

# Towne Square Animal Clinic, LLC

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“We treat your pet like our own.”

## Puppy Basics

Congratulations on the newest member of your family! You are about to embark on a 12-17+ year relationship with a Canine member of the Animal Kingdom. Our job is to serve as your advisor and your companion’s health provider through these years. Towne Square Animal Clinic, LLC encourages you to always make it a two-way street of communication and feel free to call, text or email us with any questions you may have. Please use our newest tool for communication – texting. With texting, you have the ability to text us photos, videos and just generally communicate with us on questions on your dog’s health. By sending us pictures or videos of something that is going on, we can quickly assess if this is something we should see, or if we can offer suggestions on how to treat it. Text to our main office number of

**513-793-1875**. If after hours, we will respond by the morning of the next business day.



In this PUPPY BASICS discussion, we may blow several myths of puppy/dog care out of the water in order to get the facts straight. **The FIRST MYTH is:** “Don’t take your new puppy out in public until it has had all it’s shots!”. The truth is that veterinary behaviorists will tell you that the first 4 months of a puppy’s life are the most important for socialization and setting the pattern for the future. If you ‘raise it in a bubble of no social interaction’, it will stunt (possibly permanently) its natural ability to deal with its environment. Its like taking a home-school raised child and waiting till high school to introduce them to the social aspects of growing up to be an adult. Could be awkward. We encourage you taking your newest canine member of the family out into the world to socialize it. That means introducing it to other dogs, cats, the UPS carrier, postal carrier, different age folks....children especially, different floor surfaces.....just the world in general. Praise them highly when they accept their new environment!

**We believe Preventative Medicine** is the most important part of keeping your new canine companion healthy. Preventative medicine includes more than just annual visits for vaccines and a physical. It also includes proper nutrition, regular examination of the pet by the owner at home, proper teeth and ear care, training and obedience classes, neutering, heartworm and flea prevention, and even fencing and leashes to keep your friend restrained and away from harm. Preventative care not only benefits your puppy, but it is the most cost-effective approach as well.

In this discussion, the subject of new puppy care will be divided into 3 areas:

- I. **Training**
- II. **Nutrition**
- III. **Health Needs**

Take your time to study this information and note any questions you may have for us during your office visit. Knowledge is the foundation to understanding. Be sure that all members of the family participate in this lifelong project.



## I. TRAINING

### A. **Housebreaking**

This is one of the first training items you should start when your puppy arrives at your household. Realize your puppy assimilates information best between 8-14 weeks of age, so a puppy that is only 6 weeks old when you bring it home may need a little more patience and time. Not all the neurons are connected just yet.

The four basic times a puppy's body tells it to use the bathroom are: 1) when they are waking up from a nap or sleep, 2) when they are about to take a nap or go to sleep, 3) when they have just gotten through exercising, and 4) **(the most important)** right after eating a meal. By knowing these 4 basic times, you can schedule times to take the puppy outdoors to eliminate.

**It is a mistake to leave food and water down all the time!** If you do, your pup may get hungry or thirsty when you are not there, eat or drink, and have no choice but to soil the area where it is staying. Instead, we recommend you set a rigid food and water schedule and stick to it. Feed your puppy three small meals a day, with the last meal being no later than 7:00 p.m. For the smaller, toy breed of dogs, we may recommend feeding 4 meals per day to avoid low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) episodes. Leave the food and water down for 10 – 15 minutes, and then take them BOTH up. Yes, even the water. Those who leave the water down will invariably come back on their next visit and tell us that the pooping outside is fine, but we are still 'leaking' in the house. If you feel guilty, put a few chips or ice down between feedings. After taking the food and water up, wait for the 'gastro-colic reflex' to take effect. Saaay whaaat! This is a natural reflex that exists in human babies and in puppies. The full stomach sends a signal to the colon (large intestine) to empty out to create more room. That is why human babies fill their diapers

soon after eating. That reflex may take anywhere from 5 – 20+ minutes to take effect. Once you know your puppy's 'Gastro-colic time', learn to take it outside at that time.

