

Care for Your Dog

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VACCINATIONS: Many serious diseases can be prevented by vaccination. Vaccination is inexpensive protection against costly medical treatment or the premature loss of your dog. Please discuss the following vaccines with one of our Veterinarians:

DA2PP VACCINE - The so-called "**distemper/parvo**" vaccine, which actually protects against 4 different infectious diseases: distemper, parvo, hepatitis and parainfluenza (a respiratory disease). Parvo is a contagious and potentially fatal viral disease whose symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea, pneumonia, runny nose, runny eyes, and seizures. We recommend vaccinating puppies every 3-4 weeks between the ages of 6 and 16 weeks of age; older dogs should receive two initial vaccinations 3-4 weeks apart. **Remember:** after initial immunity is established, **regular DA2PP boosters are required** to maintain immunity.

LEPTO VACCINE - This vaccine protects against the 4 most common varieties of leptospirosis, a bacterium with the potential to cause serious damage to both liver and kidneys. This disease was once thought to be mainly a rural problem, but is now found to be prevalent in both urban and suburban settings as well. Ohio is a hotbed for the disease, which is highly contagious to both dogs and people. Immunity is established with two initial vaccinations 3-4 weeks apart, begun after 12 weeks of age. **To maintain immunity, annual boosters are required.**

RABIES VACCINE - Required **by law** for all dogs 4 months of age or older. It cannot be given before 3 months of age. It must be administered under supervision of a **licensed Veterinarian**. The first vaccine is good for one year; subsequent boosters are then given every three years. Owners must be able to produce a current rabies certificate. In addition, current rabies tags must be worn by all dogs. Rabies is a fatal disease, which both people and animals may contract through skin wounds.

BORDETELLA - For the prevention of one of the more severe forms of "**kennel cough**". This vaccine is generally regarded as optional; however, most kennels and dog training organizations will **require proof** of bordetella vaccination (in addition to rabies and DA2PP vaccination) **before** your dog will be admitted. **To maintain immunity, annual boosters are required.**

OTHER VACCINES - Our Veterinarians may recommend vaccination against other diseases, such as **Lyme's Disease**, based on a current assessment of your dog's particular risk for exposure. You should discuss with us the need for these vaccines, especially if you intend to travel with your dog.

ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS: Annual physical examinations are **essential** if our Veterinarians are to have the opportunity to discover serious illnesses at an early stage, when steps may be taken to lessen the impact of the disease and prolong your dog's life. Many diseases of the heart and other internal organs are **clinically silent** until they have reached an advanced stage, at which time treatment options may be limited. In other words, **your dog could have a serious ailment and appear completely normal to you**, until it is too late. Annual examinations also afford you the opportunity to get helpful information from our Veterinarians on questions of **behavior, proper diet, parasite management, flea control, disease prevention, allergies**, and other topics of interest to you and your pet.

HEARTWORM DISEASE: This mosquito-borne parasite is prevalent in Southwestern Ohio and other areas of the country where mosquitoes exist. Even dogs that stay indoors most of the time are at risk. If your unprotected dog is bitten by an infected mosquito, it will develop a colony of 8-inch-long worms living *in the heart and lungs*, causing severe damage over time to these organs. Your dog can have heartworm disease for several months - even *years* - before symptoms become obvious. By then, the disease is serious and difficult to treat, and your dog's life may be in serious jeopardy. You are encouraged to adopt the following preventative measures:

ANNUAL HEARTWORM TESTING - Our staff will take a small sample of blood from your dog to determine if heartworms are present. If detected early, heartworm disease can be treated very successfully, with minimal risk to the health of your dog. **Testing is required** before we can dispense preventative; however, dogs receiving year-round preventative may "skip" a year.

HEARTWORM PREVENTATIVES - We will provide you with an appropriate preventative tablet or topical, usually given monthly, for the prevention of heartworm disease. Most Veterinarians in this area recommend **year-round** use of preventative, but at the very least you should treat your dog from March through November. Year-round use will help prevent many of the intestinal parasites listed below.

INTESTINAL PARASITES: A variety of parasites can inhabit the digestive tracts of dogs living in Ohio, leading to symptoms ranging from vomiting and diarrhea to anemia, weight loss, coughing, and "scooting". Parasites commonly found include **roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms, coccidia, and giardia**. Our Veterinarians can detect the presence of these parasites through the examination of a fecal sample, which you are encouraged to bring with you to your dog's annual physical exam, or whenever your dog is experiencing the symptoms listed above. Once detected, these parasites can be readily treated with medications we will provide.

FLEA CONTROL: In addition to making your dog itchy and miserable, flea bites often cause allergic reactions in the skin, leading to "**hot spots**" and other lesions requiring medical care. If swallowed, fleas can also transmit tapeworms to your dog. Now, with the introduction of newer, monthly preventatives available only through Veterinarians including **Sentinel, Vectra, and Trifexis** flea control has become more efficient and less labor-intensive. **There is no reason any longer to put up with fleas!** We will be happy to recommend products and strategies to help rid your dog and your house of fleas.

DENTISTRY: Dental health care is one of the most neglected of pet health needs. **Periodontal disease affects most dogs**, particularly as they get older, and can lead to infection in the liver, kidneys, and heart. Bad breath, depression, drooling, and acute pain while eating are signs of periodontal disease. Regular dental examinations, professional scaling and proper home care are necessary for good pet health.

SPAY/NEUTER: This surgery is recommended for all dogs not intended for breeding, and is **required for all dogs adopted from the Humane Society the SPCA, and other local shelters**. This surgery can significantly reduce the incidence of breast tumors, infections of the uterus (pyometra), testicular disease, prostate disease, and certain undesirable behaviors. Of equal significance is the role this surgery plays in reducing the number of unwanted pets in our community, lessening the need for the Humane Society, the SPCA, and other organizations to put *thousands* of these homeless animals to sleep each year. **Do your part - spay or neuter your dog!** We advise doing this surgery between 5 and 6 months of age, but it can be safely performed in older dogs as well. We will honor the vouchers issued by local shelters as payment towards the cost of this surgery.