: We recommend monthly oral administration of [Credelio](#) year-round to prevent flea and tick infestations. In addition, all dogs should be given monthly [Interceptor Plus](#), which treats many internal parasites and prevents heartworms (not currently a problem in Western Washington, but critically important for any dogs that travel.). A fecal analysis should still be performed annually to detect the presence of other less common parasites along with Giardia and Coccidia, which are not treated by use of prevention products and more common throughout our region.

Spaying/Neutering:

- Veterinarians have recommended for decades that dogs be spayed/neutered at 5-6 months of age, just before they become sexually mature. This prevents unwanted breeding, behavioral problems associated with puberty and hormone production, and eliminates the chance of breast cancer in female dogs.
- Recent studies suggest that neutering large-breed dogs before 12 months of age may increase their risk of skeletal/joint problems, and slightly increase the risk of some cancers later in life. More statistics are needed, but at this time we recommend considering delayed neutering large-breed male dogs (expected to reach an adult weight of 60 pounds or more) until 12-18 months of age IF the following criteria are met:
 - The dog is adequately confined to prevent unwanted breeding and "roaming"
 - Unwanted behavioral problems (urine marking, aggression, "humping") do not become apparent.
- We continue to recommend spaying female dogs at 5-6 months of age. While the data concerning early neutering also applies to female dogs, other risks of not neutering (increased incidence of mammary cancer and the challenge of maintaining a female dog in heat) continue to favor early spaying at this time.

Dental Care: Healthy adult dogs should receive their first prophylactic dental cleaning starting at 3 years of age for small breeds and 4 years for medium and large breeds.

Permanent Identification: We recommend that a microchip be placed under your pup's skin to help ensure that she is rapidly returned to you if ever lost. This can be done at the time of spaying/neutering if being done at 5-6 months of age, or can be done at one of the early puppy visits in animals where neutering is going to be postponed.

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Behavior:

House Training: Take your puppy out frequently (especially after meals) and praise urination/defecation outside. Puppies need to be *CONSTANTLY* monitored indoors and corrected if they eliminate in your sight indoors (scolding for an accident out of your sight simply doesn't work). For this reason, puppies should have no unsupervised time indoors until they have been reliably eliminating outdoors for at least 1-full month. When you can't immediately supervise your pup, it should be confined to an area easily cleaned.

Chewing/Biting Behavior: Puppies need to chew and should be given appropriate chew toys (large/sturdy enough that they are not swallowed!). If your puppy is biting you, tell him, "OW!! No Biting!", and briefly end all play/interaction. Then return with an appropriate chew object

Socialization: Provide lots of opportunity for positive socialization, but stay away from dog parks, trails, and other areas where dogs frequent until your pup has received his last vaccines.

Note that we strongly encourage you to take your puppy to a "Puppy Classes" for training help and to allow socialization.

Pet Health Insurance: Now is the time to investigate Pet Health Insurance if you have any interest, before your puppy develops any pre-existing conditions, which are excluded from coverage "life-long." The website, petinsurancereview.com is an excellent resource to investigate insurance options.