Always accompany the puppy outside at first. Take them to the area of the yard in which you would like them to eliminate in order to avoid the "land mine" effect....pooping and peeing everywhere. You will appreciate it when you cut the grass and are able to tell where to clean! If it was a perfect world, you will be able to have your puppy poop and pee in less than a minute and then go inside.....won't happen! This member of the family is only 2-3 months into this world and is easily distracted. Grass growing, squirrels, birds, dog next door....just about anything is distracting. To get the 'job done', we need to give your newest canine member of the family a 'job' to do. That is what separates a cat from a dog. Cats are not owned....they have staff and servants doing their bidding. Dogs live to do jobs and get rewards for a job well done. We need to tell your puppy the job it needs to do. Pick out 1 -2 words that express what you want him/her to do. Each family member must use these same 1 – 2 words each time it goes out. As your puppy goes to the bathroom, softly say and repeat those words. It is generally believed that most dogs have a vocabulary of 160 – 185 words. A drunken sailor could come up with 70 different words for this function, but we don't want 70 words of their vocabulary being taken up by potty language words. The puppy will start to associate this phrase and other 'potty language' with using the bathroom and you will be very happy they know this command when it is –10 degrees or raining outside! Make it a very positive experience when your puppy urinates or has a bowel movement in the appropriate area. Encouraging words and praises are a must! *Occasionally and sporadically* give them a small training treat right after they perform their functions outside. Do not do it every time they potty outside, or they will just come to expect this. By doing it randomly, the puppy will perform the action in hopes it gets a treat that time. If Christmas were every month, kids would not be good in November! A puppy will return to the same area where it has urinated but does not like to return to an area where previous feces are, so be sure to clean the bowel movement each time your puppy has one. This will also prevent re-infestation with any parasites it may have.



The dog reward system for jobs done is an important training aspect in their lives. The classic training rewards are small (many have 'mini' in their name), very tasty, and usually soft so that you can take one reward and make it even smaller. Professional trainers ONLY use very small oral training rewards. First, you must find out what is the best reward for your puppy. You may find out that a chew toy is a better reward than a food treat. The other important thing is to also follow the 2 basic rules with treats and rewards:

1. **TIMING:** All rewards must be given immediately after the 'job' that was done to get its full effect. For instance, if you forget to bring out the reward for 'doing their business in the yard and left it on the kitchen counter, DO NOT give it a reward after it has gotten back to the kitchen and expect it to associate it with having properly 'done its business' in the yard.

2. **MAKE SURE THEY DO A JOB FOR THE REWARD:** Don't compliment them on having beautiful eyes and give them a reward. That is a compliment, NOT A JOB.

The other thing to remember about rewards is that it DOES NOT have to be an oral reward to be a reward. For instance, the door opening to take them outside can be a reward if they love going outside. Before that door opens up, have them do a 'job' with commands such as 'sit', 'give me a paw', 'lay down', etc., before the door opens up. In a similar fashion, before you put the food bowl down for them to eat, do the same thing. Once the 'job' is complete, always follow it with praise!

Now, the big question, what if your puppy eliminates in the house? If it does, and you are not there to catch her/him, just grumble to yourself and clean the mess. A puppy has a very short memory and it does not help to reprimand them unless you catch them in the act. Do not rub their face in it! To help catch them in the act be sure to have yourself or a family member always keep two eyes on them. Use baby gates or other items to keep them from wandering free in the house UNTIL you trust them. When you are not able to monitor them, put them in their crate. If you do catch your puppy soiling in the house, you must let them know this is not acceptable. Keep a rolled-up newspaper to hit the floor. The paper is used to smack the floor beside them to make a startling noise. A closed can full of pennies always makes a nice racket! At the same time, loudly verbally reprimand your dog and then immediately take them outside where you should change back to a soothing, positive voice. The next time your puppy wants to eliminate, they will remember that when they had the urge to do it in the house, they had an unpleasant, scary experience and, that when they went outside, they had a very pleasant experience. It will want to repeat the 'good' experience and (hopefully) give you a signal that they would like to go outside. This may include whining, a circling action, or something as simple as waiting by the door. You will need to learn to interpret this 'Body English"! Some people have found that by hanging a bell by a rope on the doorknob of the door you go out, they can train the puppy to ring that bell each time it needs to go out. You must learn to recognize these signals and respond to them. Your dog wants to please you and looks for reassurance through your praise.

So, in summary, the 5 times that a puppy should be taken out during the day are:

1. When it first gets up in the morning.
2. Two – four are after each meal.
3. Number five is just before you go to bed.

Some owners report they take their puppy outside to go to the bathroom and they play or sniff every blade of grass instead of relieving themselves. Once they bring the puppy inside, it soon eliminates in the house. These puppies are just having too much fun romping and playing and forget to go to the bathroom. If this occurs, allow the puppy to play, then let them come inside, but be ready to take them out soon afterward for them to "potty." *In potty training, if you have another dog(s) at home, it is best that it does not go outside at the same time as your puppy may be distracted in wanting to play, and forget about using the bathroom.*



**Crate training** can be an important adjunct for housetraining. Crate training works on the premise that puppies do not like to urinate or defecate in an area where they sleep. By confining an unsupervised puppy to a crate, you are forcing the issue. You should crate your puppy at night or when you are not able to directly supervise them. The correct crate size is one that your puppy can just turn around and lie down in. If the crate is too large, your puppy will simply go to one end of the crate to use the bathroom then go to the opposite end to sleep. If you buy a large crate for a puppy that will be growing a lot, block off part of the area with pillows or a board to temporarily make it smaller.

