THE NARRE WARREN VET

Puppy Handbook



the narre warren vet™

PUPPY HANDBOOK

Congratulations!



Congratulations on the arrival of your new family member!

We know that there are many challenges that come with the addition of a new pet - that's why we've put together a new puppy handbook outlining the basics of pupy care.

If you have any questions about your new puppy, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

Phone (03) 9704 6463
Email: nurses@narrevet.com.au

or visit us in person at 459 Princes Hwy, Narre Warren, VIC

PUPPY HANDBOOK

Coming Home

From Breeder to home

The transition from breeder to home for a new puppy can be extremely stressful. They have lost the comfort of mum, dad, siblings, and even their handler, and the safety and familiarity of their home. It is essential that they receive comfort, guidance, and support throughout this process.

Adaptil

Veterinarians commonly recommend a spray or plug-in diffuser called Adaptil, which helps puppies to feel comfortable and relax in stressful situations. Adaptil contains a synthetic pheromone that only dogs can smell. Adaptil replicates the dog appeasing pheromone, which is secreted through the mother's milk. The appeasing pheromone is the reason puppies are seen to be ‘sleepy’ or calm after a milk meal. For this reason, it is a smell that puppies already recognize, which can comfort and reassure them during times of transition in a new environment and family. Adaptil can also be used during the car ride from the breeder to home.



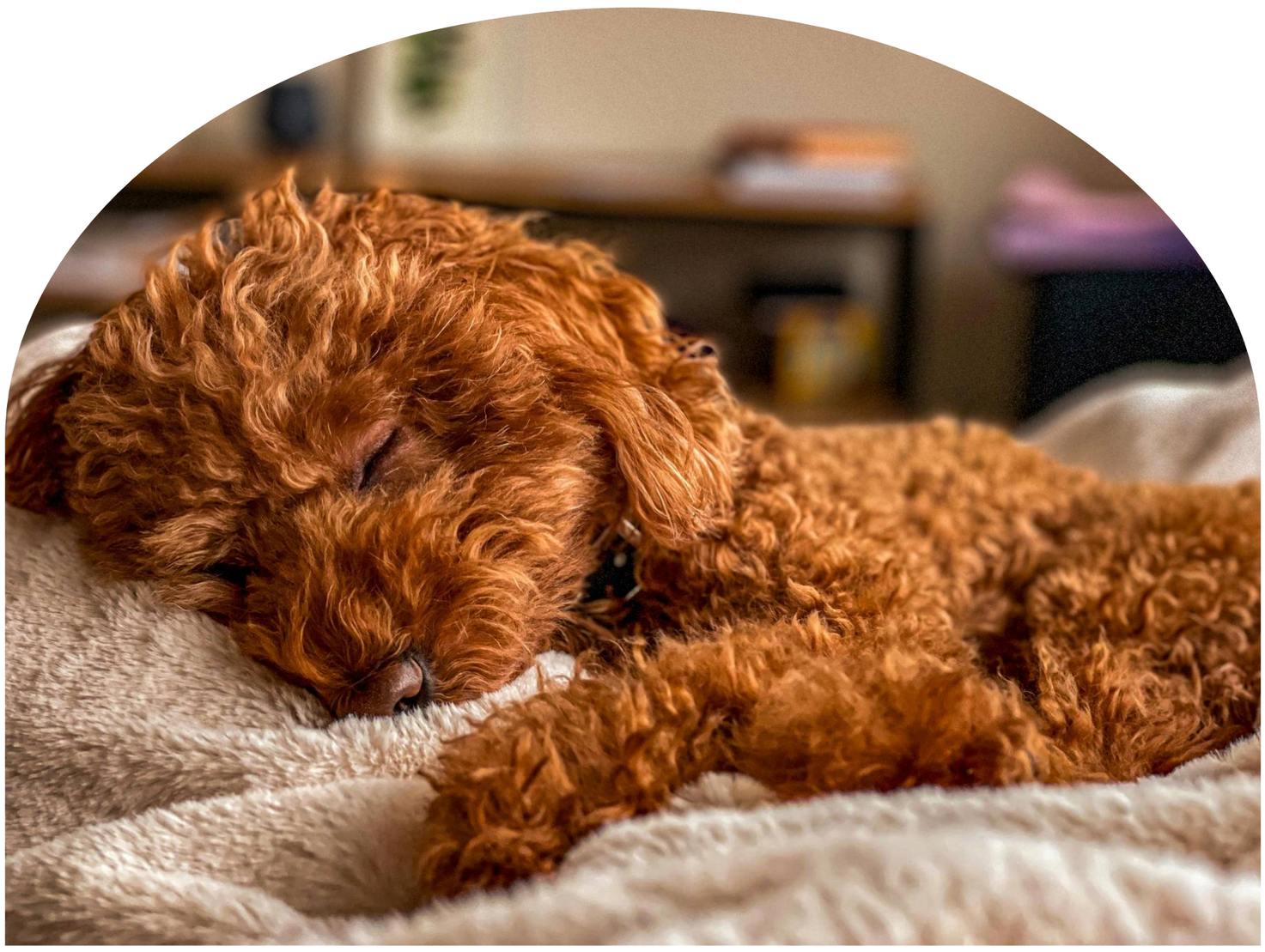
PUPPY HANDBOOK

Settling in

First nights

Puppies will feel lonely and will miss the comfort and familiarity of their parents and siblings during the night. It is quite common for puppies to cry and whimper when they are left alone for the first few nights or even the first few weeks.

There are a few things we can do to help them settle in.
Adaptil should be used as a diffuser in the room that the puppy is sleeping in to help reduce anxiety and stress.
A puppy's bedroom should be set up with a warm, comfortable sleeping area that includes a bed and blanket. Something like an old t-shirt or pillowcase that has your smell can also be placed in the bed to help sleep.
A playpen can be used to confine your puppy overnight. You can also crate train your puppy; however, this will often take a couple of weeks to do properly.



PUPPY HANDBOOK

Settling in

When preparing for bedtime, it is important that we don't just feed puppy and then put them away. Puppies need time to work off their energy as well. It is a good idea to feed them a few hours before bedtime, then give them time to digest. A few hours prior to sleeping should be spent with training, playing, and bonding. After play time, we then start to calm our puppy down and put them to bed.

We are now down to the hardest part. If your puppy cries, don't go straight to cuddling them and petting them; wait a while to see if they'll settle. Otherwise, our puppy might learn that crying will get them attention.

