

PUPPY'S FIRST YEAR

At Northpoint Veterinary Hospital we recommend the following visit schedule for your puppy's first year.

8 Weeks

- First vaccine! DHPP (Distemper, Hepatitis, Para Influenza, & Parvovirus) the veterinarian will also discuss optional vaccines with you at this time.
- Stool sample
- Possible deworming

12 Weeks

- Booster of the 1st vaccine DHPP
- Stool sample
- Possible deworming

16 Weeks

- Final DHPP booster & Rabies Vaccine
- Possible deworming

6-8 Months

- Spay/Neuter

Spring (May-June)

- Heartworm testing & begin preventive medication (to be given June- November)
- Tick borne disease testing & begin prevention



INTESTINAL PARASITES

Parasite infection in dogs and cats, particularly in puppies and kittens, is extremely common. Worms can be passed through the mother's placenta to infect the puppies and kittens in the uterus before they are even born, and can be passed through the mother's milk after they are born. Microscopic worm eggs can also be easily passed to both young and older pets when sniffing the ground, sniffing other animals, or chewing on their own fur.

Can worms pass to people?

Absolutely yes! Many common pet parasites are zoonotic, which means they can pass to people in a variety of stages. Symptoms in people can range from no obvious symptoms, to skin irritations, diarrhea, internal cysts, and even blindness. This is why it is extremely important to the entire family that your pets' intestinal parasites are dealt with effectively.

Deworming plan for puppies and kittens

Puppies and kittens are routinely dewormed every 2 weeks until 3 months of age, and usually again at 4 months. Various stages in the life cycle of the parasite can cycle through your pet for several months when they are young, so it is important to follow through with these treatments. These guidelines are set by the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) for the safety of your pets and the people in your household.

Why check stool samples?

Stool samples can often reveal the presence of intestinal parasites before the animal becomes symptomatic. There are, however, times during the parasites life cycle that eggs are not being released. For this reason, other factors (such as pet's age and exposure to other animals) are taken into consideration when planning deworming treatments. Stool samples are also invaluable in assessing the success of previous deworming treatments to confirmed parasite cases. Regular stool checks should be taken in puppies and kittens, and should be continued annually with adult dogs and cats.

How to keep your family safe and prevent re-infection

- Have a fresh stool sample examined microscopically at least once a year.
- Follow all deworming protocol according to directions and be sure to provide a follow-up fecal sample
- Clean up stools immediately
- Wash hands after handling puppies and kittens and discourage face licking
- Encourage children to wash hands before eating
- Pregnant women should avoid cleaning/changing litter boxes

HEARTWORM DISEASE

What is Heartworm disease?

Heartworm disease is caused by a parasite (worm) that lives in the heart and adjacent blood vessels. Immature heartworms (microfilariae) circulate in the bloodstream and, once in the heart, can grow up to 35cm long, causing significant damage to the heart and lungs. If left untreated, heartworm disease can result in death.

How is Heartworm disease transmitted?

Heartworm disease is transmitted to dogs and cats by infected mosquitoes during the spring and summer months.

What are the signs of Heartworm disease?

It can take up to 6-7 months from the time of the infection for the symptoms to become apparent. These signs include fatigue, weight loss, and chronic cough. Unfortunately, by the time the symptoms are seen the disease is already advanced.

Can Heartworm disease be prevented?

Annual Heartworm disease tests along with the preventive medication given once monthly during mosquito season (June-November) is strongly recommended to protect your pet from heartworm infection. Treatment of heartworm disease is possible, but can be complex and costly as the drug required to kill the adult worms can have serious side effects and must be administered under close veterinary supervision.

House Training

The following are the keys to successfully housetraining your puppy:

- Manage your puppy's environment.
- Keep the puppy on a feeding schedule.
- Pick up any food the puppy does not consume after 15 minutes.
- Always reward the correct behavior (eliminating) when and where it happens.
- Always be consistent.

Basic Rules for Housetraining

Introduce a cue (word or words) to him when talking to him on the designated elimination area, especially if the puppy is being trained to go outside.

Do not take the puppy for a walk to eliminate. Instead, take him to a place to eliminate and give him about six feet of leash to walk around while you are standing somewhere still. Once he has done his business, mark the elimination that has occurred in the proper area and reward him with a treat or take him for a walk as a reward. If you take the puppy for a walk to eliminate, the puppy can easily become distracted with all the different smells and sounds, and he may wait until he comes back inside to house to eliminate.