There are 4 basic rules in crate training:

1) DO NOT LEAVE FOOD OR WATER IN THE CRATE WITH THE PUPPY!!! If your puppy eats or drinks while in the crate, it will have to relieve itself 15-30 minutes later and there will not be anyone there to take it out. Most puppies 8 weeks and older can “hold it” for 6-9 hours.

2) It is important to reward the puppy for “holding it” by taking them out first thing in the morning and as soon as you get home from work. Don’t stop to make breakfast or look at the mail. This also means that you will not be able to sleep late on Saturday mornings until your puppy is fully trained. If your puppy happens to have an accident in the crate, be sure to clean it as soon as possible since you don’t want them to become comfortable with being in the crate with urine or feces.

3) Never punish the puppy by using the crate to place them in when they have done something ‘bad’ – it should be a retreat and safe haven where they can go for some privacy.

4) Do not put the crate in your bedroom at night. They will be training you soon as they may wake up at night and want just to play or may have had a dream. You will believe they need to go outside, and sleep will be hard to come by. Please put the crate in the kitchen, laundry room, etc. You can make it a more reassuring experience for them by a) covering the crate and creating a cave effect, b) put a night light on, and c) leave a radio set to an easy-music station on low volume. An additional training hint is to use your Smart Speakers (Homepod, Sonos, Google Home or Echo) to help train your new puppy to avoid noise aversion. Each night have it play a different sound...Classical music, storm sounds, firework sounds, rock music, etc. This gets the puppy used to the fact that these are natural noises in its environment and nothing to fear. The first 2-3 nights will have a lot of whining, but if you remain strong, the puppy will soon learn to adjust to its new surroundings.



One last thing about crates involves Separation Anxiety. This is a behavioral issue that exists because we love our dogs so much. New puppy comes to your home. It came from an environment where it was surrounded by its litter mates and its mom. Suddenly you are it....the world revolves around you. That puppy follows you around the house each day and becomes your shadow. You love it! To that puppy, you are the center of the Universe. The problem is that you can't be there 24 hours a day. When you leave, the center of the Universe is gone. It's Chicken Little time...the sky is falling! Anxiety attacks occur which manifest themselves in excessive vocalization, pooping/peeing and destructive chewing. Many-an-animal shelter or rescue are filled with dogs that are surrendered secondary to that dog having severe separation anxiety.



How does the crate fit in? Most people when they leave put the puppy into the crate and 'baby talk' to it. The pitch of your voice changes. This is repeated after they get home. A puppy prone to separation anxiety will recognize the pitch change in the voice, and the anxiety ramps up. Let's avoid this! Make it a neutral experience when putting the puppy in the crate. Say nothing and walk away. Put a filled Kong chew toy in the crate. When you get home from being away....repeat the neutral experience and say nothing for a while, before quietly going to the crate and letting the puppy out to take it outside. You should be praising our puppy when it is doing things away from you and independently. Yes, it will be a bruise to your ego.....you will get over it. Let's not look forward to having a dog with separation anxiety and having to put the dog on Prozac.

Call us before separation anxiety becomes a very big problem.

## B. Chewing



Chewing by puppies is natural habit. They don't have opposable thumbs, so they put things in their mouth for taste, texture, closer smell, and generally just getting to know their world. We all enjoy watching a litter of puppies playing. If you observe them, you will notice they all chew on each other. Our goal at home is to avoid destructive chewing. The habit tends to stick with them until just after getting all their adult teeth (approximately 6 months of age). Puppies start getting their permanent teeth at approximately 4 months of age beginning with the upper and lower middle incisors. Be sure to provide your pup with appropriate chew toys. You will find out that almost any animal part can be made into a chew toy: ears, hooves, horns, skin, procreation devices of

steers/bulls, turkey necks and feet, and so much more. Not all are good. We show you pig ears to emphasize that dogs should not have pork in their diet. Pork fat is incriminated in causing pancreatitis too often...especially small dogs. Therefore, no bacon, ham, sausage, pork chop...generally no pork! That is why you can't find dog foods made of pork. Cow hooves and elk horns are too hard and can break teeth. Man-made chew toys like Nyla-bones and Greenies are ok if monitored. The bits are digestible if they get into the stomach, but bigger pieces may get stuck half-way down. That is true of any chew toy – you must monitor your dog's chewing habits to make sure they are not too aggressive to break off pieces that can be swallowed.



Old socks and shoes should not be offered, since puppies can't tell the difference between an old shoe and a new one and could chew them into small pieces of leather or swallow a shoestring. The Kong toy is an excellent training tool. The theory in using one is that it replicates the center of the bone, the marrow, like the beef bones that your grandmother or great grandmother used to get at the butcher shop for their dogs. The marrow was always the best part of the bone for the dog as it contained fatty substances.....thus all the taste! The Kong Toy has a hollow center that can be stuffed with a small amount of peanut butter, Cheese Whiz, or a dog biscuit. Some people will get an extra one to fill with canned dog food, put it in the freezer overnight, and then offer it to their puppy the next day. A wonderful 'frosty paws' treat for them. Your puppy will spend hours occupied on chewing while trying to get the treat out. Also use this toy as a diversion (in the crate) when you leave. They will be so enthralled with the Kong, they will not realize you are leaving and are less likely to suffer from separation anxiety. If you Google 'stuffing the Kong Toy', you are bound to find a number of unique ways to do this. If you do use peanut butter, and are into organics, be sure that it does not contain Xylitol as a sweetener....these are poisonous to dogs. Kong chew toys can be placed in the dish washer for cleaning.