It is recommended that the puppy's sleeping area not be in your bedroom, as this encourages dependency, which can lead to separation anxiety. We also should never use the puppy's sleeping area as a time-out or for punishment, as this may create a negative association with the space



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Crate Training

Crate training is a very effective training tool for adult dogs as well as puppies. It can provide a safe haven for our pets during stressful events, teach them boundaries, and provide an area of safety during traveling. Crate training is also very helpful in teaching puppies to settle and can be very useful for toilet training. When choosing a crate, we need to consider the size of our puppy once they are fully grown adults. The crate should be big enough for them to stand up, turn around, and lie down. It can be plastic, metal, or fabric, and some may even be collapsible.

Puppies can be trained to sleep in the crate overnight. Make sure you start with short sessions and gradually increase the length of time over several weeks. When introducing dogs to crates, you can open the door and leave it in the central part of the household, such as in the living room or TV room. When your puppy goes near the crate or into it, reward them by throwing treats into the crate. You can also begin crate training by feeding your puppy in the crate and slowly, once they are more comfortable, close the door until they are finished.



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Crate Training

Slowly, increase the amount of time inside the crate until your puppy is comfortable. You can then teach your puppy the “crate” or “bed” command for them to go into the crate. Once they understand, you can treat them for calm behaviour.

Alternatively, when creating an area for the puppy to sleep, you can set up a play space with the crate inside. This is a great way to slowly introduce your puppy to the crate. The door should be left open for your puppy to freely move in and out of it.



Having a crate-trained puppy will also be very helpful when it comes time for visits to the vet clinic. Having your puppy comfortable with confined spaces will reduce the stress and anxiety associated with a hospital stay, as hospital cages and runs are of a similar size to the crates you would use in your home. It is very important not to use the crate as punishment. The crate should always be associated with positive experiences.

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Enrichment

Dogs and puppies need to have both mental and physical enrichment. This involves allowing dogs to engage in natural behaviours and express their instincts in safe and appropriate ways. Enrichment helps dogs stay mentally sharp and prevents boredom, which can lead to destructive behaviours. There are 5 main types of enrichment which can be used to give your puppy a full and prosperous life.

Physical Enrichment:
Physical enrichment focuses on providing opportunities for physical activity and exercise. This can include walks, playing fetch, swimming, etc.

Sensory Enrichment:
Sensory enrichment involves engaging your dog's senses through different sights, sounds, smells, and textures. Examples include playing different types of music, introducing new scents and sniff walks, and providing various textures to explore (like different types of toys or surfaces).



PUPPY HANDBOOK

Enrichment

Social Enrichment: Social enrichment involves interaction with other dogs, people, and other animals. Social enrichment helps dogs learn appropriate social skills, reduces fear and anxiety, and can improve overall well-being. Examples include playdates, walks in public spaces, and visits to dog-friendly locations.

Cognitive Enrichment: Cognitive enrichment focuses on providing dogs with opportunities to engage in activities that tap into their instincts and problem-solving skills. Examples include scent work and learning new tricks.

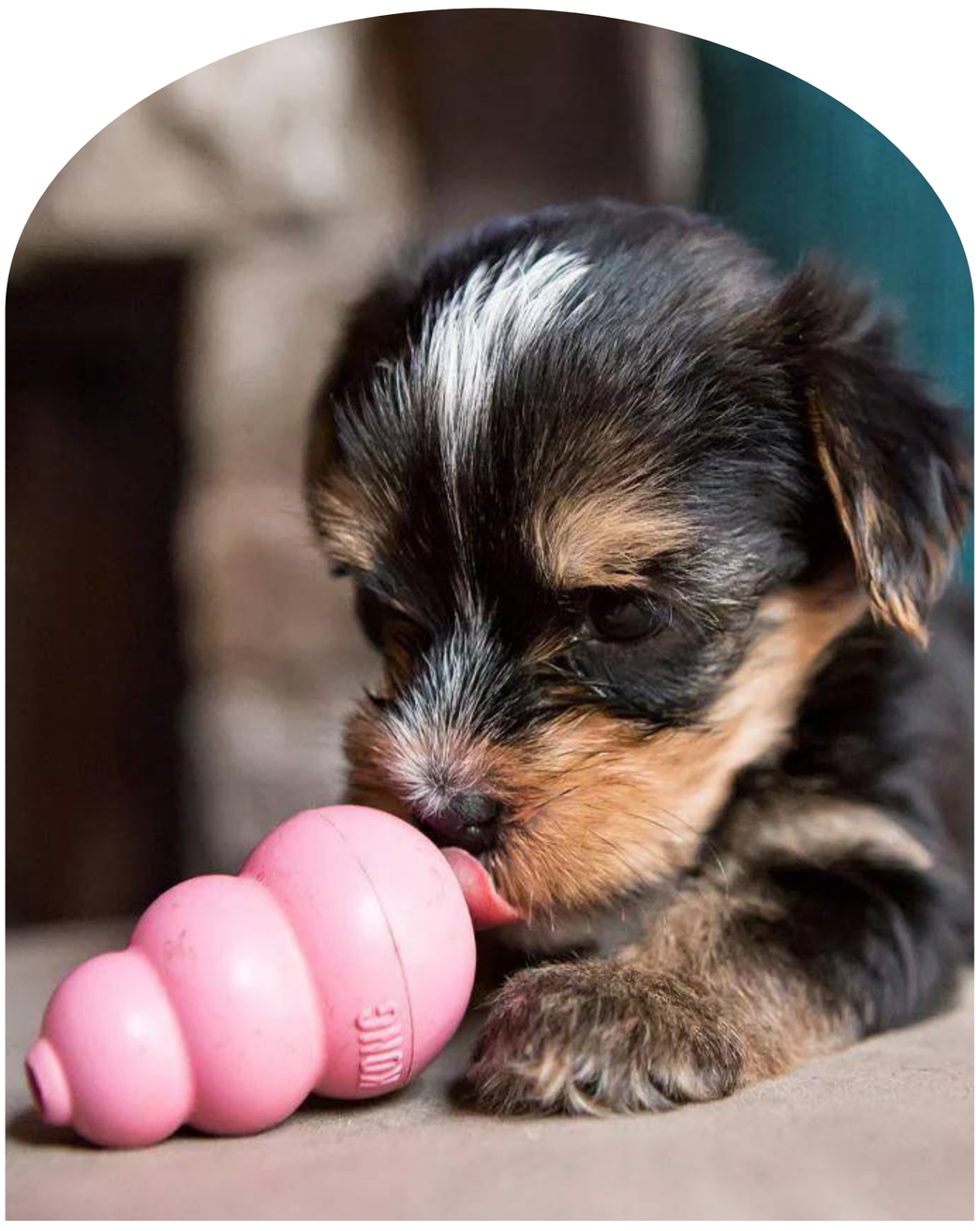
Feeding Enrichment: Nutritional enrichment focuses on how your dog eats, providing them with mental stimulation and opportunities to engage in natural foraging behaviours. Examples include puzzle toys, food-dispensing toys, and slow feeders.