The other reason a walk is not recommended for elimination is because puppies quickly learn that once they eliminate the walk is over. They will learn to hold it as long as possible so the walk does not end. As the puppy's ability to hold it grows, the walk will take longer and longer while waiting for the puppy to eliminate. There will be times when you do not have the time to continue the walk, you will come back inside the house, and he will eliminate on the floor.

Bring a treat with you when you take him outside to eliminate. Offering treats for proper elimination can make the training easier. The only time your puppy gets this really great treat is when he eliminates in the designated area. The second he is done with his business, mark the elimination with a word like "yes" or use a click from a clicker, and reward the behavior with a treat. After rewarding the initial elimination, stand still and wait if you think the puppy needs to eliminate again. Once he is finished eliminating the second or third time, mark and reward the proper elimination each time he eliminates. However, do not get too excited when marking the elimination behavior or you might distract him. A verbal "yes, good boy" in a soft voice will suffice. Avoid giving him the treat inside when he returns from outside. The puppy will want to return inside too quickly to get his treat. He will relate the treat to coming back into the house and not the elimination he just did. Then, instead of completely finishing all his business outside, he will want to go back inside to get his treat.

Manage Your Puppy's Environment

You must constantly watch your puppy when he is not confined to a room or crate. Accidents happen when you try to watch the puppy and cook, watch TV, do homework, or talk on the phone. Your puppy requires constant supervision to understand what is expected of him with his new family and to learn what the rules are. When you are distracted, you may miss your puppy's warning signals to tell you he is looking for a place to eliminate. Some puppies will sniff the ground, others will circle, some will raise their tails higher than normal, some will sit by the door leading outside, and others will walk quickly and suddenly squat. Every puppy has his or her own style and signals. It is your job to learn your puppy's signals.

When accidents occur (and they will) do not scold your puppy. This is very important! Scolding your puppy will cause many puppies to hide when relieving themselves so they do not get in trouble. This is why many new puppy parents end

up finding surprises behind the couch or under tables. Elimination mistakes are usually the result of the puppy not being properly supervised. Paying close attention to him when he is not confined to his space will help prevent accidents from happening in the first place.

When an accident is in progress, make a short sound such as clapping your hands together to distract your puppy. Quickly scoop him up, if physically possible, and take him to the proper elimination area either outside or to a pee pad inside to finish the business.

Stay with him until he is finished, and remember to mark and reward him with a treat or walk for eliminating in the designated area. Clean the accident area with a product that will eliminate the odor completely. Do not use any products that contain ammonia, however. They only encourage future eliminations in the same place. Use products that are made specifically for this purpose.

Remember to put your puppy in his crate or confined area when you cannot manage his environment. Most puppies want to keep their sleeping area clean and will try to hold it as long as possible before eliminating there. Puppies need to eliminate on a fairly regular schedule- when they first get up in the morning, after a nap, after play periods, 5 to 10 minutes after eating or drinking, before they go into their crates, when they first come out of their crates, and before they go to bed at night. During waking hours, puppies may need to eliminate every hour or so.

Small dogs can sometimes be a little more difficult to house train. They are very close to the ground, and you may not realize when your puppy is actually eliminating until it is too late. Keep a close eye on little ones to help them learn what you expect from them. Manage their environment carefully.

Teaching Your Puppy to Communicate

If you are taking your puppy outside to eliminate, it will be important to teach him how to tell you he needs to go outside in the future. You can begin working on this now by teaching your puppy to *speak* (bark) to let you know he needs to go outside.

Offer your puppy a special treat and tease him with the treat until he barks. The second the puppy barks, say the word *speak*, then mark the behavior using a word like “yes” or a click from a clicker. Reward him with the treat for barking. Repeat this exercises several times until he will *speak* on cue.

After he has learned to speak on cue, every time you take him outside, ask him if he wants to go outside, and give the cue “speak”. Mark the behavior and reward him with a tiny treat, then take him outside to his designated elimination area. In time, he will learn to tell you he needs to go outside by barking.

As a general guide, you can confine an 8-week-old puppy for three hours and a 16-week-old puppy for five hours before he will usually need to eliminate. If he does not get a chance to relieve himself within that time frame, you may end up with him soiling his area. Do not get upset with him if this occurs; he simply could not hold it any longer. This was the result of human error, not your puppy’s mistake. If he is sleeping you do not have to wake him up to go outside. Wait for him to wake up on his own before you take him to his designated elimination area. Remember to take the treats with you when you go outside so you will be ready to mark and reward him for eliminating in the proper area. House training takes time, patience, and consistency.