Another important lesson in choosing chew toys is to get ones that have 'Character'. Why would that be? Big question is what we mean by that .First, let's dispense with Myth #2. **Myth Number Two** that we want to dispense with is when dry dog food manufacturers say that 'dry dog food is good for keeping your dog's teeth clean. NOT TRUE. If you ate potato chips vs. a bowl of soup. What leaves more residue behind in your mouth.... has to be the potato chips. The bacteria in your mouth feed on the food residue and use it to build the framework for calculus which eventually becomes tarter...bacterial cement on the teeth. The first thing we hear from our dentist...'Are you flossing regularly?'. A proper chew toy with 'character' acts like flossing. Buying a toothbrush, we choose ones that are not straight across, but rather have whirls and swirls. These toothbrushes are better in 'flossing' of your teeth to get in cracks and crevices. Smooth chew toys for dogs are like the toothbrush that are straight across on its head. Choose character!





**Finger chewing** can be fun until the puppy bites down too hard. However, if you never allow them to chew on your fingers, they will never learn **“bite discrimination.”** This means they will learn that they can ‘mouth’ fingers, etc., but will know that at a certain point, they are causing pain and will learn not to go beyond that point. Allow them to gently gnaw on your fingers or hand, but the first time they bite too hard, respond with a **loud “OUCH! That hurts!”** and then put them into a “time out” for 15 – 20 minutes in a laundry room or ½- bathroom. Do not replace your fingers or hand with another chew toy. That will only be rewarding them for bad behavior. Make sure this room does not have things in it that will be construed as playtime. If you put them in a half bath for this, be sure to put the toilet lid down and the toilet paper up, or they will create their own play toys. Do not use the crate for punishment since you want the crate to be associated with good things. “Time out” is a ‘punishment’ for the puppy that only wants to be near you, and she/he will probably cry, but be strong! You are teaching them what is appropriate behavior now, when they are small, and not allowing any serious problems to develop later when they are fully-grown.

### C. Three to Four Time a Week List

All this leads to our 3 – 4x/week list. These are training items you do not need to do every day but should do at least 3- 4x/week.



- **Number 1** on the list: train the puppy how not to have food aggression. Three to four times a week while your puppy is eating, be sure to ‘aggravate it’ by pulling the food bowl away from it, touch its feet, touch its tail.....do what you can to have your puppy realize that it is ok to have people and other animals around it while eating.



- **Number 2** on the list: have your puppy realize what fingers are by three to four times a week, before you feed it, place your hand in the food bowl with your fingers spread apart. Pour some dry food into bowl, and then allow it to eat the food from between your fingers. They learn what fingers are, and it makes it much easier in the future to give the dog small treats without the dog snapping it out of your fingers.



- **Number 3:** Who’s the boss! It is important that you are the alpha in your group at home. Some people do not believe in the alpha dog training, but it becomes critical in such instances such as where the dog is off leash in your front yard. He/she may see something across the street and start running toward it. They will not stop at the street edge, look both ways, and then cross. The potential to be hit by a car is high! If you are not the alpha and yell for it to stop, it will not! Training for this goes back to the wolf pack that all dogs descended from. In a wolf pack, there is always the alpha wolf. If he/she saw a wolf acting up in the pack, they would run over to the wolf, knock it down so that its belly was up, and then stand there and growl over it. A very subservient position for an animal in the wild as this submissive pose leads to leaving it open to attack on a vulnerable throat and soft belly. We will adopt this similar technique by three or four times a week when play with your puppy on the floor, roll it over onto its back with its belly up. Hold it down firmly even though they struggle. Keep repeating ‘NO!’ until it quits struggling and cries ‘Uncle!’ or ‘waves the white flag’. You are not trying to be mean, just letting it know who is in control. Also, do not let your puppy win at Tug-of-war and get false hopes it is the alpha.



## D. Leash Training

Puppies should be encouraged to accept collars and leashed at an early age. You should be able to slip two fingers between hi/her neck and the collar for a proper fit. Remember to check the collar often since puppies grow quickly and a too-tight collar can be a problem.



You may need to allow the puppy to go where they want to go at first and just follow them while holding the leash. This can be very effective to just get them used to having a leash attached. To avoid the “stubborn mule” technique when using a leash for the first time, get your puppy’s attention by “snapping” the leash (short, sharp jerks). Then call their name and say “Come” in an excited voice. When they respond, praise them lavishly. Pulling the puppy along by the leash will not make them a willing walking partner. We do not encourage you getting the reel leashes that give you anywhere from 10 – 20 feet of extra lead. This ‘freedom’ will make you lose control of your puppy on the walk. Yes, it’s easier for you, but it is like giving a teenager complete freedom in a Mall.