PUPPY HANDBOOK

Enrichment

Toys: Puppies have deciduous (baby) teeth until around 4 to 5 months of age; from here, their adult teeth begin to come through. Puppies use their mouths to explore the world. Toys are great substitutes (for your hands, ankles, and toes) to help distract them and ease their gum pain when their adult teeth are coming through. Even though puppy teeth feel incredibly sharp, the gums and teeth are still developing. For this reason, they need toys of a softer material to chew on. However, the toys must be hard enough for the puppies not to chew them into small bits and swallow them. A good rule of thumb is that if you cannot indent the material with your fingernail, it is too hard for your puppy's mouth. Kong toys have a variety of options that are safe for puppies, such as teething sticks and their original toy with altered rubber material, making them safe for puppy teeth.



Safety Tips: Always supervise new toys at first. Ensure all objects are non-toxic and not too small to swallow. Throw broken or damaged toys away. Remember that toys that can be swallowed often cause obstruction in the digestive tract; unfortunately, most of the time, these need to be removed surgically.

PUPPY HANDBOOK

Registration

Council Registration

By law, all pets in Victoria are required to be microchipped and registered with your local council.

Each council has its own set of regulations for pet registration.

In the City of Casey, all dogs over the age of three months must be registered and microchipped. In addition to being microchipped, the City of Casey requires all dogs to remain contained within their property boundaries.

This is in line with the Domestic Animals Act 1994.



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Microchips

By law, all pets advertised for sale must be microchipped. Microchips help prove ownership of a pet and help reunite lost pets with their families.

The first thing we need to do is ensure that the transfer of ownership has been changed. A change of ownership form should have been completed or sent home with you when you picked up your puppy.

It should include the signature and details of the breeder from whom you purchased. You will then need to fill in the details about yourself and submit them to the database company.

The most commonly used database registries in Victoria are: Central Animal Records, Australasian Animal Records, Petsafe Register, Homesafe I.D., and Global Micro Animal Registry.

Occasionally, we find that some puppies have found new homes without a microchip implanted. Microchip implantation is a service that we provide; however, the owner of the puppy must provide a source number, which links the microchip to a government database (this is separate from the microchip registry).

If your contact details change, your pet's microchip details must be kept updated.

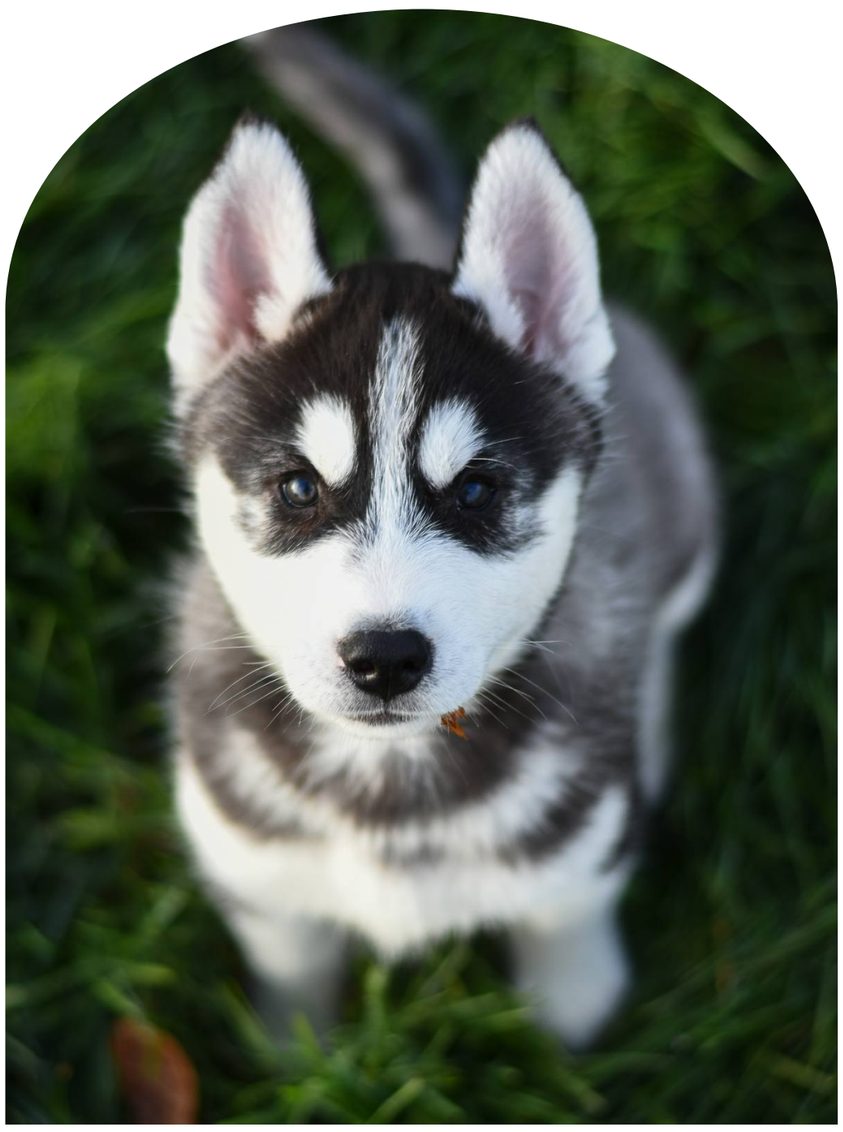


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Insurance

Pet insurance is a type of health insurance for pets that helps cover the cost of veterinary care. It can ease the financial burden of unexpected illnesses or injuries, and sometimes routine care. Coverage depends on the plan, but most policies fall into one of these categories:

Accident only: covers injuries (e.g, broken bones, poisonings, car accidents, etc.). It is the cheapest option but only has a limited scope.



Accident and illness (Comprehensive): covers accidents and diseases such as cancers, infections, arthritis, etc. This is the most popular type of coverage.

Wellness / Preventative: (add-on or separate cover to the options above) covers routine care such as vaccinations, parasite prevention, and dental procedures; occasionally will cover costs associated with desexing. This type of cover is often the least cost-effective unless it's bundled with one of the options mentioned above. Most pet insurance plans are re-imbursement based meaning that you still need to pay for your vet bill up front, you'll then make a claim to your provider with your receipt and consultation notes, and then your insurer will reimburse you a percentage of your bill minus any excess deductible.