Housetraining Troubleshooting

Suppose it has been more than a month since your puppy had an accident in the house. You think your job is complete and your puppy is now housetrained. Then, more housetraining accidents start to appear. What happened?

- The puppy may have a medical problem, such as an infection, and needs to be seen by his veterinarian.

- You forgot to teach him a cue that lets the puppy alert you to the fact that he needs to go outside. If this happened, go back to the basics and introduce the cue (word or words). Cues such as “Outside”, “Let’s go outside”, “Do you want to go outside?” are appropriate. You can use any word or words you choose, just be sure to use the same word or words consistently. Your puppy can learn to respond by getting excited, barking, or sitting.
- You forgot to teach your puppy to communicate with you when he needs to go outside. This can be accomplished by teaching him to *speak* (bark), *sit*, or even ring a bell that is hung on the door you use when taking him outside. You may also use a bell placed on the floor for your puppy to ring to let you know he needs to go out.
- You take your puppy for a walk, and he comes in the house to eliminate since puppies are constantly learning, the puppy now realizes that once he eliminates, the enjoyable walk comes to an end. As a result, he holds it as long as possible. You run out of time to keep walking him and come back inside. The walk has ended and the puppy forgot to eliminate while outside or did not want to because he didn’t want the walk to be over. Either way, the puppy eliminates in the house. If this has happened, return to the basics and take the puppy to the designated elimination area. Stand there for a few minutes and wait until he eliminates. If he does, mark and reward him. If he does not eliminate in the elimination area, take him back inside and confine him to either his crate or a designated area. Wait 10 to 15 minutes and repeat the exercise. This must be continued until he finally eliminates outside. Mark the behavior (elimination) with “Yes” or a click from a clicker. Now take your puppy for a nice walk as the reward. You will need to repeat this exercise every time he needs to go out over the next several days until he understands that walks happen only after the elimination occurs.
- Your puppy does half of his eliminating outside and the other half of his eliminating inside. This can happen when treats are given to the puppy inside the house instead of outside where elimination occurred. The puppy thinks he is being rewarded for coming into the house and, in turn, he hurries to get back into the house for his reward. Your puppy cannot relate the reward to the desired behavior when the behavior is performed at one location and the reward is given at another location. Rewarding your puppy in a different location only confuses him. To address this issue, take the treats outside with you and be ready to mark and reward him as soon as the elimination occurs. If you know he is not done, be patient. Stand there and wait for the next elimination. Once it has occurred, mark and reward immediately at the location of the elimination. After a few days, he will connect the wonderful treats with eliminating and will want to do as much eliminating as possible while outside to receive the rewards.

If you are still having problems with your puppy soiling in the house, please contact our office. Your puppy may be dealing with a health issue.

Socialization

Socialization is the process of introducing your puppy to new people, things, and experiences he will likely encounter in his lifetime as part of your family. This may include exposure to the veterinary practice without needing to be examined, visiting nursing homes, going to parks, seeing children running, screaming and playing, hearing loud noises (such as trains, motorcycles, and gunshots). You will also want to give your puppy opportunities to meet children, babies, the elderly and people with disabilities in wheelchairs or using canes. Your puppy should also be familiar with people wearing odd clothing such as big hats, sunglasses, and costumes, and people in uniforms, such as police officers, postal workers, and delivery truck drivers. Take your puppy for rides in the car, let him walk on different surfaces, go for a ride on an elevator, take a nice walk through a park, or go to a ball game. These are wonderful experiences for your puppy and can be great fun. Allow your puppy to become comfortable with one socialization opportunity at a time until he seems comfortable with each situation before moving on to a new or different experience. You will not want to overload him with too much information too quickly.

It is important that you introduce your puppy to other animal species (such as cats, rabbits, horses, or goats), as well as other dogs. Introduce him not just to other animal members of your family, or next-door neighbors, but to all types – big, small, young, and old. Before you introduce your puppy to other animals, make sure that the other animals are properly immunized. It is important the other animals do not have a problem with puppies, though, or you will defeat the purpose of the interaction.

