

Your New Adult Dog

Clermont Animal Hospital Inc.



The staff at Clermont Animal Hospital would like to congratulate you on your new dog! To help you and your dog start a happy, healthy relationship, we have compiled a packet of important information for you. Please take a few minutes to review the information. If you have any questions, feel free to ask our doctors or staff. The following is an overview of the information contained in this packet:

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Vaccinations for Your Dog

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***Vaccinations** are shots given to your pets that will protect them from getting diseases. Many of the vaccinations require one or more **booster vaccinations**, which are shots that renew the effectiveness of the original vaccine. It is very important to get the vaccinations and booster shots on schedule to keep your dog healthy. The information below will describe what type of vaccinations your dog needs and when he or she will need them.*

When should my dog be vaccinated?

Adult dogs need yearly booster vaccines. If your dog has never been vaccinated before, the first distemper combination vaccine will need to be boosted 3-4 weeks after the initial shot. Most breeders or rescue organizations give at least one set of vaccinations while the dog is in their care. For this reason, it is important to bring any records you received with your dog so we can give your dog the vaccinations at the appropriate time.

It is important to note that the Rabies vaccine must be given by a licensed veterinarian. Most likely, your new dog will need this vaccination now, unless you have proof that it was given while in the care of a former owner.

Once we have a record of your pet's prior vaccinations in our computer system at Clermont Animal Hospital, our staff will automatically send you reminder cards when vaccinations are due. Please be sure to notify us of any address changes so that you can be sure to receive these reminders.

Will the vaccines cause reactions or side effects?

Only a small percentage of vaccinated dogs have a reaction to the vaccine.

Common Reactions

- Low-grade fever
- Lethargy (lack of energy)
- Loss of appetite (inappetance)

Most of the time these symptoms begin four to 12 hours after the vaccination is given and are gone within 24 to 72 hours. **If your dog is exhibiting signs for more than three days, it is important that you contact our hospital.**

Site Reactions

Another common reaction is a bump or swelling at the injection site, called a site reaction. **If you notice a vaccination site reaction, please bring it to the attention of our veterinarians.** Most of the time these bumps are not a medical concern. In rare cases, an infection may occur at the vaccination site, causing a small abscess (lump) to form.

Allergic Reactions

Allergic reactions to vaccinations are uncommon but can occur. **If your dog exhibits any of these signs of allergic reaction, please contact us immediately:**

- Swollen face/Swollen eyes
- Hives or red skin
- Difficulty breathing (in extreme cases)

What diseases do vaccines prevent?

Below you will find a discussion of recommended vaccinations and the diseases they prevent.

DHLP-P Vaccine: The DHLP-P vaccine will protect your dog against several common infections. Booster vaccinations are given yearly.

The DHLP-P vaccine prevents a number of diseases including:

- The **distemper virus**, which causes neurological problems including seizures, respiratory problems and gastrointestinal problems. This virus is deadly in about 50 percent of the cases.
- **Viral hepatitis**, which is a deadly liver condition.
- **Leptospirosis**, which is a bacterial infection that causes severe, life-threatening liver and kidney failure. The leptospirosis component of the DHLP-P vaccination is known to cause allergic reactions. If your dog experiences an allergic reaction, we will not give this component during future vaccinations (we will give a DHP-P instead of the DHLP-P).
- **Parainfluenza**, which is a canine disease very similar to human influenza.
- **Parvovirus**, also known as **parvo**, which is a life-threatening disease that causes bloody diarrhea, vomiting and immune system suppression. Dobermans and Rottweilers are particularly sensitive to this disease. If you have a purebred or mixed breed dog of one of these breeds, it is very important not to miss or be late for any DHLP-P vaccinations in order to ensure that your dog remains protected against parvo.

Rabies Vaccine: The rabies vaccine protects your dog from rabies, which is a disease of the nervous system that is transmitted by a bite from an affected animal. Humans can get rabies.

The rabies vaccination is required by law for *all* dogs.

The first vaccination must be boosted after one year. **In Ohio, your dog is required to get a rabies vaccination every three years after the first booster.** If your dog travels to a state where rabies is a greater concern, we may recommend yearly vaccination.

With each rabies vaccination, you will receive a certificate to keep as proof of vaccination. Clermont Animal Hospital can also provide a rabies tag free of charge that you can attach to your dog's collar. This tag has an identification number and our hospital's telephone number. We keep a database of all rabies identification numbers and owner information. If your pet should ever be lost while wearing this tag, anyone who finds your pet can report it to our hospital and we will help reunite you and your dog.

Bordatella Vaccine: The bordatella vaccination protects your dog from a disease known as kennel cough. While most cases of kennel cough can be treated easily with antibiotics, the disease can progress to a life-threatening pneumonia in a small percentage of cases. In addition, the cough associated with this disease can cause both the dog and the owner several sleepless nights before the antibiotics can control the infection.