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Insurance

GapOnly

We have the GapOnly® program available within our clinics. GapOnly® is a service that simplifies pet insurance claims by allowing pet owners to pay only the difference (the "gap") between their vet bill and their insurance coverage at the time of service. Instead of paying the full amount upfront and waiting for reimbursement, pet owners can claim on the spot at participating clinics and only pay what their insurance doesn't cover.



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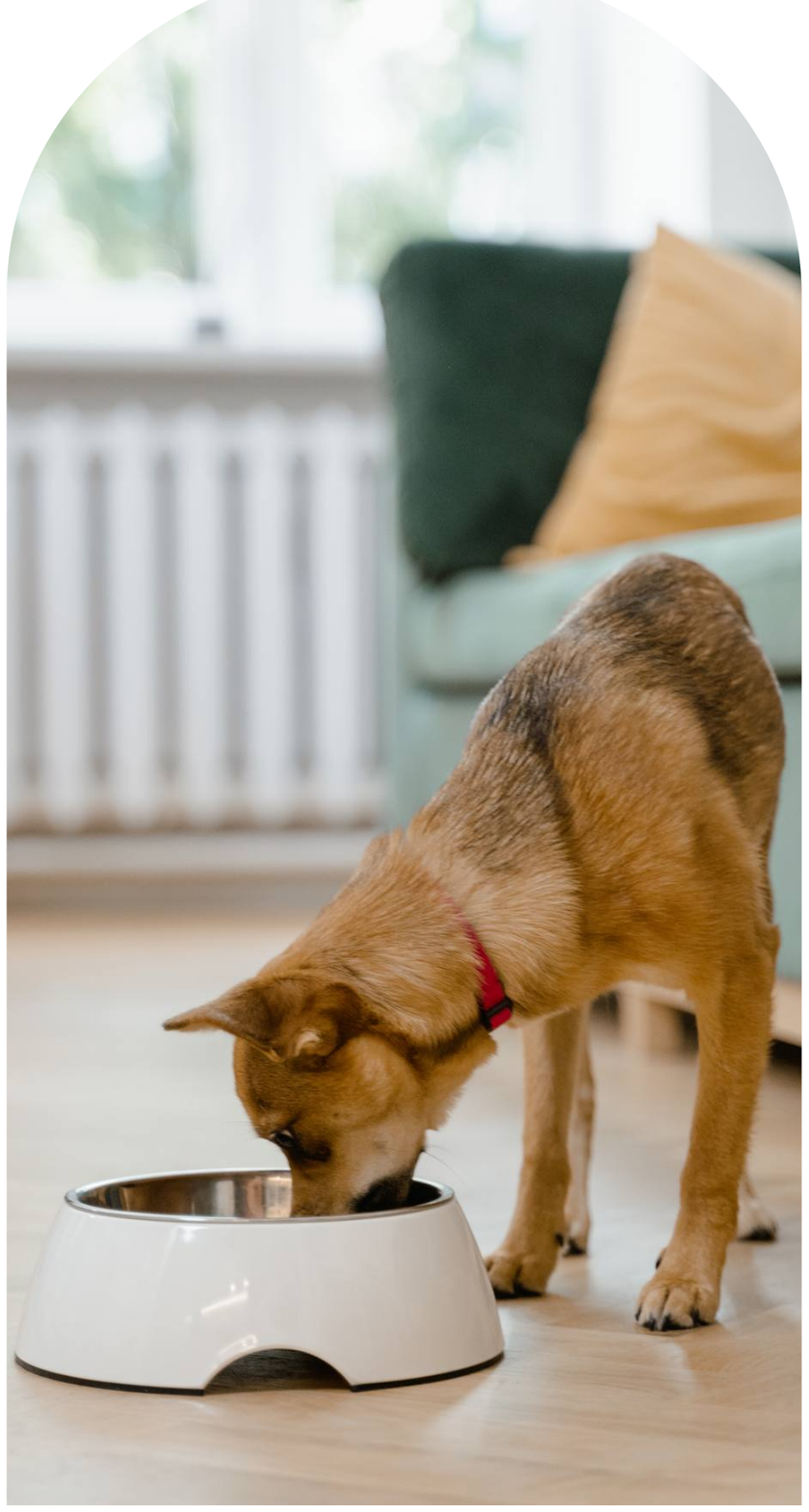
Nutrition

Nutrition plays a big part in a puppy's growth and health. Puppies are omnivores, which means they require a mixture of meat and plant-based foods.

Puppies are fed exclusively mum milk until they are old enough (about 6 weeks old) to be weaned off mum and introduced to solid foods.

The basis of a puppy's diet should be a high-quality, balanced premium commercial puppy food.
There are a lot of different diets for our puppies out there, including raw food diets, dry kibble diets, canned food diets, and home-made diets.

Whilst we are not against any diets in particular, we still recommend that a high-quality, balanced, premium diet be fed to all dogs (appropriate for their life stage) as it is important to prevent nutritional deficiencies during growth.



Puppies should initially be fed 3 to 4 times a day, reducing to twice daily at around 6 months of age. Adult dogs should still be fed twice daily, as there has been research that shows one large meal can be a predisposing factor for bloat, which can be fatal.

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Large breed puppies need a different calcium-phosphorus ratio and thus need to be on a large breed puppy diet.

Make sure that when you change your puppy's food to another brand or flavour, you transition it over a period of time (7 to 10 days) to avoid gut issues such as vomiting or diarrhoea.



PUPPY HANDBOOK

Toxic Foods

There are a number of human foods that are toxic to dogs. If you know or suspect your dog has ingested any of the following foods, please phone the clinic or the after-hours emergency center as soon as possible.

Chocolate: Contains theobromine and caffeine.
Symptoms: Vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, heart arrhythmias, and even death.
Grapes & Raisins: Toxic compounds can cause kidney failure.
Symptoms: Vomiting, lethargy, loss of appetite, abdominal pain.
Onions, Garlic, Leeks, and Chives (Allium family): Damage red blood cells, leading to anemia.
Symptoms: Weakness, vomiting, and breathing problems.
Xylitol (found in sugar-free gum, candy, toothpaste): Causes rapid insulin release, leading to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and liver failure.
Symptoms: Vomiting, coordination issues, seizures.
Alcohol: Dogs are highly sensitive to ethanol.
Symptoms: Vomiting, disorientation, tremors, and breathing difficulty.
Macadamia Nuts: Cause neurological symptoms in dogs.
Symptoms: Weakness, tremors, vomiting, high temperature.
Avocado: Contains persin, which may upset the stomach. It can also be a choking hazard (pit) and cause pancreatitis (fatty flesh).
Caffeine (coffee, tea, energy drinks): Similar effects as chocolate: stimulant toxicity.

