

On behalf of the doctors and staff at Pet Care Center at Luna Park, we are so excited for the wonderful journey that you are about to embark on with your new pet. Having a new furry friend can be a lot of fun, but we also recognize that you may have some questions about the best way to care for your companion. Don't worry, we will be here for you every step of the way with expert advice.

This packet will have some information to get you started with your new pet and to inform you of things to look for and avoid in the upcoming months and even years. As always, if you have additional questions, you are welcome to call our office at any time.

### **How to Choose a Proper Diet**

With so many diets available these days it is important to know the basic dos and don'ts to look out for. Many terms used on pet food labels are not regulated by the FDA as they would be in human foods. Terms to look out for that may be marketing tools for these companies include but are not limited to the following:

- Holistic
- Human Grade
- Premium

Knowing who your pet food is produced by and having the contact information for these companies is a great start. Some of the questions that you can ask to ensure that your pet is getting a balanced, nutritional diet are included below.

Also check for the following:

- AAFCO Labeling
- Labeled for age and size (puppy, large breed etc.)

We do not recommend feeding raw diets. While this is advertised as "the natural way" to feed your pet, the GI systems in today's companion animals have evolved and some raw diets cause diarrhea and other GI upset. In addition to GI issues, a raw diet also increases the risk of exposure to infectious diseases such as salmonella and influenza H5N1. This can then be spread to humans.

We also suggest **avoiding grain-free diets**. This was a trend in the pet food community but has recently been linked to heart disease in several dog breeds.

*Questions to ask your pet food company:*

1. Who formulates your food and what are their credentials?
2. Where are your foods produced and manufactured?
3. What specific control measures do you use to ensure consistency and quality of the ingredients of your product?
4. Is the food complete and balanced? If so, what life stage/age is intended for?
5. Will you provide a complete nutrient analysis for the dog or cat food in question?
- 6.

## **Vaccines**

There are two classifications for vaccines in the veterinary community, these are the core and non-core vaccines.

*Core Vaccines* are vaccines which are strongly recommended and sometimes even required.

*Non-Core Vaccines* are vaccines that only some dogs need depending on factors such as geographic location and lifestyle.

Rabies Vaccine (Legally Required Core Vaccine)	A rabies vaccine is legally required and protects pets from the virus that is also transmissible to humans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial Vaccine at 16 weeks</li><li>• Booster at 1 year</li><li>• Booster every 3 years after</li></ul>
DAP Vaccine (Core Vaccine)	All dogs should be vaccinated against Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvovirus (DAP) in our hospital. Puppies should start their vaccines between 6-8 weeks of age. Puppies should not be exposed to other dogs of unknown vaccine status (reputable puppy classes are OK) until they are fully vaccinated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial DAP Vaccine at 6-8 weeks</li><li>• Booster 2-3 additional times between 9-18 weeks</li><li>• Booster at 1 year</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booster every 3 years after</li> </ul>
Leptospirosis Vaccine (Core Vaccine)	<p>Leptospirosis is transmitted through the urine of dogs, raccoons, deer, cattle, and horses. Dogs with exposure to farm ponds, roadside rest stops, parks, or any grassy areas where any of the previously mentioned animals may have urinated should be vaccinated annually. Leptospirosis can potentially even be found in your own backyard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Vaccine at 9-12 weeks</li> <li>• Booster at 12-16 weeks</li> <li>• Booster Annually after 1 year</li> </ul>
Bordetella aka Kennel Cough Vaccine (Non-Core/Strongly Recommended)	<p>Infectious Tracheobronchitis (kennel cough) was traditionally obtained in a kennel or high population situations where an infected dog coughs and the bacteria particles are inhaled by another dog nearby. However, we are seeing more and more of these cases in dogs that have limited or no direct exposure to other dogs. Therefore, we are advising all canines get this vaccine annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Vaccine at after 8 weeks</li> <li>• Booster Annually after 1 year</li> </ul>
Influenza Vaccine (Non-Core Vaccine)	<p>Canine influenza virus causes symptoms in dogs that are similar to the flu. It was first identified in the US on the east coast in early 2015 and is now prevalent in Washington state. We recommend this vaccine for pets that will be in highly populated areas such as dog parks, grooming facilities, and boarding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Vaccine at 12 weeks</li> <li>• Booster at 15-16 weeks</li> <li>• Booster Annual after 1 year</li> </ul>