## E. Handling

A very important part of keeping your pet happy is getting them used to being touched and handled, especially while eating and playing with toys, so that they do not become protective. Your puppy will be much less stressed at the vet and/or grooming salon if they are used to being handled at home by their owners. Every day you should handle all parts of their body including opening their mouth and checking their teeth, handling their feet (very important for nail trims!), looking into their ears, etc. They should be comfortable with having every part of their body touched. Furthermore, while doing these at-home “exams” you may notice potential problems before they become serious.



**MAKE TIME TO ATTEND DOG OBEDIENCE CLASSES EARLY IN YOUR PUPPY’S LIFE!** The best opportunity for them to imprint positive training and good habits is in their youth. Dog training classes also allow your puppy to become socialized or used to many different types of dogs and people. If you cannot make it to classes, consider an in-home trainer or rent videotapes and read books on training. Remember, no matter what your approach, training should be consistent and practices every day. Time spent on training now will be rewarded with a lifetime of good manners and a more pleasant companion.

## II. NUTRITION



**MYTH NUMBER THREE:** Having a picture of a wolf on the cover of the bag of dry dog food means it is the best dog food. **Other myths:** Grain-free, Gluten-free, organic foods are always the best. **CAN YOU SAY MARKETING!** These companies are not selling to the dog...they are selling to folks who believe in pictures and all that the labels say are the best....because their neighbor said so, or the pimply-faced teenager at the front counter of the pet store told them so. Going into a modern pet food superstore may make this subject seem scary and confusing. Follow these simple rules to avoid a lot of confusion. Dog foods can be divided into three different categories: 1) Generic and store-brand foods, 2) Middle-of-the-road foods, and 3) Premium brands. The bottom line on generic foods is **DO NOT FEED THEM** to your dog! A vast majority of these foods do not meet their label requirements for essential nutrients. General side effects of feeding nutritionally inferior foods long term includes poor coat quality, failure to thrive, diarrhea, and in extreme cases, death. Middle-of-the-road brands include the good, commercially available foods such as Purina Puppy Chow, Puppy Kibbles and Bits, Cycle One, etc. These foods are made by reputable companies, are relatively economical and readily available. The disadvantages are: the protein source is sometimes not consistent and there may be more cereal fillers present. This leads to a larger volume of stool produced by your dog. If you decide to feed a middle-of-the-road food, we recommend adding a multi-vitamin to your dog's diet. The third level of puppy foods available are the premium brands. These include Iams, Hill's Science Diet, Eukanuba, Pro Plan, Blue Buffalo, Royal Canin, etc.. These foods tend to be moderately more expensive, and a bit less available, although Iams and Blue Buffalo are now available in grocery stores. These foods are the best for your dog because their protein sources are usually more consistent, and there is less cereal filler in the food. These factors lead to higher digestibility, smaller and less frequent bowel movements, and total food volume fed is less as these are more energy dense foods. If you decide to feed your puppy premium brand foods, do not add vitamins to the diet. These foods may be purchased at your local pet store, or larger grocery stores. No matter which food you use, avoid sudden changes in your dog's diet. Sudden changes in diet may lead to several days of diarrhea as your pup's digestive tract tries to adjust. The best approach is to gradually blend the new food in with the old over a period of 3-4 days. Start by mixing in and adding 25% of the new food each day until after the 4<sup>th</sup> day you are completely changed over.



**DO NOT FEED TABLE SCRAPS TO YOUR DOG!** This bad habit can lead to an unbalanced diet, diarrhea, pancreatitis and vomiting. Quality dog foods are fully balanced and meet all your companion's nutritional needs. This does not mean it is wrong to offer your adult dog an egg or two per week to keep their coat shiny, but stay