When introducing your puppy to other people, never hold him to receive a pet. Instead, let him meet the person at his own pace. If he does not want to greet the person, do not force the experience. Thank the person for his or her time and move on. Try introducing him to other people again and again until he is willing to go up to the person and receive a treat that you gave them to give to him. Once your puppy learns that other people are wonderful creatures, you have accomplished your socialization mission with people.

If your puppy is a smaller breed, make sure not to carry him everywhere. You are **not** protecting him; instead, you are telling him that he is too small to handle anything on his own. If you continue to carry him around, he may bark at other dogs, animals, and people for the rest of his life.

Pushing, pulling or forcing your puppy in any way spoils the entire socialization experience. It is important that you build gradually on his successes. Socializing your puppy can be a wonderful and fun time for both of you.

One of the best things you can do for your puppy is to enroll him in a puppy class if there is one available in your area. Make sure the trainer does not use any harsh corrections on your puppy, and if the trainer tells you to do anything harsh to your puppy, leave the class and do not go back. These early months set the foundation for his future and young dogs (under 12 months) go through two to three fear periods. Emotional or physical harm done during the first year can last a lifetime.

Textures

You will want your puppy to be comfortable walking on, over, and through anything you would want to walk through. So introduce him to those textures while he is young. Some examples of textures you can use include grass, sand, cement, gravel, rocks, plastic bags, plastic bags with water sprayed on them, (makes them slick), water puddles, bridges, collapsed cardboard, ice, snow, and carpets. Let your puppy approach every new texture at his own pace to build his confidence. Do not force your puppy onto any surface.

Building Confidence by Using a Confidence Course

A small, easy-to-assemble confidence course can do wonders to build your puppies confidence. The confidence course should consist of things he can walk on, over, or through. Be creative and use items already in your home. You can use a big plastic garbage bag and place it on the floor for him to walk on. You can use a mop or broom handle for him to walk over. You can use a hula hoop for him to walk over or through. Styrofoam blocks give your puppy something to step over. An umbrella can be used to get your puppy get over a fear of new objects. Be creative and use your imagination. As he becomes used to one new item, add a second item. Always introduce one obstacle at a time until he is comfortable walking on, over, or through the item before introducing him to a new item. You always want to move at your puppies pace and build on his successes.

When using a confidence course, put the collar and leash on the puppy and ask him to walk slowly through the course. Many puppies, especially those which are 6-18 months of age, want to fly through the obstacles; however, this does not help anything. When you take your puppy through the course, take a few steps and stop. Pet him for a few seconds and take a few more steps. It is important that he does this slowly. You will want him to pay attention to what he is doing. Slow walking with frequent stops helps him to pay attention. Any item that offers a different experience will work, so use your imagination. In a few weeks, this can help many puppies be more confident, especially when left alone.

Socialization with children

Puppies and children should never be left unsupervised. Although they often have an affinity for one another and form a very strong bond, it is still a good idea to keep an eye on them when they are together. Left unsupervised, a puppy may bite a child in self-defense. Without proper supervision, it is difficult to identify the instigator and correct the problem. Children are often unknowingly unkind to animals, and the puppy is wrongly blamed for his response to the unkindness.

To some puppies, children are noisy, fast-moving objects with tempting flying hot dogs for fingers. Some puppies take it all in stride, but others become overwhelmed with too much stimuli happening too quickly for their comfort level.

When introductions are made, it is important to supervise the introductions. Children must be taught how to interact with animals safely. At first, instruct children to wait until the puppy approaches them before petting. They should be taught to respect when the puppy pulls away from them and to never bother the puppy when he is in his crate.

For the initial introductions, ask your child to approach the puppy from the side, never straight toward the new puppy. Ask your child to stop about three feet away from the puppy and extend one hand out to the puppy with the palm down. Allow the puppy to come up to sniff the extended hand. Once your puppy stands next to your child, the child can begin to pet the puppy on his side. If the puppy backs away from the child, do not force the interaction. Giving your puppy the time he needs today will help build a strong relationship between your child and the new puppy tomorrow. Proper introductions will ensure that your child and puppy develop a healthy bond and become friends for life.

