



Westonka Animal Hospital & Laser Surgery Center
Mound, MN 55364 Phone: 952 472-4900
"Where Smart Pets Bring Their People"
Drs. Craig & Jackie Piepkorn, DVM
www.westonkaanimalhospital.com

Socializing puppies and kittens is one of the most frequently overlooked yet important things a new owner can do. This can decrease the chances of unwanted behaviors later in adult pets. We at Westonka Animal Hospital encourage all dogs and cats to be socialized to as many people and situations as possible.

The **socialization period** for dogs and cats is between 4 and 16 weeks of age. During that time, the young pet is very impressionable to social influences. They are "imprinting" on humans. If your pet has positive experiences with men, women, children, and other animals, they are likely to accept them throughout their life. If the experiences are absent or unpleasant, they may become apprehensive or fearful. Therefore, during the period of socialization, we encourage you to expose your pet to as many types of social events and influences as possible. Men tend to have naturally dominating, intimidating lower voices and children can play rough (pulling tails, ears, or fur), so we recommend that you focus on exposing your puppy to as many different people as you are able. For puppies we recommend socializing with as many different well socialized dogs as possible.

We also recommend introducing touching and playing with your pets feet, ears and mouth. At some point in time you will have to clean their ears, give medications and/or trim their nails. This will make that process a great deal easier. Remember it is ok for you to put your hands in your pets' mouth but it isn't ok for your pet to put their mouth around your hands or arm.