



Sleaford Vets

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A HEALTH GUIDE TO YOUR PUPPY'S FIRST YEAR:

6-8 Weeks old

- 1st Vaccination (*Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus & Leptospirosis*) ()
- Primary health check and vet registration ()
- Weight check ()
- Worming ()
- Start flea and external parasite control ()

10 Weeks old (Or two weeks after first vet visit)

- 2nd Vaccination (*Distemper, Hepatitis & Parvovirus +/- Kennel Cough*) ()

This allows your puppy to mix with other vaccinated dogs. However, Swimming and drinking from outside water sources must still be avoided as your puppy is not yet protected against Leptospirosis.

- Weight check ()
- Worming ()

12 Weeks Old (or two weeks after your second vet visit)

- 3rd Vaccination (*Leptospirosis*) ()
- Weight Check ()
- Flea and Worming Treatment ()

4 Months old - Flea and Worming Treatment ()

5 Months old - Flea and Worming Treatment ()

6 Months old

- Adolescent health check
- Weight check
- Flea and Worming Treatment
- Neutering discussion (castration or spaying)

1 Year old

- Yearly vaccination booster
- Weight check
- Change to adult food

Feeding: Your puppy does not need a complicated diet. We recommend a good quality complete puppy food. Varying the diet by adding things like milk or raw meat can simply cause diarrhoea and is not necessary if you have chosen a complete food. With the right food, you can choose to feed just dry kibble or biscuits. Keep in mind that cheaper brands can be bulked out with fibre, fat or water, they often cause smelly breath and bigger stools and if your puppy has to eat more to get all the nutrients, they can be no cheaper per feed. When changing food, always introduce it slowly over a week. They should be on a puppy diet until one year old unless the vet recommends otherwise.

Worming: Puppies are born with worms and also get them from their mother through the milk. They therefore need worming every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks old, followed by monthly treatment until 6 months old and then a minimum of every 3 months throughout their adult life, depending on what product is used. Adult dogs often carry worms that are not visible in their stools, some of which are a health risk to humans, so should be wormed regularly. If you have small children or your dog has the bad habit of scavenging then they should be wormed monthly.

Fleas: Fleas and mites are very common, particularly with puppies, and can be seen at any time of the year. Fleas like to breed in your home and it is the same flea that infests dogs, cats, rabbits and humans. Mites burrow deep into a puppy's skin and cause mange. It is far better to prevent these problems than wait until they occur. There are many treatments, the safest and most effective are those sold by vets. Beware of products on the market that are just repellents.

We run flea and worming consultations here at Sleaford Vets, where we can help advise you on the best parasite control regime for your pet.

Vaccinations: After the initial puppy course of three injections, your dog will need a yearly booster throughout their adult life.

Teething: You can expect your puppy to shed its baby teeth between 4 and 6mths old but this can vary between breeds. The vet will check the baby teeth at the first vaccination and the adult teeth at the adolescent health check.

Insurance: You are more likely to claim on pet insurance than car or house insurance, so we highly recommend insuring your pet. It is best to take out a policy as soon as possible as young puppies are prone to accidents or development problems. When getting quotes be sure to ask the following questions:

- Will an ongoing problem with my pet be covered for more than one year?
- Is there a limit to how much money I can claim back in one year or in my pet's lifetime?
- How will my policy, premiums or excesses change when my pet is over 8yrs old?
- Can I claim for prescription foods, dental care or gum problems?

Beware of cheap deals that do not give lifetime cover, exclude many conditions or become very expensive as your animal ages.

Microchipping: This became a legal requirement in April 2016. It gives your pet a unique number that can be read by special scanners held by Vets and rescue centres. Your details will be registered with a UK wide company so if lost, your pet can be reunited with you anywhere in the country. It also helps prevent theft of your cute little puppy and aids in quicker medical treatment in the case of an emergency. It is also a requirement if you wish to get your pet a passport later in life.

The next 15 years: Just remember that your puppy could live for 15 years so start with good habits now. Do all the things with your puppy now that you may want to do with it as an adult. For example, trips in the car, playing with children, meeting other dogs, walking down a busy street and standing near loud noises (e.g. Trains and buses). Make the rules at home the same as you plan to have for your dog as an adult. If it has been allowed on the sofa as a little puppy, it will be very confused when you don't want it on there as a huge dog. And if there is ever a chance that the dog will have time at home alone in the future, then start by leaving your puppy for short periods of time by itself now.

Have fun! It might all sound complicated, but just a little planning now, means you can enjoy a lifetime of fun with your new pet. The staff at Sleaford Vets are more than happy to help with any questions you may have, so please feel free to ask.