When your child does get that opportunity to actually pet the new puppy, explain the importance of petting the puppy gently and speaking softly. During the early stages of developing a relationship between your child and the new puppy, it is important that the child be instructed to avoid petting the puppy on the head, as many puppies are head shy. Once the puppy becomes more comfortable with the child, pats on the head can be added if the puppy does not shy away from the hand reaching over his head. If the puppy pulls away, head pats should not be allowed for a bit longer. Over time, with proper supervision, your child and puppy will have a very special relationship. If you have a few children,

introduce the puppy to one child at a time, not all at the same time. They will be very excited, but this is not a relationship you want spoiled. Time, patience, understanding and consistency are the recipe for a wonderful relationship between your children and their new puppy.

If your puppy is shy, timid, or fearful you will need to move very slowly in building this bond. If the puppy pulls away from your child, explain to your child that the puppy is a little shy right now and will need time to be comfortable. You can let the child offer the puppy a treat. If the puppy walks up for the treat, that is a great start. If the puppy is afraid to approach the child, let the child drop the treat on the floor and take a few steps back so the puppy can get the treat. After a few treat opportunities, the puppy will become conditioned to the idea that when the child is near, good things happen.

If the treats do not encourage the puppy to go to the child, explain to the child that the puppy is not brave enough right now and the puppy may feel a little braver never time. Most children are very understanding about such timid behavior and are willing to wait.

As a safety precaution, tell your children they should never approach a strange dog without the dog's owner's permission. Any contact with strange dogs should be supervised by you as well as by the dog owner. The same approach outlined above should be made to strange dogs. Always approach a dog from the side and not head-on. Do not reach over a strange dog's head as this could be misinterpreted.

Consistency in the Family

It is important for your entire family to work as a team to successfully train your new pet. Your puppy/kitten will need to learn the meaning of your words, the rules in your home, and your expectations of him or her. You will confuse your puppy/kitten if words, rules and expectations are inconsistent from one family member to another.

Children are great little trainers. It is recommended they be at least three years of age to help with training. Children should be supervised during training sessions. Pets and children should never be left alone unsupervised.

Since puppies do like to chew and kittens like to sharpen their claws, discuss these natural behaviors of puppies/kittens with your children before their favorite toys are chewed, clothing is ruined, and various other problems occur. Let your children know that cruelty (actions such as shocking, hitting, shaking, pulling ears, pulling tails, grabbing or rubbing the pet's nose in feces) will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Many times children don't even realize that what they are doing is cruel to the animal. In addition to children, babies and toddlers should never be left alone with your pet or even with your most trusted adult dog, unsupervised.

Puppies and kittens have some basic needs – physically, mentally and emotionally. They need to eat on a regular schedule (consult your veterinarian) and require access to clean, fresh water. Puppies need to relieve themselves frequently as well as nap several times throughout the day. Playtime, rest, and exercise are all important to young dogs or cats.

Puppies and kittens should have a safe, comfortable place to go when they are not being supervised. Ideally, puppies/kittens should be socialized a few minutes each day, and they should be trained for 5 to 10 minutes at a time. This can be gradually increased as the pet gets older. Each training session should remain short to make it easy for the puppy/kitten to pay attention, but more sessions can be added throughout the day.

To care for your pet and maintain consistency while training, develop an action plan for your family. Adults should be actively involved in supervising the following activities. Consider these questions when developing your plan:

- Who will feed the puppy/kitten and when?
- Who will keep the water bowl clean and filled with fresh water?
- Who will be in charge of the puppy's/kitten's bedding to make sure it is clean?
- What training techniques will you use for house training? Crate training? Litter training?
- Who will be in charge of training the puppy/kitten in these areas?
- Who will socialize the puppy/kitten to different people, places, and things? How often and when?
- Who will play with the puppy/kitten? How often and when?
- Who will brush the puppy/kitten? How often and when?
- Who will take the puppy for a walk?
- Who will trim the puppy/kittens nails?
- Who will brush the puppy/kittens teeth? How often and when?
- Who will supervise the puppy when not in his or her crate? How long and when?

Give your puppy or kitten room to make mistakes. Being overly demanding and short-tempered can have long term negative consequences on the behavior and enjoyment of your pet over its lifetime.

Always be consistent. If your pet is not allowed to do something today by one person and then allowed to do the same thing tomorrow with someone else, the pet will become confused with the mixed signals. This can even happen with the same person from one day to the next. Mixed signals can confuse your pet and lengthen the time it takes for puppies and kittens to learn what is acceptable, and what is not acceptable.

Puppies and Kittens can express their confusion by being overly excited, fearful, shy, timid, or aggressive. In many cases, you may see a combination of behavior problems occurring.