While the bordatella vaccination is an optional part of your dog's vaccination program, most boarding kennels, training facilities and some groomers require it. Kennel cough is highly contagious and the can be spread through the air, so vaccination will benefit most dogs.

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Dog Parasites

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Parasites are living beings such as worms or insects that live on or inside your pet. They usually feed upon your pet, which can cause them to be uncomfortable, malnourished or even to die.

Intestinal Parasites

Intestinal parasites, such as whipworms, hookworms, tapeworms and giardia, are a very common problem in adult dogs. If your dog is from an animal shelter, he or she is at a higher risk.

Symptoms

Symptoms of intestinal parasites include vomiting and diarrhea, poor condition of fur, and in extreme cases, death. However, some dogs with parasites do not show these symptoms. Just because you do not see the worms does not mean that they are not there. It is important to realize these worms live in the intestines, so you will NOT see them in the stool of your dog unless they are dead or dying.

Diagnosis—Fecal Analysis

We recommend a routine fecal examination for all new dogs, and then examinations twice a year thereafter. For adult dogs, we use a sophisticated test involving a series of steps including centrifugation and flotation. This provides much more accurate results than the simple flotation technique that most vets use. Please bring a small amount of stool with you when you bring your dog for vaccinations. If you have several dogs sharing the same yard, only one stool sample is needed. It is best if the sample is less than 24 hours old.

The fecal analysis shows if there are intestinal parasite eggs or single-cell parasites called giardia in your dog's stool. This is important to know because some parasites can infect humans when the eggs are being shed in the stool. It is also important to know that your dog can re-infect himself or infect other dogs when eggs are being passed. Eggs can survive in your yard for long periods (in some cases, up to 5 years) if stools are not properly disposed of. For this reason, it is important to pick up all stools promptly and properly dispose of them if your dog has parasite eggs in the stool.

Also, please note that just because your dog's fecal analysis was negative (no worm eggs) at a previous visit, it does not mean that these parasites are not present. Due to their complex life cycle, worms may be present without shedding eggs. It is important to have at least three negative stool samples before we can assure you that your dog is free of all parasites.

Can intestinal parasites affect my family?

It is important for you to know if your dog is currently shedding eggs in his or her stool so you can protect your family. Humans, particularly children, can be infected with certain worms by ingesting the egg or larva (baby worm). This is only a concern if there are eggs in your dog's stool. Prompt removal of all stool and proper hygiene can easily prevent any chance of infection.

If your dog is actively shedding parasite eggs, it is very important to be as clean as possible in dealing with your dog. **It is also very important to pick up ALL stools to prevent accidental infection of a family member or re-infection of your dog.** If the stool is left in the yard, eggs can survive in for more than a year and can contaminate soil even after the stool has degraded.

Heartworms

Heartworms are a deadly disease in dogs. Dogs living in Eastern Cincinnati and Clermont County are at higher risk than dogs in other parts of the Tri-state area.

How do dogs get heartworms?

Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes. When a mosquito bites a dog with heartworms, it picks up microfilaria (baby heartworms). The mosquito can then spread the disease by biting a healthy dog. The microfilaria travel through the blood vessels to the heart and lungs where they develop into the adult worms. If untreated, the adult worms will eventually cause heart failure, killing your dog.

Diagnosis

We can do a simple blood test to determine whether your dog has heartworms. The doctors at Clermont Animal Hospital recommend this test for all new dogs and with a repeat test every year. This is particularly important if you ever miss a month of preventative or if you are more than a week late in giving it to your dog. This test is only able to detect mature heartworms, and therefore is not accurate until 4-6 months after your dog was infected by the mosquito. For this reason, it is possible for your dog to be infected but still test negative.

After two negative tests in a row, we can start testing every other year, but **ONLY** if you meet the following criteria:

- Your dog is on prevention year round
- You have not missed any doses in the last two years
- You have not been more than a week late in giving any dose in the last two years

If you do not meet one or more of the above criteria, yearly testing is still recommended. Heartworm prevention cannot be prescribed if your dog has not been tested according to these recommendations.

Remember, heartworms kill dogs. Early detection is very important.

Prevention

While heartworm disease can be treated, treatment is both expensive and dangerous, with long periods of confinement required. In addition, there is often irreversible damage done to the dog's heart and lungs that occurs before the worms are even detected.

Fortunately, we have very effective medications to prevent this disease. **Year-round heartworm prevention is recommended.** The doctors at Clermont Animal Hospital currently recommend either Trifexis® or Interceptor® on a monthly basis for heartworm preventative

Interceptor® is a monthly tablet that prevents future intestinal parasite infections, in addition to heartworms. This is a chewable tablet that should be given with a full meal (vomiting may occur if given on an empty stomach).

