



## **Puppy FAQs**

### **How Often Does My Puppy Need to Come in for Vaccines?**

Puppies start their vaccine series at 6-8 weeks of age. Boosters are given every 3-4 weeks with the last set being given at 16 weeks of age. Rabies vaccine can be given no earlier than 12-16 weeks of age. Adhering to this schedule is extremely important for the health of your puppy!

### **How Do I Know if I'm Feeding a Good Quality Food?**

First of all, make sure the food that you are feeding is formulated to meet AAFCO guidelines. This statement should be on the bag of food you are feeding. Puppies should be eating food labeled for growth or for all life stages. Grain-free foods are generally not appropriate for growing puppies although these are good diets for adult dogs. We feed and recommend Canidae and Royal Canin foods.

### **How Often Should I Feed My Puppy?**

Young puppies should generally be fed three times per day until 4-6 months of age, depending on the size of the puppy. After this age, twice daily feedings are recommended. Tiny and small breeds may require four feedings per day to prevent hypoglycemia.

### **How Much Should I Feed?**

The number of calories in a cup varies between brands. As puppies, it is okay to follow the feeding instructions on the back of the bag of food. You may need to adjust this amount if your puppy is gaining too much weight. For an adult pet, feeding the recommended amount on the back of the pack could potentially lead to obesity. Like us, the amount of food a dog can eat is directly proportional to the amount of exercise he or she is receiving.

### **What Treats Should I Give My Puppy?**

Treats should make up a very small portion of your puppy's daily calories. It should constitute less than 5% of your puppy's total intake. Feeding healthy snacks like carrots and green beans are preferable to high-calorie, high-sodium treats. Avoid table scraps! Feeding table food will encourage your puppy to beg at dinner time. People food is also a contributing factor to cases of diarrhea and life-threatening pancreatitis. Above all, your puppy craves your time and attention!

### **When Should I Switch to Adult Food?**

A general guideline is to switch when the puppy has reached 90% of their adult weight. For most small breeds, this is 9-12 months and for large breeds this is 12-18 months.

### **What Foods Can Pose a Danger to My Puppy?**

Avoid avocados, chocolate, grapes, raisins, macadamia nuts, bread dough, onions, garlic, chives, alcohol, coffee, caffeine-containing beverages, salty foods, and food sweetened with xylitol. Never, ever give your dog real bones. Doing this can cause obstructions, bowel perforations and fractured teeth. A good website is [www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control](http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control) for further information on pet toxins.

### **How Should I Feed My Giant or Large Breed Puppy?**

Large and giant breeds can suffer from a variety of skeletal and joint issues which can be worsened by overfeeding. Large breed puppy foods are generally lower in calories, calcium, and phosphorus to help prevent these issues. A good goal is to feed a calcium/phosphorus ratio of 1.1:1 to 1.3:1, energy of 3.4-4.1 kcal/kg, and fat content less than 15%. Canidae All Life Stages fits this requirement. This is the food we feed and recommend for large and giant breed puppies.

### **How Can I Prevent GDV (bloat) in My Dog?**

GDV, or gastric-dilatation volvulus, is a common problem in large and giant breed dogs. Breeds such as Great Danes, German shepherds, Dobermans, and Irish setters have a significant predisposition to this problem. To decrease the incidence in predisposed breeds, we recommend the following:

1. Feed two or more times per day.
2. Feed separately from other pets. This will make them more relaxed and help prevent aerophagia (air gulping), which is a factor in GDV.
3. Do not exercise your pet a minimum of one hour before or one hour after feeding.
4. Don't allow your pet to drink excessive amounts of water at feeding times.

There are many different theories on what causes bloat, but adhering to these rules may help to prevent this serious condition.