This does not have to happen. Your pet is constantly learning, and every waking hour to them is a learning experience. With time, patience, and training consistency, your pet will become a successful member of your family. End all training sessions on a positive note. If the puppy/kitten is having difficulty learning a new cue, stop before you both get bored or frustrated and ask the pet to do something he/she is very good at, such as asking him to sit. Mark and reward this behavior and end the training session.

Families that work together as a team can be great trainers. Keep the same message every time (be consistent). If more than one family member is training, all family members should train the exact same way. Introduce challenging variations in your training (different locations, different people, and distractions) gradually.

It does not matter what you are trying to teach your pet, just be consistent. If you are training a puppy to do his business outside, then take the puppy out the same door every time. If you want your puppy to be quiet while in his/her crate, don't open the door to the crate when the puppy is barking to be let out. If you do not want your kitten scratching or biting at your hands, never use your hands to play with your kitten. Use an appropriate cat toy instead. Reward the behaviors you want in a consistent manner.

Some people get upset with an animal because they think the puppy/kitten knows what they want. They call their pet hardheaded, or stubborn, or they say their pet has selective hearing. This can happen when you think the pet knows what the word "sit" means. You taught "sit" in the kitchen to receive meals, and now you are outside and the puppy/kitten just will not listen to you. It is not because the puppy/kitten did not hear you, nor does the pet have selective hearing. It is because your puppy/kitten really does not know what "sit" means outside.

Dogs and cats do not generalize very well, they learn in context. That means the puppy/kitten has to be taught "sit" in

various places with different people, the puppy/kitten now understands that “sit” means put its rear end on the floor whenever it hears that word.

Grooming

Brushing and combing

Brushing your puppy is an important bonding time for both of you. This is a wonderful time to build trust in the relationship. Check the brush and comb you are going to be using to make sure they do not scratch your puppy’s skin. Some combs and brushes have sharp edges, and they can hurt. When this happens, your puppy will become concerned every time you try to groom him. If you are using a slicker brush, use one that has cushioning on the teeth and make sure that the actual teeth have been rounded off so they are not sharp. By checking tools before they touch your puppy, many grooming concerns can be eliminated.

If your puppy is afraid of the brush or comb, and he tries to bite you or the grooming tool, stop brushing or combing him immediately. Offer him the brush or comb to feel and taste. If he wants to bite it, let him. Give him a minute or so to check out this new object with which you are trying to touch him. When he looks away, this is a sign that he has finished checking out the new item and you can begin combing again.

Once the puppy has had an opportunity to explore the brush or comb, slowly start to brush him again. If he pulls away or cries, immediately stop again. Talk to your puppy and give him some pets and treats to take his mind off what just happened. Do something else with him for a while and try again later in the day.

The next time you try to brush or comb him, offer a few tiny treats as you use the back of the brush or comb to slide on his body. This will offer him a different kind of petting feeling without the teeth. Talk softly, reassure him, and offer treats to reward this quiet behavior as you are using the back of the comb or brush.

After a few strokes, turn the brush or comb over and lightly do one stroke. If he accepts the stroke, be sure to praise him and keep the treats coming. If he tries to bite, cries, or squirms, stop again. Ask him for a simple cue such as sit and then mark and reward him and end the grooming session on a positive note. You can try again later the same day or the next day. For now, do not give the puppy too much attention and go about your normal daily activities.

Some puppies can be very sensitive about being groomed and will need time to work through this procedure. The most important piece of this exercise is to teach your puppy that you are paying attention to his concerns and stopping when he asks you to. In time, he will learn to trust you enough to allow brushing and combing. Remember that this is not a race, and it is important for you and your puppy to have a positive experience. Grooming your dog can be a wonderful bonding opportunity, and every dog needs grooming.

Work with your puppy using the brush and/or comb every day. Stop if your puppy cries, squirms, or tries to bite you. If the problem persists after several days, consult with your veterinarian because your puppy may have a medical issue you are not aware of that is causing this reaction. If your veterinarian does not find a medical reason for your puppy’s reaction to being groomed, do not give up.

Give your puppy the time it needs to become comfortable with this procedure. In time, it will begin to trust you and

learn that brushing or combing will not hurt it. When this happens, it will become comfortable with being groomed and this can become a special time for both of you.

Ear Cleaning

Checking your puppy's ears and keeping them clean can prevent infections and funguses. A number of products are on the market to keep your puppy's ears clean. Ask your veterinarian which product is best for your puppy.