Fleas and Ticks

Many dogs have a problem with fleas. If you notice just one or two fleas on your dog, chances are there are many more in your house and yard. Fleas spend less than 15 percent of their time on the animal. The rest of the time is spent in the surrounding environment. For this reason, for every flea you see, there may be six more hiding in your carpet or yard. In addition, fleas reproduce very quickly. A small number of adult fleas can generate hundreds of thousands of fleas within a few months.

Ticks are most common in mid-to-late spring and early summer, but can be a problem from early spring to late fall. Animals that run through tall grass, weeds, or wooded areas are at risk. Tick control is important because ticks can carry a number of diseases that can affect both your pet and your family.

Prevention

Because it is easier to prevent a flea or tick infestation rather than eliminate it once it occurs, we recommend using monthly flea preventative for all dogs. Currently we recommend **Simparica®** for routine monthly protection against fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes. There is currently no product that will provide adequate protection from fleas, ticks and heartworms; however, if ticks are not a concern, we recommend **Trifexis®** to provide flea, heartworm, and intestinal parasite control. This is the newest and strongest prevention on the market at this time. We have other products available, as well. Our doctors and staff will be happy to help you choose a product that best fits your pet's needs.

Treatment

Clermont Animal Hospital offers a variety of products for flea and tick control. Because each situation is unique, our staff will work with you to suggest the product or combination of products that will most quickly and effectively eliminate your flea or tick problem. The products we carry are much more effective than anything you can buy from a pet store or grocery store. Most products you get from a pet or grocery store only treat fleas in the adult stage and have limited (if any) effectiveness against ticks. It is important to remember that only 5 percent of the fleas are in the adult stage, and immature fleas will survive and develop into adults even when these flea treatments are used. For every adult flea, there may be close to 100 immature fleas. Not all life stages can be killed, so once your dog is infested with fleas, it may take several months or more to totally eliminate the problem.

Once fleas have been spotted, it is necessary to treat them aggressively for several months in a row to ensure that all immature fleas have been eliminated. Our staff can help you create a customized

ensure that all immature heads have been eliminated. Our staff can help you create a customized treatment plan for successful treatment of both your pet and the environment. Ask us for further information.

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Spaying or Neutering Your Dog

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Spaying females prevents unwanted pregnancy and eliminates behavior changes that occur when your dog is in heat (having her period). Spays also prevent certain health problems such as some cancers and life-threatening uterine infections.

Neutering male dogs prevents them from getting a female dog pregnant, and it may help to eliminate behavioral problems such as roaming and aggression. Neuters also remove the risk of certain cancers.

When should I get my dog spayed or neutered?

Because your dog is already an adult, he or she may already be spayed/neutered. If this is the case, please disregard this section. If your dog was not spayed or neutered, it is important that you have this procedure performed as soon as possible.

Adult dogs can be spayed and neutered at any age. Pre-surgical blood screening is recommended before anesthesia for all dogs over one year old and is strongly advised for all dogs over 4 years old.

Dogs who are in heat or are pregnant have a higher risk of problems related to this surgery. There is also an increased cost associated with spaying these dogs. Please be sure to discuss this with our veterinarians if you are considering having a spay done during these times.

Are these procedures safe?

Spays and neuters are very common surgical procedures. In young, healthy animals, the risk of complications is very low. Our experienced doctors and staff take every precaution to ensure your pet's safety before, during and after surgery.

Your dog will be in good hands at Clermont Animal Hospital. Our surgical suite offers the most up-to-date equipment to monitor your dog while he or she is anesthetized. All patients are monitored with a heart/respiratory monitor, so that any changes in heart rate or respiration are detected immediately. Other sophisticated monitoring equipment is also available should complications arise. We use water circulating heating pads during surgery and hot air blankets after surgery to ensure that

your dog's core body temperature does not drop too low. The injectable and gas anesthetics we use are the safest available. This helps ensure that your pet has a quick recovery, and it allows us to do spays and neuters as outpatient procedures for most animals. This way your pet will not have to spend a night away from home.

Despite having the latest technology and all of the precautions we take to ensure safe anesthesia, every anesthetic procedure has a small risk associated with it. Most anesthetic complications occur when underlying liver, kidney or heart problems exist but cannot be detected on physical exam. These complications can be minimized by performing recommended pre-surgical blood screenings to aid in detecting underlying problems before anesthesia.

Will the surgery be painful?

Pain management is an important concern to our hospital staff. We make the smallest incision possible to decrease the amount of post-operative soreness. We also routinely prescribe anti-inflammatory medications to provide pain relief for your dog after he or she dog goes home. Most animals experience minimal discomfort and recover very quickly from routine spay and neuter procedures.

