

**Your Guide To**

# **Puppy Health Care**



**Humanimals**  
YOUR PETS' DOCTOR

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# Puppy Health Care Information



Bringing a new puppy into your family is exciting. To get your bundle of fur off to the best start in life, there are a few things to think about from a health perspective.

## Vaccinations

Vaccinations are the best way to protect your puppy from several dangerous diseases. We vaccinate puppies against canine parvovirus, canine distemper virus, infectious canine hepatitis, and infectious canine tracheobronchitis (kennel cough).

### Puppy Vaccination Schedule Example:

1



**First vaccination  
between 6-8 weeks**

2



**Second vaccination  
between 10-12 weeks old**

3



**Third booster  
between 14-16 weeks old**

Your puppy will not be fully protected from disease until 10-14 days after its final booster. Your adult dog will be vaccinated annually for infectious canine tracheobronchitis and receive a C3 vaccination every three years. Your vet might recommend an annual C3 vaccination if you live in an area of high parvo incidence. An animal not vaccinated is susceptible to highly contagious diseases; some outcomes can be fatal. Therefore, it is essential that you follow your vaccination schedule to protect your pet and others around them. Please keep in mind that this vaccination schedule may vary depending on your veterinary recommendation.

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## Intestinal Worming

Intestinal parasite infestations can cause your puppy to become unwell or even die. You must de-worm your puppy regularly, every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age, then once a month until 6 months of age, and every 3-6 months for life (more often when associating with young children).

There are a variety of de-worming products available, including:

- All-wormer tablets and chews
- All-wormer and heartworm combination tablets

When deciding which medication to give your dog, you should always ask your veterinarian for advice first to ensure you give the correct dosage to your dog.

## Fleas

Fleas are one of the most problematic parasites in the world, with the ability to cause skin disease and allergic reactions. They can be difficult to diagnose - a dog or puppy with flea allergy dermatitis may never actually be seen with fleas!

Flea treatments must be used every month of the year to effectively prevent and control flea infestations. Please check the label carefully when you buy a new flea treatment or prevention product. Some products are safe for dogs but are toxic to cats. If in doubt, please consult with one of our vets who will be happy to advise you.



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## Desexing

Desexed pets are less likely to urinate inappropriately, fight, wander, develop behavioural problems and produce unwanted litters. They are also less susceptible to certain cancers, and infections such as pyometra. Research shows that desexed pets are more likely to live longer.

Generally speaking, we advise desexing your dog by six months of age. However, it is best to ask your veterinarian their recommendation as this will vary depending on the pet. For example, some larger dogs may be required to wait longer to ensure adequate growth.



On the day of surgery, your puppy will come into the hospital in the morning (without breakfast), have their procedure under a general anaesthetic, and go home the same day or the following day, depending on their condition.

## Ticks

The brown cattle tick is the only tick found in New Zealand. While this parasite is not lethal to puppies, it can develop into an irritating skin condition and become uncomfortable especially if an infestation occurs. This type of tick can spread disease among other pets. Ticks attach mainly along the back, on the neck, in the ears and between the toes.

Tick prevention products include:

- Oral chews
- "Back of the neck" spot-on products
- Tick collars
- Sprays
- Rinses

Please contact your veterinarian if you do find a tick on your puppy. Ticks can be removed, and treatments are available.



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## Microchipping

By law, your puppy must be microchipped before sale or at change of ownership. This tiny chip is placed under the skin of the neck, between your puppy's shoulder blades. If your puppy is found and taken to a vet or animal shelter, staff will use a special scanner to retrieve the unique identifying code on your puppy's microchip.

When entered into the National NZCAR (New Zealand Companion Animal Register) database, this code will bring up a file that contains all of your contact information, so your puppy can be reunited with you. It's very important that you keep these details up to date. If you're unsure of your puppy's microchip status, we can use our clinic scanner to check this - it only takes a few minutes and does not require an appointment.

We advise you to register your puppy with your local council when it is 3 months old. Your registration fees will be cheaper if your puppy is desexed. If you move or change phone numbers, don't forget to update your records with your local council as well as the microchip database. Please use this as a primary guide and follow up with your local council for the most up to date information.

## Feeding

There are many premium-grade commercial foods that meet the exact nutritional requirements of growing puppies. Although brands vary in quality, premium brands generally provide higher quality ingredients. We recommend you feed your puppy a premium grade puppy food until desexing or beyond depending on the size of your dog. For puppies expected to grow to more than 25kg, we recommend using a "large breed puppy" formulation to reduce the risk of skeletal problems later in life.

At 8 weeks of age, you should provide your puppy with 3 small meals per day. From 2-4 months of age, you can reduce this to 2 larger meals per day. From 6-12 months, you may drop this to one meal per day if desired. Feeding guidelines can be found on the label of your chosen food. Any change in your puppy's diet must be made gradually over 3-5 days to prevent gastrointestinal issues.

## Socialisation and Training

The experiences your puppy has during its first 16 weeks of life will greatly influence the sort of adult dog it grows into. It is important that your puppy interacts with other people, dogs and puppies during this time to help prevent it developing antisocial behaviour.

Puppy preschool is an ideal way to socialise puppies of this age because all the pups attending classes have started their vaccination program and the sessions are moderated by a dog trainer who ensures the puppies learn to play nicely. It is preferable to complete the four-week course by the time the puppy is 16 weeks old.

Toilet training involves frequent positive reinforcement rather than punishment. When the pup starts to sniff and circle, and always after eating, playing or sleeping, take the puppy outside to the area you want it to urinate and defecate and stay with it until it does. After the puppy uses his/her toilet, reward him/her with praise and a food treat. Ignore mistakes because the puppy will not associate any punishment with the mess on the floor.

**Please note:** some information may vary between dogs. If you are unsure, please consult your veterinarian.



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## Jumping Up

Your puppy will often jump up to gain your attention or initiate play. This might be acceptable when your puppy is playing with other dogs, but for humans, it can be messy, painful, and intimidating, especially as your puppy grows into an adult dog, especially a large breed dog.

## Digging

It is very normal and natural for your puppy to dig. Digging promotes thermoregulation and provides dogs with shelter and comfort. If possible, give them an area that you are happy for them to dig in.

## Barking

Similar to jumping and digging, barking is also a normal dog behaviour. However, it can become a problem if your dog barks all day, becoming a nuisance to you and your neighbours. It can also be a sign that something is wrong: dogs will bark when they are anxious, bored, or even in pain.

Your puppy may bark in the middle of the night because it is looking for its pack, but it's important that you do not go to the puppy to soothe it as this teaches it that barking is a good way to gain attention.

## Pet Insurance

Veterinary care these days is cutting-edge, and there are many options available if your dog becomes seriously ill or injured. However, unlike the human healthcare system, there is no government funding available to pay for veterinary treatment. Pet insurance helps to take the sting out of vet bills by reimbursing you up to 100% of the cost. There are many different policies available to suit your needs, including cover for illness and accidental injury, routine care, and emergencies.



**To make an appointment, book online at [www.humanimals.co.nz](http://www.humanimals.co.nz)  
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