### **Where Do I Take My Pet in Case of Emergency?**

We are open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for emergency care. If you have an emergency case, call us at 281-486-1509 to let us know you are on your way and what type of emergency you will be bringing in. During the week, our doctors generally arrive between 8:30 and 9 a.m. If your emergency is before this time, every effort will be made to contact one of our doctors. Otherwise, we recommend the following emergency clinics:

VCA Calder: 281-332-1678

VCA Edgebrook: 713-941-8460

## Common Heartworm & Intestinal Parasite Preventive Medications for Dogs & Cats

Preventive	Insecticides	Species	Indications
<b>Monthly Chewable Tablets</b>			
Heartgard Plus	Ivermectin Pyrantel	Dogs (>6wks)	-Prevents heartworm disease -Treats and controls roundworms and hookworms
Trifexis	Milbemycin Spinosad	Dogs (>8wks)	-Prevents heartworm disease -Treats and controls roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms -Treats and controls flea infestations
<b>Monthly Topical Solutions</b>			
Revolution	Selamectin	Cats (>8wks)	-Prevents heartworm disease -Treats and controls roundworms and hookworms -Treats and controls flea and ear mite infestations
<b>Six-Month Injection</b>			
ProHeart 6	Moxidectin	Dogs (>6 mths)	-Prevents heartworm disease -Treats and controls hookworms
<b>Common Flea Preventive Medications</b>			
Preventive	Insecticides	Species	Indications
Vectra 3D	Dinotefuran, Permethrin, Pyriproxyfen	Canine (>7wks)	- Kills and repels fleas, ticks, mosquitoes, sand flies, mites and lice - Controls flea eggs, larvae, and pupae
Vectra	Dinotefuran, Pyriproxyfen	Feline (>8wks)	-Kills fleas -Controls flea eggs, larvae, and pupae
NexGard	Afoxolaner	Canine (>8wks)	-Kills Fleas -Kills Ticks

**\*Stay away from Hartz and Sergeants products. Serious reactions can occur.**

## Canine Spay FAQs

Surgical sterilization of the female dog, commonly referred to as spaying, is one of the most significant aspects of female dog care an owner can provide. The benefits to the dog FAR outweigh simply not having puppies, though as pet over-populations looms as a societal problem, it is important to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Spaying involves removal of the uterus and ovaries. It is a major surgery but a commonly performed one, ideally performed while a female dog is still in puppyhood, prior to her first heat cycle.

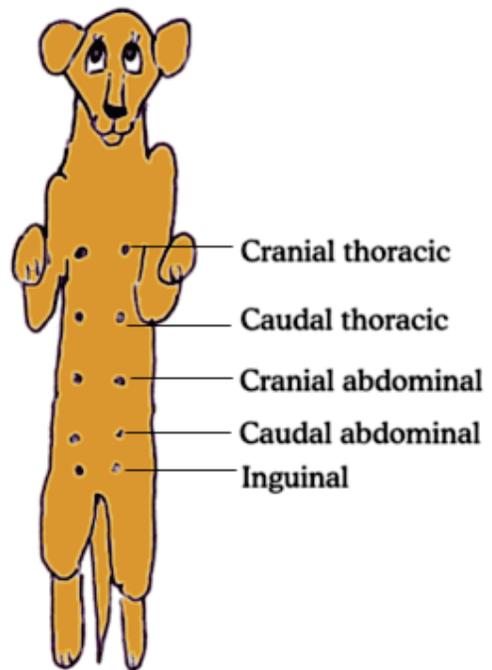
### Why Female Dogs Should Be Spayed

#### ***Mammary Cancer Prevention***

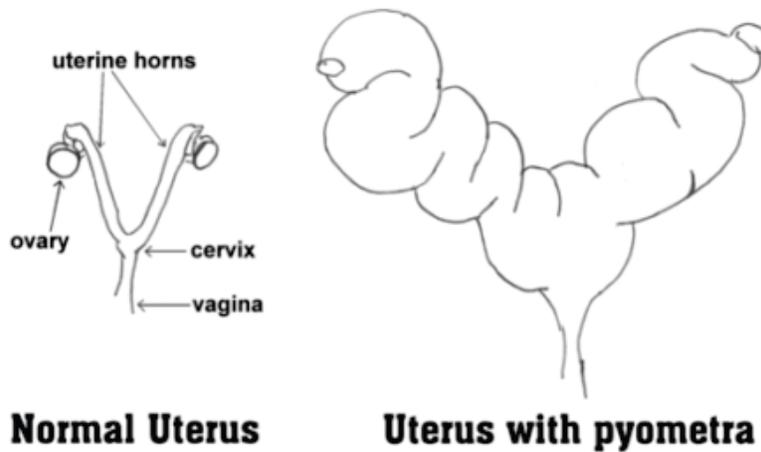
A female dog spayed before her first heat will have a near zero chance of developing mammary cancer. After the first heat, this incidence climbs to 7%, and after the second heat, the risk is 25% (one in four!). It is easy to see that an early spay can completely prevent what is frequently a very difficult and potentially fatal form of cancer.