Training and Socialization

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Training and socializing your dog is another important step in building your relationship with him or her. Training teaches your dog to follow your commands to do things you want, like come, sit or stop doing something she shouldn't be doing. Your dog may already know some basic commands or may have had no prior training. It is important to start training right away, especially if your dog doesn't already know the basics. Only a few basics are covered in this section. If you need more information on training your dog, please request our Puppy Visit Two: Training and Socialization Handout.

Getting to Know Your Dog

It is important for your dog to feel comfortable in your home and to trust you and your family. Many dogs from shelters and rescue organizations have had bad experiences and less than ideal care. It is important to be patient with them, as it may take awhile for them to learn to trust you. Below are some tips for you and your family to follow to help build good trusting relationships:

- ❑ NEVER cause your dog pain as punishment (beating, kicking) no matter how mad you are! This will lead to an aggressive, fearful dog that does not trust you.
- ❑ Be sure to supervise all young children around the dog so that they do not hurt the dog.
- ❑ Make sure that all members of your family spend time with your new dog and participate in all care and training. This way your dog learns to love and respect all members of your family.
- ❑ Have friends and neighbors play with your dog and offer treats and praise. This will help your dog become comfortable around other people.
- ❑ Play with your dog's ears, feet and mouth. It is important that your dog learns to allow you to do this so that later you can trim nails, brush teeth and administer medication. Be sure to make this fun with lots of praise, treats and play.
- ❑ Hold your dog in various positions: on his back, high in the air, etc. This helps to build trust.

What commands should I teach my dog?

For all new commands that you want to teach your dog, it is important to choose a one-word voice command and a simple hand command. Remember to be consistent—make sure that all family members use the same command every time. The first commands your dog should learn are “sit” and “no.” If your dog understands these commands you can teach him or her the other basic obedience commands: “down,” “come,” “stay” and “heel.”

Should I take my dog to obedience class?

If you are lucky, your dog may already know these commands and just need a little review. If your dog is already well-trained in obedience, formal obedience classes are probably unnecessary.

However, many adult dogs placed in second homes have little training. Unless you have a lot of experience in training dogs, we recommend enrolling these dogs in an obedience class. While dogs

can learn basic obedience and “new tricks” at any age (even old dogs), adult dogs are usually more difficult to train than puppies. Adult dogs do have the advantage of a longer attention span, and, in some cases, a calmer disposition—both advantages to training an adult.

How do I choose a training facility?

Many people choose a training facility based on location, cost or days and times that programs are offered. While these must be considered, it is also important to find out about the curriculum of the program, the experience of the trainer, and the facilities. Here are some suggestions to help find the right program for you and your dog:

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- ❑ If possible, talk to other people who have attended classes through the program(s) you are considering.

 - ❑ Most facilities will also allow you to observe a class before signing up. This allows you to see the facilities and observe how the trainer teaches his or her classes and interacts with the participants.

 - ❑ If you are planning to do more than one training program with your dog, it is important to find out about what options are offered for more advanced training at that facility.

 - ❑ You should also be sure to check into program policies for required vaccinations; making up missed classes; and discounts for rescue dogs, multiple dog families, or taking multiple classes.
-

Does Clermont Animal Hospital recommend any facilities?

While the staff at Clermont Animal Hospital is not familiar with every training program in the area, we are happy to share our experiences and pass on comments from other clients regarding various training facilities and programs. Brochures for several local programs are available in our waiting room display area. Information for select area programs is listed below. You can also look under “Dog & Cat Training” in the Yellow Pages for additional facilities and programs.

Cincinnati Canine Companion Centers

420 Wards Corner Rd
Loveland, OH 45140
513-489-6239 www.cincinnati-canine.com

Clermont County Dog Training Club, Inc.

6058 Kells Ln.
Milford, OH 45150
513-625-4337 www.ccdtc.org

Blue Ribbon Dog Training Academy

3548 Jackson Pike
Williamsburg, OH 45176
513-703-8301 www.BlueRibbonDogTraining.com

Socialization

Depending on the prior experiences of your new dog, he or she may already be well socialized. In many cases, however, adult dogs placed in second homes often carry “emotional baggage.” That is to say that due to prior experiences or lack of proper socialization early in life, they may be uncomfortable, scared or unsure how to react to a variety of situations. These dogs need special attention in the area of socialization. Do not assume that your new dog will react as you expect to new people, animals, or situations. Until you and your dog know each other well, watch carefully for signs of fear or aggressive behavior in all new situations.