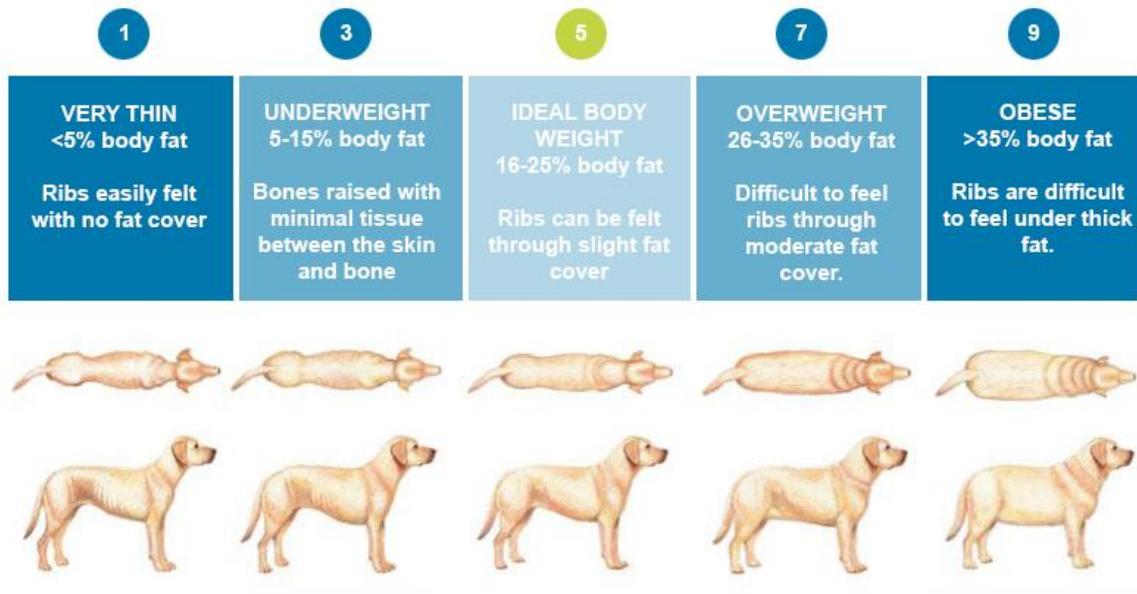
away from fatty scraps, especially pork products. Dogs cannot properly digest the pork fat, and this can lead to a higher incidence of stomach upset, all the way to pancreatitis.



For healthy and low-calorie ‘human’ snacks, your pup will enjoy baby carrots, broccoli, small bits of cheese, boiled liver, or training treats as a tiny treat. You can even offer it mini-rice cakes, Cheerios, Oyster crackers or butter-free popcorn when it becomes an adult. These ‘human’ treats, although they are considered ‘table food’, have less calories and are healthier than your standard Milk Bones, Pupperoni, etc.

Feeding your dog at the same time you eat dinner may be a way to keep them from sitting by the table and begging while you eat. Feeding your dog from the table will not only reinforce begging but can also help contribute to an overweight problem in your pet. An accurate way to gauge proper weight is to:

- Check your dog’s rib cage. You should not be able to see the individual ribs, but you should be able to feel each one cleanly. If there is fat padding over his/her ribs, they are overweight.
- Look for a tapering behind the rib cage.
- The third way to gauge body condition is to look at your dog from the side, the bodyline from behind the chest should slope up into the groin area. Proper weight is a must for good health! If your dog loses the battle with obesity, it will shorten your dog’s life, increase the risk of earlier onset of arthritis, and all the health conditions we come to associate with being overweight.



### III. HEALTH NEEDS



#### **A. Vaccinations and Physicals**

Preventive medicine is always the least expensive health care option. We will start your puppy on a vaccination series to help protect her/him from some of the most common viral diseases such as Distemper, Parvovirus enteritis, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, Bordetella, and Rabies. Some other vaccines that you may encounter are Lymes vaccine and Canine Influenza. These are situational and we will work with you on determining what is the best for your puppy. Your puppy received some initial immunity from its mother in its first milk, colostrum. This passive protection wears off at varying times for each pup. Rather than run the expensive series of blood tests to determine when passive immunity wears off, we will set up a regular schedule of vaccinations. These boosters will continue until your puppy reaches 16-18 weeks of age. Her/his first Rabies vaccination in the state of Ohio will be good for one year. Any subsequent Rabies vaccines in the state of Ohio will be re-administered every three years. Yearly physical exams and vaccinations (as needed) for other viral diseases are a must! Towne Square Animal Clinic, LLC will send you a reminder in the mail, as well as emailing you each year when your dog is due for a visit. If you plan on boarding your dog at a kennel, or exposing her to frequent large group situations (such as in Doggie Daycare or a Dog Park), please let us know, as a Bordetella and Canine Influenza vaccination will be required or strongly recommended. Once your dog reaches a senior age of 12 – 14 years old, we will move into a bi-annual physical exam schedule. We begin regular Senior testing of blood and urine when a dog reaches 8 – 10 years of age, depending on the dog's breed. This helps us monitor and catch any early health problems that come with an aging pet.

Many puppies may experience a temporary 12 – 24 hour period of muscle soreness from getting their vaccines. This may be accompanied by a decrease in appetite. If you feel your pup is uncomfortable, you may ease their soreness with an 81 mg baby (or low dose adult) aspirin at a dose of 1 tablet per 15 pounds of body weight given orally every 12 hours, for a maximum of four doses. Give this dose of baby aspirin with food to avoid an upset stomach. The series of physical exams, which accompany vaccines, is an important time for us to assess your pup's growth and development. We will report any findings that would be of concern to you, and we are interested in your observations and questions about health, nutrition, and behavior. Bring a fresh stool sample to our office for your puppy visits and then yearly for her annual physicals to be used for fecal parasite checks.