But is it too late if a dog is already past her second heat? No, in fact spaying is important even in female dogs who already have obvious tumors. This is because many mammary tumors are stimulated by estrogens; removing the ovaries, the source of estrogens, will help retard tumor spread.

Spaying removes both the uterus and both ovaries and is crucial in the prevention as well as the treatment of mammary cancer.



## Pyometra Prevention



Pyometra is the life-threatening infection of the uterus that generally occurs in middle-aged to older female dogs in the six weeks following heat. The hormone progesterone, which primes the uterus for potential pregnancy, does so by causing proliferation of the blood-filled uterine lining and suppressing uterine immune function. It is, thus, easy during heat for bacteria in the vagina to ascend to the uterus and cause infection. The uterus with pyometra swells dramatically and is filled with pus, bacteria, dying tissue, and toxins. Without treatment, the dog is expected to die. Despite her serious medical state, she must be spayed quickly if her life is to be saved.

- This is an extremely common disease of unspayed female dogs.
- Without treatment, the dog will die.
- Treatment is expensive.
- Treatment involves surgery in a potentially unstable patient.
- Spaying prevents the whole thing.

The older unspayed female dog has an irregular heat cycle. There is no end of cycling comparable to human menopause. If you still decide against spaying, be familiar with the signs of pyometra LINK, which include loss of appetite, lethargy, vomiting, excessive thirst, marked vaginal discharge.

### ***Simple Convenience***

The female dog comes into heat every 8 months or so. There is a bloody vaginal discharge and local male dogs are attracted. Often, there is an offensive odor.

***All of this disappears with spaying.***

## **Canine Neuter FAQs**

### **What Are the Health Benefits to the Dog?**

There are several health benefits to neutering. One of the most important concerns the prostate gland, which under the influence of testosterone will gradually enlarge over the course of the dog's life. In age, it is likely to become uncomfortable, possibly being large enough to interfere with defecation. The prostate under the influence of testosterone is also predisposed to infection, which is almost impossible to clear up without neutering. Neutering causes the prostate to shrink into insignificance, thus preventing both prostatitis as well as the uncomfortable benign hyperplasia (enlargement) that occurs with aging. It is often erroneously held that neutering prevents prostate cancer but this is not true. Other health benefits of neutering include the prevention of certain types of hernias and tumors of the testicles and anus. Excessive preputial discharge is also reduced by neutering.

### **What Behavioral Changes Can Be Expected After Neutering?**

The only behavior changes that are observed after neutering relate to behaviors influenced by male hormones. Playfulness, friendliness, and socialization with humans are not changed. The behaviors that change are far less desirable. The interest in roaming is eliminated in 90% of neutered dogs. Aggressive behavior against other male dogs is eliminated in 60% of neutered dogs. Urine marking is eliminated in 50% of neutered male dogs. Inappropriate mounting is eliminated in 70% of neutered dogs.

### **What Exactly Is Done Surgically?**

An incision is made, generally just forward from the scrotum. The testicles are removed through this incision. The stalks are tied off and cut. Castration is achieved. If the testicles are not removed, the desirable benefits listed above cannot be realized. The skin incision may or may not have stitches.

### **What Can I Expect Upon Discharge from the Hospital?**

The scrotum is often swollen in the first few days after surgery, leading some people to wonder if the procedure was really performed. If the dog is immature at the time of neutering, the empty scrotum will flatten out as he grows. If he is mature at the time of neuter, the empty scrotum will remain as a flap of skin. Sometimes the incision is mildly bruised. Most male dogs are eager to play by the day after surgery but, to keep the incision intact, it is best to restrict the dog from boisterous activity.

### **At What Age Can Neutering Be Performed?**

Neutering can be performed at any age over age 8 weeks provided both testicles have descended. Dogs neutered before puberty (generally age 6 months) tend to grow a bit bigger than dogs neutered after puberty (testosterone is involved in causing bones to stop growing, so without testosterone the bones stop growing later). The same behavior and prostate health benefits can be realized no matter what age the dog is. (In other words, a dog does not become "too old" to obtain the same health and behavioral benefits of neutering.)