There are three main components to socialization:

- Socialization with people
- Socialization with other animals
- Environmental exploration (exploration of places and surroundings)

Socialization with People

If your dog seems uncomfortable around people (particularly strangers), it is important that you make

an effort to expose him or her to as many people as possible *under controlled settings*. Keep your dog on a leash to maintain control and have new people approach slowly. Remember to be patient and reassuring. Many dogs who were never socialized as puppies or who suffered past abuse will take a long time to become comfortable with new people.

Children: Your new dog may have come from a family with young children or may have no prior experience with children. Until you know how your new dog will react in all situations with children, **do not trust your new dog alone with children**. A dog may seem laid back and friendly with you, but may try to assert dominance over children. Dogs may also nip, growl or show outright aggression if a child is irritating them. Do not assume your dog knows that such behavior is inappropriate. Closely supervise all interactions between dogs and children.

Friends and Strangers: It is also very important that your dog meet as many friends, neighbors, delivery persons and other people whom he or she may interact with as early as possible. Each time your dog meets a new person, give the person a small treat to offer to the dog. Encourage each person to pet, talk to or play with your dog for a few minutes. Be sure to be near by to reassure your dog if he or she seems scared or uncomfortable. Be sure to keep interactions as positive as possible.

Socialization with Other Animals

Do not assume that a dog who is friendly with people will also be friendly with animals. Introduce your new dog to other animals with caution. Some dogs will try to assert dominance over other dogs. Outright aggression is also possible. Dogs who have not grown up with cats and other small animals may identify these animals as prey species.

When introducing your new dog to other animals, proceed slowly. Keep both animals under control and allow them to interact from a distance. If neither shows signs of fear or aggression, allow them to sniff each other while maintaining control. Off-leash play sessions should be closely supervised until you are sure that both animals will get along well.

Environmental Exploration

An important part of dog socialization is exposing him or her to as many objects and situations as possible. If your dog did not have a positive experience with things in the past, he or she may now be fearful. Try to identify those things that frighten your new dog and work on desensitizing your dog to frightening situations.

- Expose your dog to strollers, crutches, bikes, rollerblades and other such objects.
- Take your dog for rides in the car. If you only put your dog in the car to take him or her for grooming and vet visits, he or she will learn to fear the car.
- Once your dog has learned obedience basics, take him or her everywhere you can. The more experiences and opportunities you provide for your dog the more confident he will be when in new situations.
- Noisy things are particularly scary for many dogs. Expose your dog to vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, whistles, thunder and other loud noises in a controlled setting.

If your dog shows fear or aggression to any of the above situations, take the following steps:

- Act in a relaxed manner, stroke your dog, and offer gentle words to help calm your dog.
- Once your dog is calm and relaxed, give praise and a treat.
- Reprimand barking, growling or other aggressive behavior directed at the noise or object.

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Home Health Care

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Routine Examination

It is important to examine your dog at least once a week for any signs or illness or injury. Routine

examinations at home will help you identify any medical problems early, when they are easiest to treat. It will also decrease the stress of veterinary visits, as your pet will be used to being examined. Finally, it will make it easier for you to examine injuries and other problems when they occur.

Below are some tips to get your dog used to being examined:

- Do not give up if your pet wiggles or tries to get away. Be firm but gentle.
 - When your dog stands still and allows you to examine him or her, give plenty of praise.
 - Give a treat at the very end of the examination.
 - Start out slowly, with just a quick examination:
 - Look in the ears.
 - Lift the lips.
 - Run your hands over his or her body.
 - As your dog becomes accustomed to being examined, perform a more thorough examination:
 - Look in the eyes for any signs of redness or discharge.
 - Examine the ears for any sign of wax or odor.
 - Open the mouth and look at the teeth and gums for signs of tartar and gingivitis.
 - Rub your fingers along the gums so that your dog starts to get used to dental care.
 - Feel the abdomen for any masses or signs of discomfort.
 - Run your hands over all parts of the body feeling for lumps or signs of injury.
 - Look for any signs of fleas or dry skin.
 - Pick up each foot and examine the pads and nails
 - If you note any changes or abnormalities during your weekly exam, please call for an appointment.
 - Each time you examine your dog, follow the same routine. This makes acceptance easier and quicker, and it allows you to perform a quick thorough examination.
-

Dental Care

Why is Dental Care Important?

Just as you need to brush your teeth everyday to prevent plaque and tartar buildup, your dog's teeth need routine daily cleanings as well. **Plaque** is a soft, sticky substance made up of food debris, saliva and bacteria that can be removed easily by brushing. However, once plaque remains on the teeth for more than 24 hours, it starts to harden into a chalky, mineralized substance called **tartar** (this is the same process that occurs in humans).

