

Welcome to our Family at Georgia Veterinary Associates!

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to care for your new puppy! We know that you care so much about your new best friend. Wellness and preventative care means much more than simply getting vaccines - from parasite prevention to nutrition, behavior to surgical consultation, we can help you with everything your new pet needs to thrive. Our veterinarians are dedicated to the best possible care to keep your pet healthy through all life stages, as well as being here for you and your pet should illness ever arise. Our entire medical staff is committed to regular continuing education, cutting edge treatments, and keeping up with the newest and best recommendations for your pet. We look forward to providing innovative and thoughtful care for you and your pet.

Here at our hospital we also offer grooming, baths, boarding with TLC packages and much more.

Puppy Vaccines

Puppies need regular vaccine boosters until about 16 weeks of age to ensure they build strong immunity against these diseases. Vaccines are started between 6 and 8 weeks of age, and boosted every 3 weeks until they receive at least 2 sets of core vaccines at 12 weeks of age or older.

CORE VACCINATIONS

- Canine distemper - to protect against a deadly virus that attacks the lungs and affects the function of the brain and spinal cord. This is included in the DAP vaccine.
- Adenovirus Type 2 - to protect against a severe but rarely fatal respiratory virus. This is included in the DAP vaccine.
- Canine parvovirus - To protect against a disease that attacks the lining of the intestinal tract, bone marrow and damages the heart of very young puppies. If contracted, this disease is often fatal without aggressive treatment. This is included in the DAP vaccine.
- Rabies - to protect against a Virus that attacks the nervous system and is always fatal. Rabies is zoonotic, meaning people can be infected too, so this vaccine is required by law for all dogs.
- Bordetella(Kennel Cough) - to protect against a common respiratory disease that is highly contagious and easily transmitted.

NONCORE VACCINATIONS

- Canine Influenza - recommended for most dogs in the state of Georgia, especially dogs who visit dog parks, pet stores, grooming salons, and boarding facilities. To protect all of our patients, this vaccine is required for patients who will be having elective surgeries at GVA hospitals.
- Lyme - to protect against Lyme disease, which is spread by ticks. Recommended for dogs who have an active outdoor lifestyle or live in an environment known to have ticks.
- Leptospirosis - to protect against this bacteria which is found in water sources, such as lakes and creeks, which are contaminated by rodents. Recommended for most dogs who go for outdoor walks, hikes, dog parks, or lakes.

What to expect after your pet's vaccinations

It is important to understand that while vaccine reactions are very uncommon they do sometimes occur and you should know what to look for. If your puppy is going to have a reaction they usually occur within the first few hours after vaccination. Sometimes a small firm, swelling may develop under the skin at the injection site. This should be completely resolved within a few weeks. If it grows in size or persists please contact us.

Some typical side effects that you may see in your puppy are:

- Discomfort and local swelling at vaccine site
- Decrease in appetite or activity
- Mild fever

Some rare but more serious side effects may include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Itchy skin
- Difficulty breathing and collapse

If you have any questions or have concerns please contact us! If any severe side effects occur when we are not available please proceed to the closest animal emergency center.

Additional Puppy Wellness Care

Deworming - at least one dose of broad spectrum dewormer is recommended for all puppies to eliminate any commonly found intestinal parasites.

Fecal test - to identify many different types of intestinal parasites, and determine if any additional treatment or deworming is needed.

Parasite prevention - a key to starting your puppy out on the right foot for the rest of their life. Your veterinarian will discuss which products are best for your puppy, but all dogs should receive heartworm, intestinal parasite, flea, and tick prevention monthly.

Dental Health:

Puppies lose their puppy teeth between 4 and 8 months of age, as their adult teeth grow in. This process can be painful in dogs, just as it is in people. Providing your puppy with firm rubber chew toys can help to ease this pain (and will reduce chewing on inappropriate objects). You can even put treats such as peanut butter in a rubber toy and freeze it to provide additional relief. As the adult teeth grow in, it will be important to develop good dental hygiene habits. Over 85% of dogs will have significant dental disease by age 3. The best way to keep your puppy's teeth healthy and delay the need for an anesthetized dental cleaning is through regular (daily) at-home brushing (with a dog-specific tooth paste), water additives (such as Healthy Mouth and C.E.T. additives), and dental food/chews (we recommend Hill's T/D food, CET Chews, and Oravet Chews).

Heartworm and Intestinal Parasite Prevention:

Heartworms are serious and can be fatal if left untreated. Even if your puppy will be an indoor dog, it is still very important to have him/her on monthly heartworm, intestinal parasite, and flea prevention.

Heartworms are a blood parasite that are transmitted by mosquitoes. If an infected mosquito bites your puppy, the larva of the worms grow in the blood and eventually live in your dog's heart and lungs. This causes severe lung and heart disease, and eventually death. Some dogs show no clinical signs with heartworm disease (other than sudden death), but more commonly we see lethargy, weight loss, coughing, and weakness. Heartworm treatment is a lengthy and very expensive process; it is a disease that is much easier to prevent. In fact, the cost of a lifetime of preventions is less expensive than the cost of heartworm treatment. A great resource for you to learn more about heartworms is www.heartwormsociety.org.

Intestinal parasites, including roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms, are commonly found in the soil in our environment. These parasites are impossible to avoid or eliminate outdoors, as they are commonly spread by wild animals and can survive for long periods of time in the soil. Even indoor potting soil can contain roundworms eggs! Intestinal parasites can rob your puppy of nutrients, cause diarrhea and vomiting, and can even lead to long term intestinal inflammation and digestive issues.