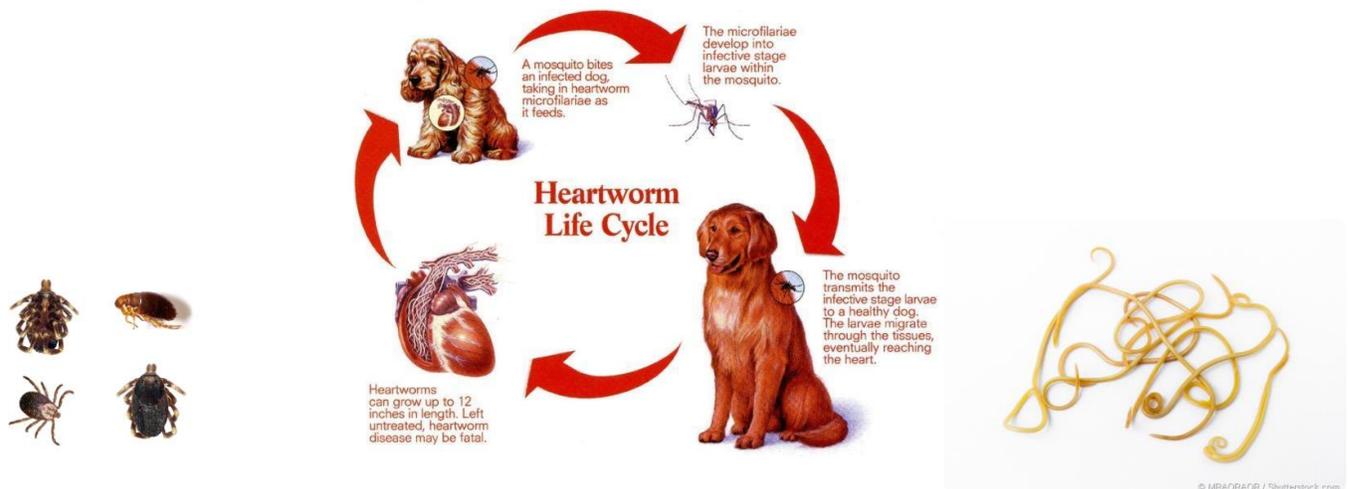


## B. Neuter/ Ovariohysterectomy (spay)

If breeding your puppy is not in its future, we recommend strongly having her spayed (neutered for males) at approximately 6+ months of age. The health and behavioral benefits of this procedure greatly outweigh its risks. In the female dog, spaying decreases the instance of estrogen-related breast tumors, eliminates messy heat cycles, and prevents life threatening uterine infections. In the male dog, neutering removes the possibility of testicular cancer, decreases prostate problems, and positively influences behavior by decreasing roaming, leg hiking, and male aggression. We prefer 6-7 months of age to have this procedure done so that we can monitor the loss of all the baby teeth. If they have retained baby teeth, this is the best time to have them removed while they are under anesthesia for the spay/neuter.

Spay/neuter surgeries are performed as one-day procedures using the safest gas anesthetics and modern veterinary techniques and monitoring equipment. Sutures are taken out ten days later on a quick visit, and if we used surgical Super Glue to close the incision, there will be no stitches to take out. It is important to monitor your pet's caloric intake after surgery, so that they do not gain weight. We usually recommend for the typical indoor pet that you start them on a less-active diet within 2 – 3 months of having t spay/neuter surgery. Yes, your puppy is very active, but the Less Active/Lower Calorie diet will be the most appropriate for them at this stage. If your puppy gets obese, it will be a lot harder to get the pounds off than it will be initially to keep it off.

## C. Heartworms and other parasites



There are three kinds of parasites which affect dogs:

- 1) **Skin parasites** such as fleas, ticks, lice and mites. We have many more effective and safer products now that can help treat and prevent these parasites vs. the old method of dumping harder chemicals such as powders, sprays and dips we used to use. Ask us about monthly topicals, and the newer monthly oral preventatives. Once your puppy is over 6 months old, we have a 3-month duration oral flea and tick preventatives (Bravecto)
- 2) **Intestinal parasites** like roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworms. Some you can visibly see in your puppy's stool; others are not visible on the stool. We will seek to get two negative stool checks in a row for these parasites for your puppy.

3) **Blood parasites** such as heartworms. Heartworms are the most difficult of the three to detect, as well as the most dangerous. These parasites were not common in the Ohio River Valley until the mid-1970's to early 1980's. This is because the heartworm uses mosquitoes as their part-time host and method of infection. As mosquitoes have grown numerous in the Ohio River Valley, so have the incidences of canine heartworm infection. Without the consistent use of heartworm preventative your dog may become infected and show no signs for 12-18 months. These symptoms would include persistent coughing, exercise intolerance, and vomiting. If left untreated, heartworms cause irreversible right-side heart damage, leading to liver and kidney failure, pneumonia, and finally death. If performed in time, treatment is an option, however, it is expensive, time consuming (10 – 12 weeks of no exercise for your dog), and potentially fatal to your animal.