As tartar builds up, it leads to a problem called **periodontal disease**. Unlike cavities in humans, this does not affect the tooth itself. Instead it causes inflammation of the gums (**gingivitis**) and a breakdown of the structures securing the tooth (which leads to tooth loss). As periodontal disease progresses, it can cause pain, decreased appetite and irritability.

Because tartar and plaque contain huge numbers of bacteria, they can lead to more serious systemic infections including:

- Endocarditis (infection of the heart valves)
 - Hepatitis (infection of the liver)
 - Nephritis (infection of the kidney)
-

If that is not enough to get you to brush your dog's teeth, consider this: 95 percent of "bad breath" in dogs is caused by periodontal disease. If you cuddle or sleep with your dog, bad breath is the last thing you want your dog to develop!

If your new dog already has tartar buildup and/or other signs of dental disease, a professional dental cleaning may be recommended by our doctors. While brushing will decrease future tartar build-up, it will not improve an existing problem.

What happens during a professional cleaning?

All professional dental cleanings require anesthesia. For this reason, we recommend pre-dental blood

screenings to make sure that your pet doesn't have any liver, kidney or electrolyte issues and is not showing any signs of systemic infection related to the tartar buildup. With every dental cleaning, we:

- Use an ultrasonic cleaner to remove all plaque and tartar.
- Check the depth of any areas where the gum has started to detach from the tooth, and determine if the tooth needs to be extracted or if we can perform a root plane procedure to potentially save the tooth.
- Look at each tooth for defects such as fractures, chips or defects.
- Polish all teeth using a fluoride polish to decrease future plaque accumulation.

Do I need to brush my dog's teeth every day?

Plaque and tartar accumulate on a daily basis. Occasional brushings are not enough. While brushing your dog's teeth once or twice a week may be better than nothing, it will not stop plaque and tartar buildup.

Daily teeth brushing is one of the best things you can do for your dog's general health and well being. Not only will it reduce the incidence of all of the problems described above, it will also decrease the frequency of professional dental cleanings. These require full anesthesia, which always carries a small risk to your pet and can become costly if frequent cleanings are necessary.

Further Information

If you need further information on brushing your dog's teeth or on professional dental cleanings, the doctors and staff at Clermont Animal Hospital will be happy to discuss these topics with you. More detailed handouts on these are also available.

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Nutrition and Weight Control

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Nutrition

What type of food should I feed my dog?

- As a general rule, you should switch to an **adult formula diet** around your dog's first birthday.
- Once your dog is seven years old, a **senior formula dog food** is recommended.
- **Pregnant and nursing dogs** should be fed puppy formula food.
- Overweight dogs should be fed a **reduced calorie formula diet**.

What brand of food should I buy?

Because your dog's food must provide for all of his or her nutritional needs and energy requirements, it is important to buy the highest quality food that you can afford to feed him or her. Clermont Animal Hospital recommends Hill's Science Diet, Taste and Desire, and Purina products, but there are many other

Hospital recommends Hill's Science Diet, Iams and Purina products, but there are many other quality foods on the market.

When choosing a brand of food, be sure to look for the AAFCO (American Association of Feed Control Officials) approval label on the bag to ensure that the food meets all nutritional standards. If you would like further information on choosing a diet, our staff will be happy to help you.

Is it okay to change brands of foods?

It is important to choose one brand and type of food rather than to randomly buy whatever is on sale or most convenient. This is because changing foods can upset your dog's stomach and intestines.

Any time you decide to introduce a new food to your dog, be sure to reserve some of the old food for a transition period. Mix the new food in gradually, increasing the amount of new food and decreasing the amount of old food each day. Most dogs will tolerate new foods well with a four to five day transition period.

Watch your dog carefully for any signs of intolerance during the transition (decreased appetite, diarrhea, etc.). If you notice these signs, slow down the rate at which you are introducing the new food and lengthen the transition period to seven - 14 days.

Can I feed my dog "people food" and treats?

In general, it is not a good idea to feed your dog "people food." Humans and dogs have different nutritional and energy requirements, making it difficult to provide a balanced diet that incorporates a large portion of "people food."

Even using human food for treats is not a good idea. Once a dog learns to expect handouts, begging and occasionally food snatching becomes a problem. Also, human foods are often high-calorie treats, which can contribute to obesity. In addition, many human foods can cause health problems in dogs including upset stomach, diarrhea, vomiting and pancreatitis.

Treats produced and marketed specifically for dogs are preferable to human food. Larger treats can be broken into bite-sized pieces for training and extra enjoyment. You will find that your dog will be more content with smaller treats given more frequently than with larger treats given less often. If your dog is on a special diet, reserving a few kibbles to give as treats is often enough to satisfy your dog's treat cravings.