We recommend Sentinel for the prevention of heartworms and intestinal parasites.

Flea and Tick Prevention:

Did you know that only 5% of fleas are the adults visible to the human eye? The other 95% are eggs and immature fleas living in the environment, and here in Georgia they live year round in both indoor and outdoor environments. Year round use of effective monthly flea prevention is the best way to prevent fleas on your dog and avoid an infestation of your environment, as well as prevent ticks which can carry deadly diseases. We recommend the monthly oral chewable, Nexgard, for most dogs.

Nutrition, exercise, and behavior are all important aspects of a healthy lifestyle.

Your puppy is growing quickly and it is important to feed them a diet that will fit their lifestyle and breed. We recommend using a well-balanced puppy formula, such as Hill's Science Diet or Ideal Balance. In the same way that babies have different needs than adults, puppies have different needs than that of the adult dog they will become.

All puppies require different nutrition so it is important to discuss what foods are best for your new puppy. Many factors go into choosing the correct formula to feed your puppy such as size, breed, age, environment, exercise, and heredity.

Improper feeding can increase your puppy's risk of obesity, excessively fast growth, growth-related skeletal problems, poor muscle and bone development and even a poor immune response.

Your large breed puppy (who will grow to be more than 55 pounds at maturity) needs a puppy food formulated to ensure proper bone and muscle growth, and provide the right amount of energy.

Hill's Science Diet and Ideal Balance puppy foods are designed to meet the needs of growing puppies with some essential benefits:

- Skin and coat health
- Healthy digestion
- Immunity
- Weight management
- Mobility health

When feeding an appropriately balanced diet, additional supplements are not needed in most cases. Your veterinarian will help you determine how much and how often to feed your puppy, as well as discuss any specific nutritional concerns you may have.

NEXT STEPS (6 months):

Microchip - It is a great idea to have your puppy microchipped. A microchip is a small RFID device (a little smaller than a grain of rice) that is implanted under your puppy's skin. It carries your contact information, so if your puppy ever gets lost any animal shelter or veterinarian will know who to call. Microchips are typically placed when puppies are spayed or neutered.

Spay and Neuter - Your puppy is expected to reach sexual maturity at around 6 months of age. This may vary depending on specific breeds. It is important to speak to your dog's doctor on the best time to spay or neuter your pet.

- Females: spaying (ovariohysterectomy) is a surgical procedure to sterilize female dogs. This procedure includes removing the ovaries and uterus. This procedure is recommended for most dogs before the first heat cycle to dramatically decrease the likelihood of mammary cancer and severe uterine infections. For large breed dogs this procedure can be done laparoscopically (a minimally invasive technique).
- Males: Neutering (orchidectomy) is a surgical procedure to sterilize male dogs. This includes removing the testicles, but usually leaving the scrotum. Neutering male dogs at an early age tends to decrease or prevent behavioral issues such as mounting, urine marking, aggression and roaming. Neutering also reduces future prostate problems and eliminates the risk of testicular cancer.

Gastropexy - this "stomach tacking" procedure is recommended for many large breed dogs, such as German Shepherds, Labs, Golden Retrievers, Great Danes, and other "deep chested" breeds. It significantly reduces the risk of bloat and stomach torsion (GDV), which is a common emergency. This procedure can be performed laparoscopically at the same time that your puppy is spayed or neutered.

It is very important to get your pet spayed/neutered. You can read more about these common procedures on our website, www.mygavet.com, under the spay/neuter service page, and our veterinarians are always available to answer questions. We will discuss your puppy's surgery during their last vaccine appointment, and schedule it for an appropriate time.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the best way to house train my puppy?

Positive reinforcement is the best and most effective way to train. Praise your puppy immediately when he eliminates in the appropriate location, don't wait until they come back inside. Praise may be verbal, physical or both and sometimes accompanied by a treat. If your puppy eliminates in an inappropriate area scolding with a sharp "No" can be effective, but only if caught in the act. Puppies have a very short memory and cannot correlate delayed scolding or punishment. Frequent trips outside, especially before and after meals, are the best way to train.

How do I correct inappropriate biting?

Puppies younger than seven months old are teething and will naturally "play bite". It is important that you teach your puppy that this is unacceptable. The easiest way to do this is by redirecting the biting from you to an approved toy.

How should I care for my puppy's teeth, ears and nails?

It is never too early to begin good dental hygiene. Luckily for us there are easy ways to provide this for our puppies. We recommend using daily dental treats such as C.E.T chews or Oravet chews once your puppy has all of their adult teeth. Both of these options are great for keeping your puppy's teeth pearly white and healthy. Be sure to speak to your vet about when to start these and what size would work!

Handling your puppy's feet, face, and ears often starting at a young age will make these things less threatening. Nail trims are a necessity as overgrown nails can cause discomfort and infection. If you do not feel comfortable doing nail trims on your puppy, nail trims are a service that our trained technicians or pet care staff will be happy to provide for your pet.

What human foods can my puppy eat?

Many human foods are considered toxic to dogs. It is very important to be well informed about which foods are dangerous to dogs. Common foods to avoid include chocolate, onions, garlic, grapes, dairy, any fruit with seeds or pits, any caffeinated items, and anything labeled sugar-free (the common sugar replacement, xylitol, is very toxic). Excessively fatty foods, such as leftover meat, can also cause digestive issues and sometimes even lead to pancreatitis. For a full list visit our website.

***Thank you for entrusting Russell Ridge Animal Hospital with your pet's care.
Please feel free to call us at (678)407-0700 with any questions or concerns you may have.***