Floppy ears can be a haven for yeast to grow, and this can be very uncomfortable for your puppy. To clean your puppy's ears, only use products specifically made for dog ears. Baby oil, rubbing alcohol, or non-ear cleaning solutions are not recommended. Products such as these can cause more harm than good to your puppy.

Many ear problems have a strong odor. If your puppy's ears have an odor, make an appointment with your veterinarian. Ear problems need attention as soon as possible. The longer you wait to take your puppy to the clinic, the worse the problem will become and the more painful it will be for him.

When checking your puppy's ears, the first thing you will want to do is to get him comfortable with having his ears touched. You can start off by petting his ears. If he does not like you touching his ears, then stop petting them for now. If he pulls away at any time while you are touching his ears, do not force him to accept the touch. This will only make him more concerned. Stop what you are doing and offer him a few little treats to take his mind off of you touching his ears. Offer your puppy a treat with one hand, and pet his ear with your other hand. If your puppy is now comfortable and does not pull away, you can lift up his ear and put it back down. If he still seems uncomfortable, you can look inside of each ear and smell it.

If he is sensitive to his ears being touched, you will want to desensitize him to having them checked and/or cleaned. You can do this by spending a minute or so a day touching his ears. Do this several times on each ear until your puppy seems comfortable and shows no signs of concern. Next, try picking up one ear flap between your thumb and fingers. Lightly hold onto the ear and gently slide your hand out to the end of the ear. If the puppy shows any concern by crying, squirming, or trying to bite you, that is his way of asking you to stop. When you honor his concerns, he will learn that you can be trusted. Once trust is established, life can be easier for both of you.

A few minutes later you can try again. Again, pet his ears with one hand while offering him a treat with the other hand. Try again to pick up the ear with one hand, and slide your hand down the ear gently while offering the treat with the other hand. Repeat this as many times as you need to, stopping every time he shows signs of concern. If he is still concerned after one or two minutes, stop for now, give him a nice pet along his back, or do something else you know he enjoys and then try again later. You always want to end training sessions on a positive note.

Within a few days, the puppy will become more comfortable with having his ears touched. Once he is comfortable with the ear slides, pick up one ear at a time and look down into the ear canal. You will not be able to see all the way down into the canal, which is why smelling your puppy's ear is so important. The odor will alert you that something is wrong. Sometimes you will see redness or the ears seem to have a buildup much like ear wax in humans. This can be a sign of a fungus in the ear. If your puppy's ears have a bad odor or seem discolored, make an appointment for him to see your veterinarian immediately.

Checking your puppy's ears at least once a week and following an ear-cleaning regiment that your veterinarian recommends will help keep your puppy's ears healthy and clean.

Nail Trimming

Many puppies have a concern with having their nails trimmed. This is actually very understandable. To your puppy, his feet are the major means of escape when in danger of any kind. With that in mind, you will want to let him know that

touching his feet or trimming his nails is safe for him.

Your puppy will need nail trimming throughout his entire life. When nails are not properly trimmed, the living centre of the nail (the quick) will continue to grow along with the nail. When this happens, it can cause discomfort and result in more complicated physical problems.

When trimming your puppy's nails, the first thing you will want to do is get him used to having his feet touched by desensitizing him. The easiest way to accomplish this is by following your puppy's lead. Always move slower if you have a fearful puppy. Fearful puppies should be encouraged and rewarded for being brave with any new experience.

You can begin these exercises while you are holding your puppy in your lap or while sitting on the floor with him.

Learning moments are everywhere for young puppies, so take advantage of them whenever possible with short learning moments.

Take your hand and slide it down your puppy's leg and pick up one paw at a time. If he is okay with you doing that, then take a finger and slide it between each toe of that paw. If he is comfortable with you playing with his feet and sliding your fingers between each toe, you can repeat the exercise on each paw. If he pulls away or cries, stop immediately. Wait a minute or so and offer him a treat with one hand as you slide the other hand down his leg again. If he pulls away, stop. If he is more interested in the treats than what you are doing with the other hand, then continue. Every time you start and stop, make sure you start sliding your hand from the top of his leg. This is an exercise of trust and confidence, so always start at the top, where he was comfortable. Then work your way down toward the paw.