Weight Control

Keeping your dog in the ideal weight range is probably the best thing you can do for his or her health. Overweight dogs are much more likely than trim dogs to develop a variety of problems, including arthritis/joint problems and diabetes. While these are usually problems of older animals, good dietary habits must start in young dogs.

How much should I feed my dog?

The most important aspect of weight control is the amount of food you feed your dog. If at least 90 percent of your dog's caloric intake comes from dog food, the feeding guidelines on the food bag are a good starting point in determining how much to feed your dog. Keep in mind that these guidelines are tailored to the needs of the average healthy dog. Once your dog is spayed or neutered, his or her caloric requirements will probably decrease by 25 - 35 percent. It is also important to realize that if your dog is very athletic and energetic or very inactive, you may need to adjust the amount of food you provide.

How often should I feed my dog?

- Adult dogs can be fed one to two times, a day depending on owner preference.
 - "Free-choice" feeding (keeping food out all day) is fine as long as you only put out the daily food amount and no more
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In addition to controlling the amount of dog food fed, limiting calorie intake from treats and encouraging an adequate exercise program are also important in maintaining ideal weight and body

encouraging an adequate exercise program are also important in maintaining ideal weight and body condition.

Using body condition to determine if your dog is eating the right amount

Weight varies greatly among breeds and with body structure. Body condition is a much more accurate way to determine if your dog is eating the right amount. Dogs who are in ideal body condition have a clearly defined, tucked waist. If you run your hands over the rib cage of these dogs, you should be able to easily count every rib, but you should not be able to see the ribs looking at the dog.

If your dog is starting to lose his or her waist and developing a fat pad making it more difficult to feel the ribs, then it is time to decrease his or her caloric intake. This can be done by decreasing the amount you feed your dog or switching to a lower calorie diet (most pet food brands have a light or weight control formula).

If you can ever see your dog's ribs, then you are not meeting your dog's energy needs and should increase the amount you are feeding your dog. Monitor your dog's body condition throughout his or her life, and adjust the number of calories you are feeding as is necessary to maintain ideal body condition.

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Preventive Care for All Life Stages

Clermont Animal Hospital Inc.



This section is intended to provide an overview of the typical recommended medical care for each stage in your dog's life. These are generalized recommendations for all dogs. It is important to discuss specific recommendations for your pet to ensure that your dog receives the best individualized care possible.

Puppy Stage (Birth to 1 Year)

Recommended Preventive Care

- Vaccinations monthly until 20 weeks of age as scheduled (See Visit One: Puppy Care)
 - Monthly fecal examinations and preventative de-wormings until 16 weeks of age
 - Monthly heartworm prevention year-round with flea and/or tick prevention as needed
 - Baseline blood panel (usually as pre-surgical blood work for spay/neuter)
 - Microchip placement and registration
 - Spay/Neuter once all baby teeth have fallen out (unless animal is to be used for breeding)
 - Daily teeth-brushing at home is encouraged once adult teeth begin to emerge
 - A daily vitamin supplement is recommended until your pet is one year old.
 - Weekly at-home examination of your pet can help you identify problems before they become severe. An examination should be scheduled whenever you discover a problem. (See page 11)
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Special Health Considerations

- Parasites are a common problem in this age group, hence the need for frequent fecal testing and monthly preventative treatment for intestinal parasites, heartworms, fleas and ticks.
-

- Genetic issues present at birth are most commonly detected in this age group. These vary by breed, so be sure to talk with our veterinarians about what conditions may be possible in your pet. These include retained testicles (males only) and hernias (either sex) that should be corrected at the time of spay/neuter.
- Retained deciduous teeth (baby teeth that don't fall out) are a common problem. Baby teeth are not normal in puppies over six months old. These should be pulled at the time of spay/neuter.
- Upper respiratory infections, diarrhea, vomiting, and low blood sugar are common in this age group.

Young Adult Stage (1-6 Years; Giant Breeds 1-4 Years)

Recommended Preventive Care

- Vaccinations: DHLPP and Bordatella yearly; Rabies every three years after first booster
- Lyme's Disease Vaccination for dogs traveling to Lyme's endemic areas
- Twice yearly fecal examinations; twice yearly worming if not on intestinal parasite prevention
- Yearly heartworm test (required by law for purchasing heartworm prevention medication)
- Monthly heartworm prevention year-round with flea and/or tick prevention as needed
- Yearly intraocular pressure Tonopen® test for glaucoma in susceptible breeds.
- Yearly Schirmer's Tear Test for breeds susceptible to KCS (dry eye).
- Professional dental cleaning as needed (Usually every 1-3 years starting at age 3-4 years)
- Daily teeth-brushing at home is encouraged. These can minimize the need for and decrease the frequency of professional dental cleanings.
- Weekly at-home examination of your pet can help you identify problems before they become severe. An examination should be scheduled whenever you discover a problem.