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Toxic Foods

Cooked Bones: Can splinter and cause blockages or internal injury.
Raw dough with yeast: Expands in the stomach and produces alcohol during fermentation.
Salt and salty snacks: Too much can cause sodium ion poisoning.
Symptoms: vomiting, tremors, seizures.
Fat trimmings/ greasy foods: Can trigger pancreatitis in dogs.

Other Harmful Foods:
Dairy: Some dogs are lactose intolerant.
Raw or undercooked meat, eggs, or fish: Risk of salmonella or parasites.
Moldy foods:
Mycotoxins can cause tremors and seizures.
Fruit pits/seeds (peaches, cherries, apples): May contain cyanide and be a choking hazard.



PUPPY HANDBOOK

Parasite prevention

Worms

Dogs can be infected with roundworms, tapeworms, hookworms, and whipworms. Puppies can be born with roundworms as the mother can pass the worms to the puppy while they are still inside her. They can also acquire roundworms through the milk. Puppies need to be wormed with an all-wormer at 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 weeks of age, then every month until 6 months of age, and then every 3 months for life

Fleas

Fleas can be transmitted to our puppies from the soles of our shoes as well as from the dirt outside. They can be easily prevented either by monthly topical products or by monthly tablets.

Ticks

Ticks are tiny parasites that feed on blood and can spread serious diseases. They attach to your puppy's skin, often after walks in grassy or wooded areas.
Tick bites don't always cause symptoms right away, but infections can lead to fever, joint pain, or tiredness. Regular tick prevention from your vet helps protect your puppy from these risks.



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Parasite prevention

Heart worm

Heartworm disease is spread by mosquitoes and can be fatal if left undetected or untreated in our pets. Treatment usually starts at 12 weeks of age and can either be given as an injectable form or via a tablet form, monthly

Nexgard Spectra

We usually recommend that puppies be wormed with an all-wormer at 8 and 10 weeks. At the 12-week vaccination, puppies will be given a free sample of Nexgard Spectra, a flavoured tablet which helps prevent fleas, heartworm, roundworm, hookworms, whipworms, and ticks.

This is given as a tablet monthly. The only thing Nexgard Spectra does not prevent against is tapeworm. We recommend a tapeworm tablet for prevention and treatment every 3 months.



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Desensitisation

Puppies have an impression period from about 3 weeks to about 13-16 weeks. This is a critical part of a puppy's development. During this time, puppies are highly impressionable and learn quickly about their environment, their species, and other living beings. This period is when they form crucial social bonds and learn about the world around them, including how to interact with people and other animals. Puppies must be exposed, in a safe and calm manner, to a range of different environments, people, and animals.

Although for a large portion of this period, puppies are unable to be out in public due to their immature vaccination status, they can be carried or placed in a dog sling to help with exposure without allowing interaction. Once your dog is one week past their second vaccination, they can be allowed out in public.

While we don't want our puppies to be scared or fearful in new environments and around other people and dogs, we equally don't want them to be overly excitable every time they meet others. The main goal is to teach puppies to be neutral in these interactions, especially when exposed to people and dogs (as well as animals of other species). To achieve this, it is important to expose them to people and dogs in this impression period, without letting them interact with them.