Remember, if your puppy is not comfortable at any time, it is okay to stop and try again later that afternoon or the following day. If you stop when he shows concern, over time he will begin to trust you. Continue to repeat the exercise until all of his paws have been desensitized to your touch.

Once he is comfortable, the third or fourth time you touch his paws and slide your fingers between them, it is time to introduce the nail clippers. Let your puppy sniff, lick, or bite the newly introduced clippers. Once he is done exploring the clippers and ignores them, it is time to introduce the new sound the clippers will make. This can be done by opening them and closing them before you actually use them. Make sure you do not have any part of the puppy in the clippers while opening and closing them. If the puppy is bored and looks away, then you can begin the nail trimming process. When trimming your puppy's nails, you want to clip them right before the quick. If he has clear nails, you can see the pink color of the blood vessel. If his nails are black, start near the tip of the nail and slowly clip small pieces at a time, moving up the nail. A tiny black circle in the centre of the nail should be your warning that you are at the beginning of the "quick". If you are not sure where the quick is or at what angle to hold the clippers, ask your Patient Behavior Advocate for some guidance.

If at any time your puppy pulls away, remember to simply stop what you are doing. Play with him for a while and try again later. You do not have to trim all of his nails on the same day when you are getting him comfortable with the nail trimming process. For now, the focus is on desensitizing him to having his paws touched and nails trimmed.

With time and patience, your puppy can become very comfortable with getting his nails trimmed. If you force him to have his nails cut, you will install fear that can last a lifetime, making nail trimming a very difficult process for you and him. Once mature, some dogs actually end up having to be sedated to have their nails trimmed. This makes a simple process very difficult and costly. Investing the time into your puppy now will eliminate this problem in the future.

When you trim your puppy's nails, always have a product such as "**Quick Stop**" on hand in case you do cut the quick by accident. This powdery product helps to stop the bleeding.

Teeth Cleaning

Cleaning your puppy's teeth regularly will promote healthy gums and clean-smelling breath. Many puppies, though, are a bit concerned with having someone inside their mouths. Since your puppy's teeth will need daily attention, you will

want to get him comfortable with you working on them. To make this a pleasant experience, you will want to desensitize his mouth. Start off slowly and take your puppy's lead. Whenever he pulls away, squirms, bites, or cries, stop what you are doing. If you stop when he shows any sign of concern, he will soon begin to trust you.

When your puppy's concerns are ignored and you continue what you are doing, he can become fearful or show signs of aggression, which makes teeth cleaning harder for both you and your puppy. By acknowledging his concern and stopping what you are doing, you build trust with him.

You can begin desensitizing his mouth by rubbing your finger on the outside of his lips gently. If he is comfortable with this light touch, you can slip your index finger into the mouth and rub his teeth and gums gently with your finger. After a few days, if you have stopped every time he showed any sign of concern, he will become comfortable with these touches. Now it is time to introduce him to his toothbrush.

Let him smell, lick, or bite on this new object. When he becomes bored with the toothbrush and looks away or ignores the brush, it is time to introduce it to his mouth.

Begin by wetting the brush a little and applying the dental cleanser you received from our office onto the bristles of the toothbrush. **Never use human toothpaste**; it is harmful to your puppy. Wet the brush to make it a bit more slippery so it does not stick to his lips.

Once the puppy is comfortable with having his teeth brushed, you can add a cue such as "toothbrush time" or whatever word or words you would like to use to let him know it is time to get his teeth brushed.

Since dogs are capable of learning by example, let your puppy be in the bathroom with you while you brush your teeth. When you are done cleaning your teeth, tell your puppy it is his turn to brush his. Many puppies will wait patiently and enjoy having their teeth cleaned.

Remember to move slowly when desensitizing your puppy's mouth. Stop when he shows any sign of discomfort or concern. Repeat the exercises a few times daily for many days. Your reward for the time and patience you give him now will last a lifetime.

PET INSURANCE

Pet insurance is a relatively new option for pet owners today. Depending on the company and coverage selected, your pet can be covered for everything from annual wellness appointments, to emergency treatments. Premiums and packages vary quite a bit from company to company, so it is important to do your research in selecting the best coverage for you and your pet.

Some of the companies offering pet insurance in Canada include:

Company	Website	Phone Number
Pets + Us	www.petsplusus.com	1-800-364-8422
Petplan	www.GoPetplan.ca	1-866-467-3875
Trupanion	www.trupanion.ca	1-855-210-8749