Special Health Considerations

- Dogs with a propensity toward obesity usually become overweight during this stage in life. Be sure to monitor your pet's body condition and adjust feeding and exercise to maintain a healthy weight. *See page 14 for more information.*
- Dogs of this age should be on a high quality adult dog food.
- Allergies are most commonly diagnosed during this life stage if they are going to be a problem for your pet. These include food, flea, and environmental allergies.
- Ear infections, often secondary to allergies or water in the ears, are a common problem in this age group.
- Dental tartar and gingivitis commonly become a problem around three to four years of age. Our veterinarians will check your pet's teeth during each regular examination and recommend a professional dental cleaning. *See page 12 for more information.*

Mature Adult Stage (7-9 Years; Giant Breeds 5-7 Years)

Recommended Preventive Care

***All preventive care recommendations from the Young Adult section
PLUS the following:***

- Urine chemistry—yearly
- Routine blood screen—yearly
- Twice yearly physical exams
- Prostate examine (unneutered male dogs only)

Special Health Considerations

- As animals age, health problems become more common. Liver disease, kidney disease, diabetes, Cushing's Disease, urinary tract infections, bladder stones, and thyroid problems are all common in this age group. Early detection allows us to address these problems before they start to make your dog feel and act sick. For this reason, we recommend yearly urine and blood screens. These screens check for a wide variety of problems and ensure your pet's ongoing good health. Twice yearly examinations are also an important part of early detection.
- Arthritis often starts to be a problem with dogs in this age group. This may lead to decreased

activity, trouble with stairs, stiffness, lameness, and/or pain. If you suspect your dog is developing arthritis, talk to one of our doctors about your dog's condition.

- Heart problems become more common in dogs in this age group. If your dog develops a heart murmur, an EKG (a test to look at the electrical activity of the heart) will be recommended. Breeds prone to heart disease including Boxers, Great Danes and King Charles Cavaliers should have annual screening EKGs starting at age seven, even if they don't have a murmur.
- Cancer becomes a concern with this age group. It is important to check your pet thoroughly on your weekly at-home exams for any new lumps, bumps, or masses. If you discover a new growth, contact us immediately to determine whether prompt examination is warranted or if it is all right to monitor the new mass at home and have it examined at your next scheduled visit.
- Prostatic enlargement is common in unneutered male dogs in this age group. If your dog is unneutered and finished with his breeding duties, consider having him neutered to prevent this problem. If your dog remains unneutered, we need to start doing annual rectal prostate exams at the age of seven to detect changes in the prostate before they become a problem.
- At this age, your dog should be eating a Senior formula food. Nutraceuticals and food supplements are often helpful in maintaining good health for dogs in this age group. All dogs should be on a multi-vitamin daily. Other supplements such as omega-3-fatty acids and Dasaquin® will be recommended based on your pet's individual needs.

Senior Adult Stage (10+ Years; Giant Breeds 8+ Years)

Recommended Preventive Care

All preventive care recommendations from the Young Adult AND Mature Adult sections,

PLUS the following:

- Urinalysis—yearly
- Blood pressure—once; repeat as warranted
- EKG—once; repeat as warranted (yearly for susceptible breeds)
- Chest X-ray—once; repeat every 2-3 years

Special Health Considerations

- Deafness is a very common problem in this age group. Most dogs start to lose some of their hearing acuity beginning around age ten. More than half of all dogs are showing some degree of deafness by their fifteenth birthday.
- Heart problems now become a concern for all breeds, not just susceptible breeds. An EKG and chest X-ray are recommended at the age of ten to screen for heart problems. By catching heart issues before they lead to full-blown heart failure, we are able to use diet and medication to control the progression of heart-related issues.
- The immune system is not as strong as it once was. Making sure vaccinations are given on time and taking care not to expose your dogs to infection become important at this age. Urinary tract infections are very common, so a full screening urinalysis is recommended at least annually.
- High blood pressure is common in this age group, either as a primary problem or linked to other disease processes. Unchecked high blood pressure can lead to damage to the heart, kidneys and other organs. Because your pet cannot complain about the headache, hot flashes, and dizziness that signal this condition in humans, it is important to check the blood pressure in dogs in this age group.
- Incontinence is a common problem in senior dogs, especially females. Sometimes this can be complicated by a urinary tract infection. If your dog seems to “leak” urine, it is important to start with a urinalysis to screen for infection. Hormonal therapy may correct the problem if there is no infection present.
- End-of-life issues need to be considered in this age group. No matter how well you care for your dog, no animal can live forever. These will vary greatly from pet to pet, but our doctors will help you ensure that your pet is comfortable during the twilight years of life.

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