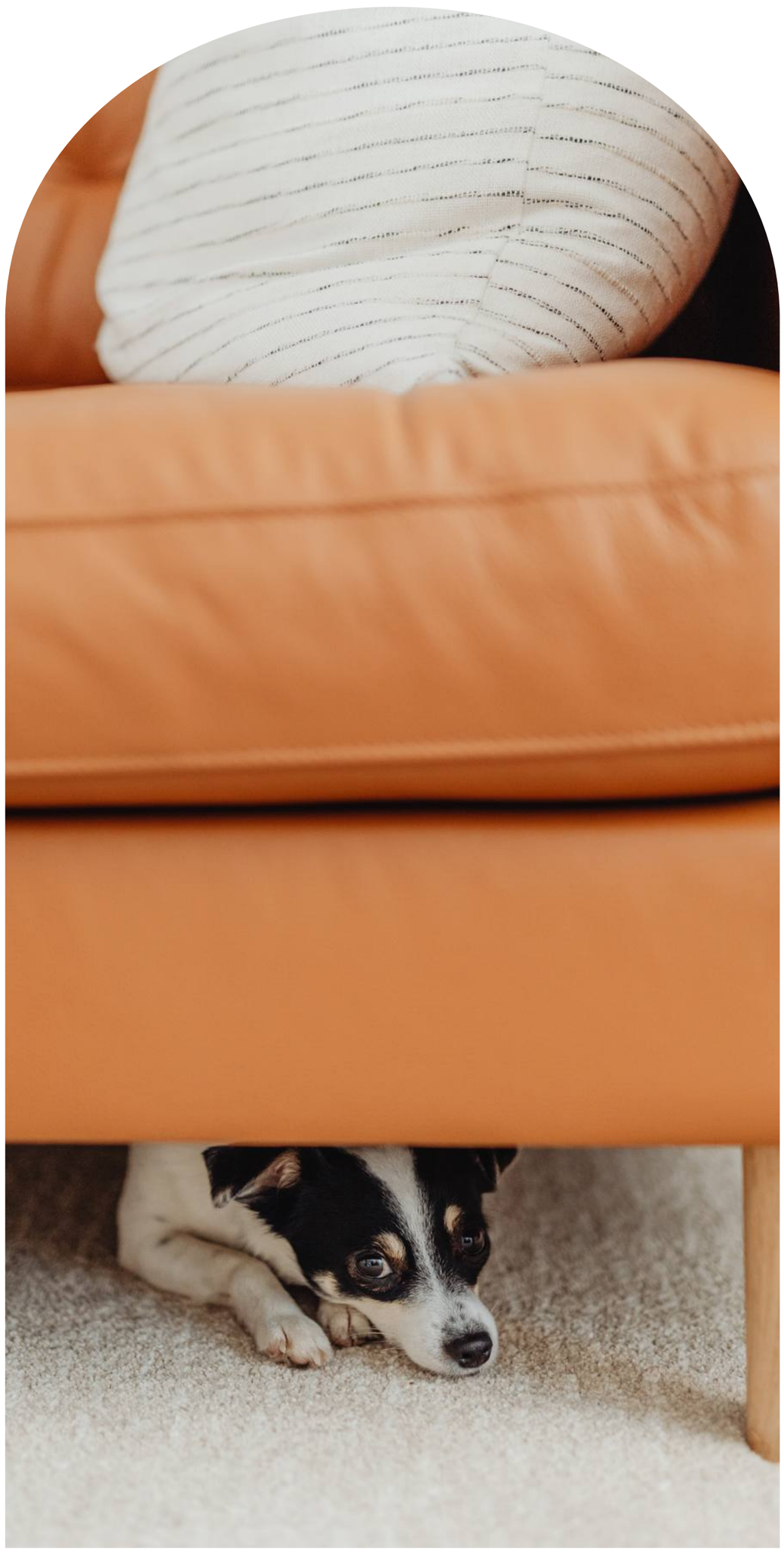


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Desensitisation

If your puppies are very reactive to being near other dogs, then continue, then start with dogs only just in view, and over time (days to weeks), can move up to being closer. For dog interactions, rather than letting them meet strange dogs, it is better to set them up with playdates with known, trusted dogs in controlled settings. This can decrease the chances of negative experiences that can stay with your puppy for life.

It is also important to introduce your puppy to objects and sounds that can cause fear or discomfort. This includes hair dryers, vacuum cleaners, etc. You can also use videos of thunderstorms, fireworks, doorbells ringing, and dogs barking to help desensitise your puppy to those sounds. Always start very slow, with low volume or larger distances, and if your puppy remains calm, you can increase volume or move the object closer to them. Do not continue if your puppy is displaying signs of fear, as this can reinforce that fear.



PUPPY HANDBOOK

Toilet training

The best way to toilet train your new puppy is to take them out consistently throughout the day to give them an opportunity to go to the toilet and praise them heavily when they do so.
At the beginning, this means taking them out every 1-2 hours to the toilet, especially after playing, eating, drinking, or waking up for a nap.

As a general rule, puppies can hold their bladder for approximately 1 hour per month of age. Meaning an 8-week-old dog can hold their bladder for about 2 hours. This is only a general rule and will often be a little less for small dogs, and can be a little more in larger breed dogs.



As your puppy begins to toilet outside consistently, you can start to introduce a command to associate with going to the bathroom to help create a consistent structure.

It's crucial to be consistent, patient, and avoid punishment, as this can hinder the learning process. If your puppy toilets inside, try to refrain from yelling and scolding, and instead just pick them up, bring them outside, and then praise them if they continue to go once outside.

PUPPY HANDBOOK

Biting & Barking

During their time with their littermates and mum, puppies communicate heavily through nipping and barking. As a result, this is often how they try to communicate with us. Puppies will bark and nip for attention, playtime, food, or from being overtired. It is important to try and determine what they are trying to communicate to try and prevent the behaviour.

It can be very difficult to teach a puppy not to do something; it is generally much easier to teach them TO DO a specific behaviour.

There are often behaviours that will come before them, biting and barking, such as getting worked up, running around, and shifting weight from foot to foot. If you notice these signs, try and redirect your puppy (ask for a sit and give a reward) before they get to the point of barking, which can, over time, teach them which behaviours get rewarded. It can generally be helpful to have bowls of treats around the house so that you can always reward any desirable behaviour.

Giving puppies structured nap times can also help decrease unwanted behaviours. Normally, puppies should sleep 18-20 hours, and unwanted behaviours are often noted when they are overtired. Regularly putting your puppy in their sleep area and encouraging settling can help decrease these behaviours.

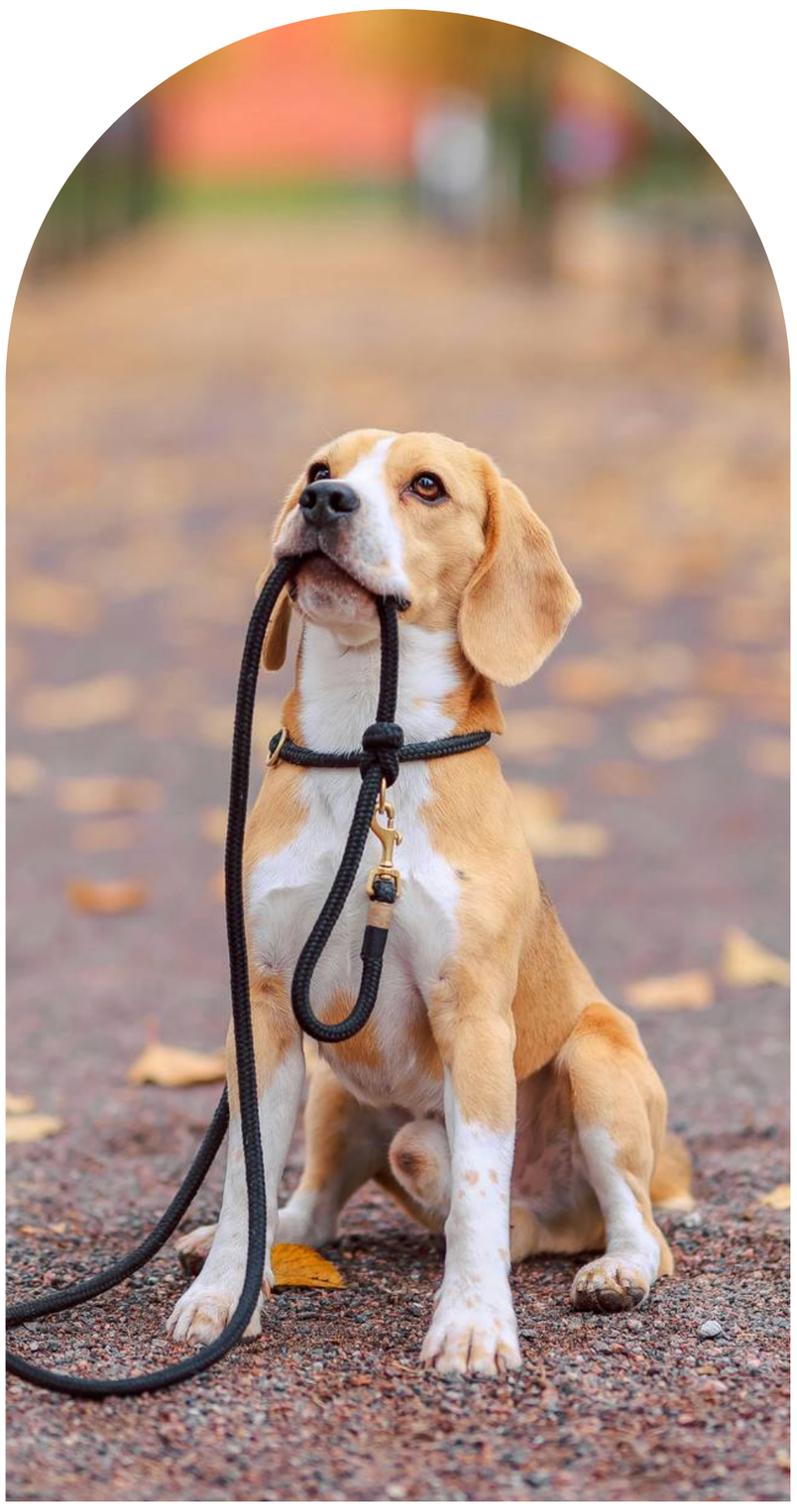


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Obedience

Puppy preschool should focus on puppy issues such as socialisation, house training, play biting and chewing, and should provide lots of positive early experiences for our puppies. This is a great time to learn the basics prior to going to obedience classes.

