



Guidelines for Your Dog's Health Care

1. For young pups make sure you spend a lot of time **socializing** your pet, to handling different parts of their body, opening the mouth, inspecting and touching teeth, etc. You should socialize him/her to different situations and other species in a non-threatening, positive, fun manner and reinforce positive responses with liberal use of treats and praise. Avoid focusing on negatives and using punishment or harsh tones. The key period of socialization is under 16 weeks in dogs.
2. We advise annual **examinations** until senior years (most breeds over 10 years of age) or when your pet is on chronic medications when twice yearly is more appropriate.
3. As a **puppy** we advise a **stool analysis** every 3 months for the first year, which may increase the frequency of deworming needed or indicate a need to change food or medication types. After the first fecal, all others for the first year are half price at any frequency. For **adults** once yearly is adequate until older years when annual urinalysis would be more helpful.
4. **Deworming** in northern climates is most important during the summer months where dog parks are places for re-infestation. Southern climates have year-round problems. Adult animals develop some resistance to parasitism. We advise monthly deworming of pups until they are at least 1 year of age due to cycling larval stages in pups, lack of resistance and increased risk of re-infestation. Dogs should be dewormed at least monthly from June 15th to Nov.15th annually which includes heartworm coverage as well.
5. **Dental care** should start at an early age by inspecting under the lips, touching teeth and getting the pet comfortable with head handling. Brushing the outer surfaces once or twice daily with a tooth brush, with or without pet toothpaste, is highly advised to remove soft plaque before it hardens to tartar. You can prevent tartar by providing daily soft chews like rawhides, but avoid bones, deer antler or other hard chews that can wear teeth or break them. Tartar can be chipped off before it goes under the gum line, but at this time it may indicate the need for a professional cleaning.
6. **Dental Program** The American Animal Hospital association advises the first dental cleaning before the pet is 2 years of age. An early dental allows for the opportunity to remove retained baby teeth, crowded or un-erupted teeth that lead to early periodontal disease. Our dental prices are at 75% of the OVMA guidelines in Ontario and we offer 30% off this price if the pet is less than 18 months of age. We give 30% off repeat dentals if done within 18 months of the last or before 3 years of age if the first was done anytime under 18 months of age. It is 43% of OVMA guidelines if combined with a spay or neuter.

7. **Nail Trimming.** Don't over-do it. If you cut too short your pet will experience pain and it will be very difficult to trim in the future. Cut in a parallel direction to the floor and only remove the hook that touches the floor. Use treats and one nail at a time to socialize and accustom your pet to it.
8. **Weight Control** is especially important in the first year. You should keep an indented abdomen and ribs you can easily feel with a little pressure from a flat hand. You should not be able to see the ribs or be able to palpate the ribs or spine with no pressure. Obesity has been linked to a number of medical conditions and should be avoided. Feed to maintain ideal body weight. Adjust type and quantity to different life stages and activity levels.
9. Should you have an emergency when our office is closed, we refer you to our sister practice the **Ottawa Animal Emergency and Specialty Hospital** at 1155 Lola St, **613-745-0123**. It is a daytime specialty center with neurologists, dental specialist, anesthesiology, and internal medicine, among other specialties, as well as an evening, weekend and holiday emergency hospital. During opening hours if your pet is sick and you can't get time to make an appointment we do take a limited number of **drop-off appointments**. If that fails we may be able to help you over the phone with a **phone consult**. We want to make sure we are there for you somehow should your pet need attention.
10. We advise **pet insurance** for at least the first 3 years of age. There are a number of companies to choose from. Excluding preventative medicine in the policy would lessen the costs. We may be able to offer a 1 month free trial pet insurance from Trupanion or Petsecure pending preexisting conditions and a normal examination.
11. We advise all animals be **spayed or neutered** to help control the pet over-population problem and to decrease the associated unnecessary euthanasia of healthy animals. There are medical and behavior reasons that support this recommendation. An early spay before the first heat prevents mammary cancers best, but young pet surgeries could potentially increase fear and aggressive tendencies later. Balancing these and other factors with specific breeds and dispositions, we currently advise sterilization between 5 to 18 months of age. By sterilizing at a later date it would make more sense to combine it with an early dentistry at the same time to prevent early periodontal disease and by correcting congenital problems and removing early plaque/tartar accumulations.
12. We suggest your dog have a **microchip implant**. This is a permanent rice sized marker that we inject under the skin above the shoulder blades. This is required now for international travel and is what city scans for if your dog becomes lost. We scan all new patients when they first come to our practice.
13. We advise **high quality nutrition** and that usually is related to price unfortunately. Puppy diet is advised until 12 months of age. Large breeds should receive large breed puppy food fed restricted to avoid excess weight