### **Heartworm and Intestinal Parasites**

There are a number of parasites that can infect your pet year-round in our area. Some of these include roundworm, hookworm, tapeworm, and giardia. These can also be zoonotic, which means they can be spread to humans.

It is important to test your pet's fecal material 2-4 times during the first year of life then at least once a year to ensure that you and your pet stay healthy and happy. We also suggest deworming puppies and kittens 2-4 times between fecal testing with a broad spectrum dewormer and then maintaining them on monthly preventatives.

Heartworms are one of the most damaging parasites for cats and dogs. Heartworms are spread by mosquito bites but are not zoonotic. When a mosquito that is carrying the parasite bites your pet, the larva enters the bloodstream and takes residence in the heart and lungs. This footlong parasite can seriously debilitate and potentially kill cats and dogs. Luckily, if this is caught early, it can be treated. Steps that you can take include:

- Annual Testing (this is a quick blood test that can be performed on the same day as your exam)
- Regular Monthly Preventatives (normally a once monthly tablet or topical solution)

## **Ticks**

Ticks are skin parasites that feed on the blood of their hosts. Ticks like motion and warm temperatures from body heat, which is why they are attracted to hosts like dogs and cats.

The bite itself is not usually painful, but the parasite can transmit diseases and cause tick paralysis, Lyme disease, and other issues, which is why tick control is so important.

## **Fleas**

Fleas are an external parasite that live outside of the body and can be a challenge to manage. To better prevent and eliminate fleas, it is important to not only

target the fleas that you can see but also the environment. The average adult female flea lays 50 eggs a day, which fall from your pet and live in the environment. These eggs take anywhere from 2-14 days to hatch depending on how warm the environment is. Once hatched, the new flea takes only 48 hours before she starts to lay eggs of her own.

Treating your pet with monthly preventatives will kill off any live fleas that are on your pet. However, to completely eradicate the infestation you will need to treat carpets and fabrics, as well as vacuum often.

\*\*For more information on parasites and how to prevent them while reducing risk to your family please visit: [www.petsandparasites.org](http://www.petsandparasites.org)

## **Dental Care**

Brushing teeth regularly with veterinary approved, fluoride free toothpaste will help to ensure your pet's oral health. Just like in humans, cats and dogs need daily brushing and regular dental cleanings with radiographs to ensure that they are well cared for. The first step to heart health is positive oral health.

Please avoid hard toys and bones as they can break and damage the teeth.

For more information on how to care for your pet's teeth please ask one of our doctors or trained technicians.

## **Identification**

All pets should wear a collar and ID tag at all times. There are special collars for cats and dogs depending on their size and breed. In addition to a collar, it is a wise idea to have your pet microchipped.

Microchips are placed similar to an injection and stay under the skin between the shoulder blades in what is known as the subcutaneous layer. These chips contain a series of numbers that are registered by universal scanners. Those numbers can be entered into a national database and will pull up your information. All lost pets

that are brought into the humane society and most veterinary clinics are scanned for microchips as soon as they arrive.

### **Spay/Neuter**

Spaying or neutering can be performed starting at 6 months. The best age to spay or neuter your pet is dependent on size, breed, genetics, etc. Please ask one of our doctors to discuss the best age for your pet. All pets should eventually be spayed or neutered unless they will be used for breeding purposes. There are several behavioral and medical issues that can be avoided by sterilization, these include but are not limited to:

- Reduced risk of Prostate Cancer
- Reduced Risk of Mammary Gland Cancer
- Prevention of Pyometra (pus-filled uterus)
- Aggression Issues