Obedience training is an important part of your puppy's lifestyle. Apart from learning tricks and obedience, it also provides them with other important things such as mental stimulation, exercise, and quality time with their favourite people. Obedience can also stop our puppies from picking up annoying habits such as jumping on people or inappropriate barking, or chewing from boredom.



In general, in the first 4 weeks at home, you should focus on teaching good manners rather than commands. While there are some commands that it is good to know early, such as 'sit', it is more important to reward generally good manners during this time.

Things to focus on early: Settle behaviour sitting for food, preventing jumping, biting, and barking. From 12 weeks plus, you can expand to more command-based training. This can be a great way to keep your dog mentally fulfilled and create a bond.

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Puppy School

At The Narre Warren Vet, we offer Puppy Preschool for puppies up to 16 weeks of age. Our classes cover all the essential foundations, including basic obedience skills, toilet training, biting and mouthing, vaccines, parasite prevention, information on reprimands, enrichment, and so much more. It's a great opportunity to give your puppy positive early experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

If you are interested in joining in on the fun, please contact the clinic on (03) 9704 6463.



Nurse Vanessa
Puppy school trainer



Hugo Downe
Puppy school Alumni

PUPPY HANDBOOK

Vaccinations

Vaccinations in dogs help to protect them against diseases such as parvovirus, distemper virus, hepatitis virus, kennel cough (two strains), and leptospirosis.

It is important to make sure that your puppy stays up to date, especially with the initial puppy vaccine course, to make sure they develop antibodies against these viruses.

There are different protocols for vaccinations; however, our clinic does: First vaccination at 6-7 weeks (typically done with the breeder), C5 vaccination at 10 weeks, C4 vaccination at 14 weeks. The C5 vaccination given at 10 weeks protects against parvovirus, hepatitis virus, and distemper virus plus two strains of canine cough. One of these components does not require a booster; therefore, the vaccine given at 14 weeks contains parvovirus, hepatitis virus, and distemper virus plus one strain of canine cough.



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Vaccinations

Just like the influenza vaccination, the vaccines only help to decrease the chances of our puppies developing the viruses and will decrease the symptoms but do not reduce the risk of contracting the disease 100%.

When puppies are subjected to a higher risk area of contracting leptospirosis (for example: swimming in lakes or rivers, roaming on rural properties, high risk contact with rats or mice), we recommend that they get vaccinated against leptospirosis. These can be performed at 10 weeks and 14 weeks with their C5 vaccination.

Once your puppy is an adult, vaccinations will be given annually. The parvovirus, hepatitis virus and distemper virus are only needed to be given triennially (once every 3 years) however the canine cough vaccine is given annually. If leptospirosis is required, this will be performed annually as well.



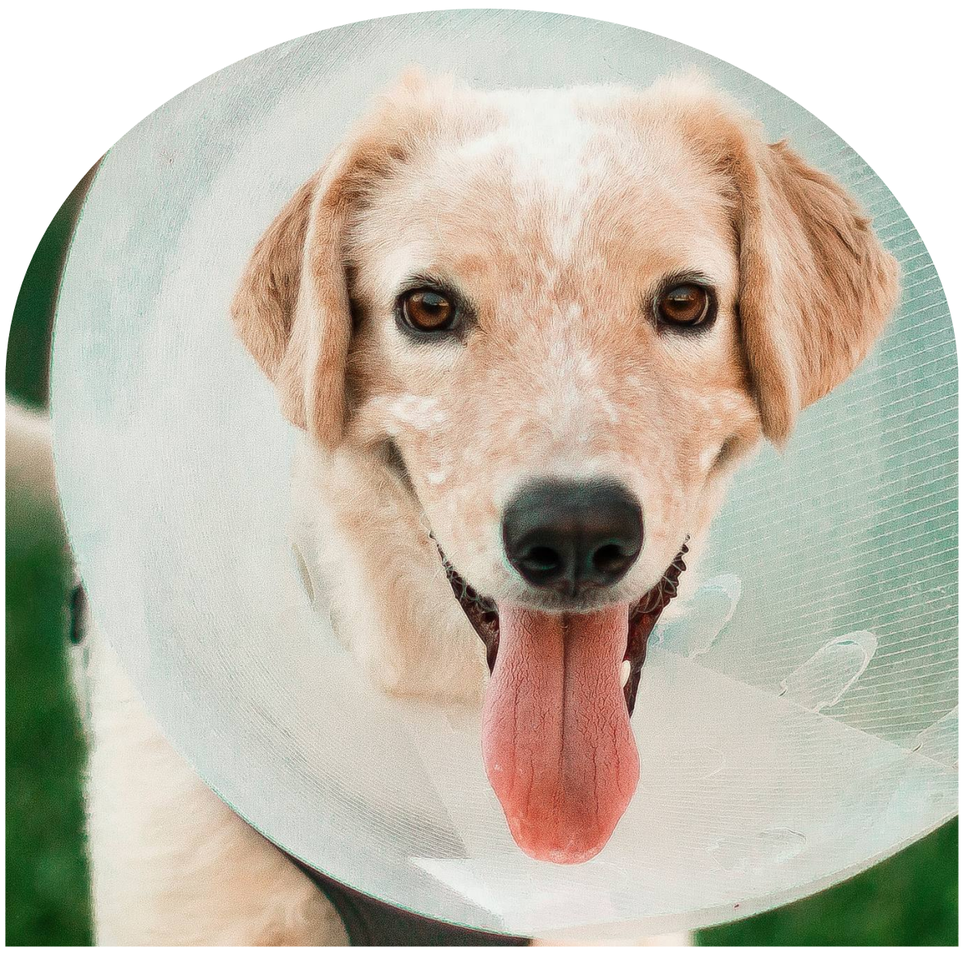
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Neutering

Neutering of female dogs decreases the chances of them getting conditions such as pyometra, mammary cancer, and uterine infections which can be fatal.
In male dogs, it reduces the chances of them getting testicular cancer and enlargement of the prostate, which may cause defecation issues. It may also reduce roaming behaviour and unwanted behavioural issues such as urinary marking, mounting, and aggression.
Neutering also helps with population control to reduce unplanned litters and can also lead to decreased aggression in some dogs.