gain. Small breed dogs should eat a dental diet over 1 year of age as they have increased risk for dental disease and early tooth loss. We carry Royal Canin puppy diets, dental diets, vegetarian diets, hypoallergenic, weight loss, senior and other medical diets. Always have fresh water available for your dog.

14. We advise monitoring the inner workings of your pet by doing **wellness blood screens**. Although not mandatory we suggest doing the first blood screen before the first anesthetic procedure to screen for congenital problems. After that we suggest doing blood work every 3 years until your pet is 10 years of age. Afterward it is advised we do annual blood screens as disease are more common in senior years and the screen is mandatory before any anesthetics at this age. We often combine this test with heartworm testing in the spring.
15. **Heartworm, flea, tick and internal parasite prevention** are advised between June 15th and November 15th annually. Heartworm can be fairly inexpensive to prevent as it is a short season (mid-July to mid-Oct) and if started as a pup would not require pre-testing for the parasite that is transmitted by mosquitos and takes a minimum of 6-8 months to appear in the heart. If exposure has occurred then we require two years of testing to prove your pet is heartworm free and then there is no further testing if you do preventatives every year. Fleas are mostly a nuisance parasite that is easily treated with the new therapies, but it can be expensive if you have multiple dogs or multiple indoor cats that would also need treatment if your pet dog brings in fleas. Pets can have flea saliva allergies and they can transmit tapeworms. Ticks are increasingly more of a concern in the Ottawa area due to the transmission of Lyme's disease through deer ticks (Ixodes). It is harder and more costly to prevent this tick as the season is longer over all temperatures above 4 degrees Celsius (as early as April through late December). There is a vaccine for Lyme Disease if your pet is at risk (woody areas where deer roam in particular)
16. **Vaccinations** are still quite important for pets. Rabies vaccination is a requirement. The first rabies needs to be followed by the second in less than 12 months to allow for legal 3 year status. DHPP is considered core vaccination, while Leptospirosis, Lyme's disease and Kennel cough are considered non-core and are given pending your dog's individual exposure and travel. We try to give vaccines to a minimal level and spread out the vaccines so less are given per year. Many clients go off label if the exposure is minimal to prevent "over-vaccination". Pups need a series from 6-9 weeks to over 14 weeks of age, which usually mean 3 visits followed annually.
17. Your dog needs basic **positive reward based training** as a minimum. It is important you research facilities offering training to make sure it does not follow old school dominance, aversive punishment based training. This leads to more chance of fear and aggression in your dog. The Ottawa Canine School on St. Laurent Blvd. is one good school. Clicker training can be learned on-line and is an example of positive reward based training. The most

important commands are leave it, wait, sit, stay, come and down. You should reinforce with praise and treats all good behaviors you want repeated, distract away from the bad ones, prevent triggers for bad ones and give way more regular exercise than you think necessary. Pheromone collars (D.A.P) and sprays have been clinically proven to help dogs learn and retain information better than dogs not using them.

18. **We want to thank you for choosing Beechwood Animal Hospital for your pet's medical care.** We invite you to our website, www.beechwoodah.com, for further information, helpful links and a video tour of the facility. We have whole body and dental digital radiography, ultrasound, therapeutic laser therapy, in-hospital laboratory, surgical suite and dental station with 3 anesthetic machines. We have high quality monitors for anesthetics (Resp. CO2, BP, PO2, Temp, and ECG) and a Bair Hugger body warmer. **Our price policy** is to keep all our prices between 70 to 85% of the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association guidelines in Ontario.

Our mission statement is as follows:

To provide thorough, thoughtful, and tailored veterinary services for all animals entrusted to our care, with an emphasis on patient safety, comfort and well-being.

To communicate with our clients in a clear, concise, and respectful manner; to listen to concerns, and prioritize diagnostic and treatment options in a sincere and compassionate manner.

To empower and educate our entire team so we all contribute to the health of our patients; to promote and actively pursue continuing education for all staff members