**It is much better to prevent heartworms early than to have to treat for them later!** Your puppy's preventative program should follow these guidelines. At less than 7 months they will be started on a monthly heartworm preventative tablet. No antigen blood test is performed at this time, because if an infected mosquito bit them on the day they were born, it would take 6 - 7 months for a positive blood test result. Dogs over 7 months old are blood antigen-tested first prior to starting preventative tablets and we then will resume the normal yearly testing schedule. We strongly recommend giving Heartworm Prevention year-round, because it not only prevents heartworms, but intestinal parasites such as *roundworms*, *hookworms*, *whipworms* and *tapeworms*. These intestinal parasites are year-round concerns for your dog, while heartworm season is based on mosquito season of 8 – 9 months per year in the Ohio-area.



#### D. Ear Care

Proper ear care is an important component to preventative health. Ear infections are second only to yearly exams as reasons for veterinary office calls. The anatomy of a dog's ear lends itself to yeast infections and bacterial build up. The canal itself drops down vertically before turning horizontally toward the eardrum (like a hockey stick in shape). This causes water and wax to become trapped down deep in the interior. Densely haired, lop-eared ears, like the ones found on Cocker Spaniels, Labradors, Poodles and Golden Retrievers, further lend themselves to infection by having an ear flap which shuts off air flow. The overall tendency is like having wet tennis shoes on the side of your head. Under these conditions the pH of the inner ear environment becomes basic (above 7.0) promoting yeast and bacterial accumulation. Your puppy should have clean, pink ears with no discharge. Wax in the ear indicates a problem that needs attention. A typical yeast infection will have a chocolate brown, greasy consistency (like melted Tootsie Rolls), and possibly a foul & mildewy odor.



During your puppy exams, we will check your pup's ears for infection and ear mites. If a problem is found, we will help you treat their ears accordingly. Long-term preventative care may include 'douching' their ears to create an environment that is not conducive to bacterial and yeast growth. You should also put a cotton ball in your dog's ears during bathing to keep water from getting into the ear canals, and 'douche' the ears any time water gets into them. If you would like to prepare 'medicated ear wipes' in an easy-to-

use form, we recommend getting an acid-based ear cleaning solution or other very good products we can recommend. Then, go to the grocery store and buy some Wet Ones (antibacterial) Wipes. They come 40 wipes to a bottle. Open the top of the Wet Ones and pour in 2 oz. - 4 oz. (depending on the solution used) into the center of the column of wipes. Recap the top and rethread the wipes from the center. You now have 40 wipes with the right pH and are easy to use for both prevention and treatment. On a regular basis (2 - 3x/week and after baths), take one wipe out to clean both ears if your dog has large enough ear canals. Use a Roto-Rooter (round-the-bowl and down- the-hole) action vs. a ram-rod motion to clean the ears. You do not want pack any discharge deep into the ear canal. The ear drums are safe from this action. This will clean the ear, and a vast majority of dogs usually accept it well. By doing this, it discourages yeast and bacterial growth in the ear canal. If you notice a buildup of a dark chocolate brown/Tootsie Roll-colored discharge in the ear(s), your dog is probably starting with a yeast infection. We recommend increasing the frequency of the ‘douching’ to *twice-a-day* for 10 – 14 days to try to reverse the trend of an alkaline pH and growth of yeast. Usually this is more than adequate to control the situation and we do not need to see the dog. If this does not control the situation, be sure to call the clinic to set up an appointment for us to check the ears.



### **E. Identification**

All dogs in Ohio over three months of age must be licensed with the County Auditor of the County they reside in within 30 days of acquisition. If your pet is found without a license, you would be assessed a fine. The license application for Hamilton County is included in your puppy folder, or you can go online at: <https://www.doglicenses.us/OH/Hamilton/>. For other counties, you can usually download that county’s registration form by going to the County Auditor website. Another form of permanent identification available at Towne Square Animal Clinic LLC is the Home Again microchip system. This form of identification is particularly useful if your dog has lost her/his collar. A small microchip is inserted with a needle under the dog’s skin on the left side of the shoulder blades. We offer this service at the time of spay/neuter. The chip can then be registered with the retrieval service to include your name, address, and chip number. A tag with the retrieval center’s phone number and your pet’s personal identification number is placed on the dog’s collar. However, if the collar is lost, most local shelters and many veterinary clinics have microchip scanners that will read the chip and reveal the identification number, which will provide the information needed to reunite you with your pet.

**Dr. Zekoff and the Towne Square Animal Clinic LLC staff want to help you have a happy, healthy puppy! Your new companion will provide you with love and friendship for many years to come and we will be here for both of you every step of the way. Feel free to call with any questions and set up your new puppy appointment today!**