There are many debates currently that concern the age of neutering versus certain side effects of health. Neutering at a younger age can be less stressful, result in smaller surgical wounds and have less tissue damage (due to small blood vessels) as well as decreased surgical time. Neutering later in life (once fully developed) can lead to better joint health, especially in large breed dogs, and decrease the chance of hormone-related incontinence.

Every puppy is an individual, and the right time for neutering will depend on breed, weight, behaviour, and lifestyle. While there is no perfect time to neuter dogs, it is safe to do so from 16 weeks old. Please feel free to discuss with the veterinarians a plan for your puppy.

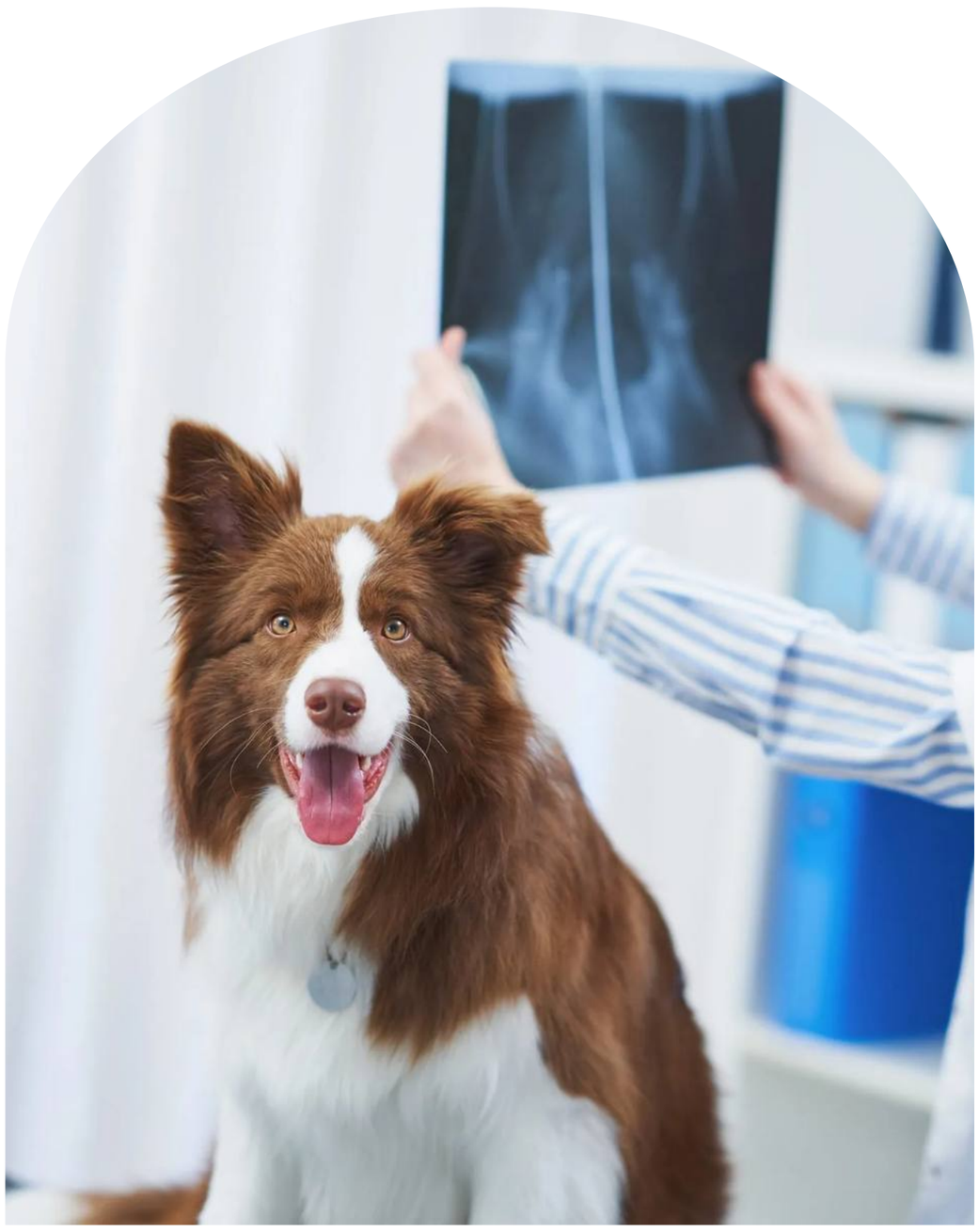


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Penn-HIP

PennHIP testing is an accurate way of testing for a dog's chances of getting painful osteoarthritis from hip dysplasia later in life.

It is a set of hip X-rays that can be taken from as young as 16 weeks of age. The x-rays get sent to the University of Pennsylvania to retrieve a distraction index that tells us whether a dog has a mild, moderate, or high risk of developing hip osteoarthritis.
The distraction index is a measure of the laxity between the ball and socket of the hip joint.
There has been a great link shown in research from the PennHIP organisation that dogs with a bigger laxity or distraction index have a much greater chance of developing osteoarthritis due to the constant shearing forces of an unstable hip.



We recommend PennHIP testing for all our puppies, but especially for breeds that have a higher risk (larger breed dogs, any terrier breeds, daschunds, bull dogs, etc) and dogs that are to be used for breeding.
Doing the PennHIP allows for early intervention and treatment of our dogs to help reduce the progression of osteoarthritis.

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Penn-HIP

If we perform PennHIP radiographs between 16 and 19 weeks of age, there may be a preventative surgery, if required, we can perform it to decrease the severity of osteoarthritis later in life.



Figure A: An X-ray showing good coverage of the head of the femur in the hip socket, ie, good hips. Figure B: An X-ray showing poor coverage of the head of the femur in the hip socket, ie, hip dysplasia.

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Final Word

Puppyhood can be a difficult time, and we know there is a lot of information to take in.

We are here to help you through this journey so we can help our pets enjoy longer, healthier lives!



Please note: We are not sponsored by any of the products listed to promote or sell their products. All the products listed are recommended by our team as they are tried and tested.