

## **Congratulations on your new puppy!**

We are so excited to watch your puppy grow, learn, and become a happy and healthy member of your family. At St. Francis Animal Hospital, our purpose is to provide compassionate and quality care for our patients, to build meaningful relationships with our clients, to share our knowledge and experience, and to exceed the expectations of those who demand the very best of veterinary care. We hope that the information provided in this guide gives you a good foundation for understanding your puppy's medical needs and helps you make decisions about their care throughout puppyhood and into the future.

If you need to contact us, you can reach us in several different ways:

Phone: 651-645-2808

Email: [group@stfrancisabh.com](mailto:group@stfrancisabh.com)

Puppyhood is such a fun time! We cannot wait to get to know your new puppy, and we are here to help you along the journey.

Sincerely,

The Doctors and Staff of St. Francis Animal Hospital





# Vaccine Recommendations and Schedule

Vaccinating your puppy is one of the most important things you can do to keep your puppy healthy. At St. Francis Animal Hospital, we follow the recommendations of the American Animal Hospital Association's Canine Vaccination Guidelines Task Force. Your veterinarian will discuss your puppy's specific lifestyle when deciding which vaccines should be administered. The following are the most common vaccines we recommend for puppies:

## **Rabies**

Rabies is a viral disease carried primarily by bats and skunks. Rabies is always fatal for dogs who are infected, and nearly always fatal for humans. The rabies vaccine is typically given at 16 weeks of age, then again one year later, and then every three years for life.

## **DAPP (Distemper, Adenovirus, Parvovirus, and Parainfluenza)**

This is a combination vaccine that protects against several of the most common and most contagious canine viral diseases. This vaccine series is given every 3 to 4 weeks throughout puppyhood, again one year later, and then every three years for life. Most puppies receive three or four DAPP vaccines during their puppy series. DAPP protects from:

**Distemper virus:** Canine distemper virus causes respiratory and neurologic damage, and for many dogs this disease is fatal. Dogs who survive usually have some degree of lifelong neurologic symptoms. Distemper is contagious and is spread through contact with infected dogs or infected wildlife such as raccoons.

**Parvovirus:** Canine parvovirus causes severe vomiting, diarrhea, and immune system damage. This disease is most severe for puppies, and left untreated, parvovirus is often fatal. Parvovirus is very stable in the environment, and puppies can be exposed by walking through an area where an infected dog has shed the virus in its stool or vomit.

**Adenovirus:** Canine adenovirus type 1 is a contagious cause of hepatitis in dogs, primarily puppies. Adenovirus type 2 causes infectious tracheobronchitis (kennel cough).

**Parainfluenza virus:** Canine parainfluenza virus is a highly-contagious cause of infectious tracheobronchitis (kennel cough).

## **Lyme Disease**

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread by deer ticks. Lyme disease is prevalent in Minnesota, including in the Twin Cities area. Dogs can develop fever, painful joints, or kidney failure due to infection with Lyme. This vaccine is given as a two-injection series initially, followed by annual revaccination.

## **Leptospirosis**

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection caused by an organism shed in the urine of wildlife, such as raccoons and rats. Dogs are exposed through direct contact with urine, such as by drinking from stagnant water. Leptospirosis causes kidney and liver failure, and infected dogs can spread this disease to their human family. This vaccine is given as a two-injection series initially, followed by annual revaccination.

## **Bordetella**

Bordetella is one of the most common bacterial organisms that causes infectious tracheobronchitis (kennel cough). Kennel cough can be more severe in very young and very old dogs. Many training classes, groomers, daycares, and boarding facilities require this vaccine.

## **Canine Influenza**

There are two forms of seasonal influenza that affect dogs. As in humans, influenza in dogs causes respiratory disease and is highly contagious. This vaccine may be advised for dogs who are very social, dogs who attend doggy daycare, or dogs who travel regularly.

## **Vaccination Schedule**

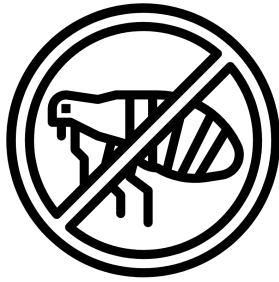
Puppies can have variable vaccine schedules and recommendations based on their age, breed, previous vaccinations, and lifestyle. Your veterinarian will help determine your puppy's specific vaccine needs.

### **One typical puppy vaccination schedule is:**

8 weeks old: DAPP, Bordetella

12 weeks old: DAPP, Lyme, Leptospirosis

16 weeks old: DAPP, Lyme, Leptospirosis, Rabies



# Parasite Prevention

In Minnesota, puppies and dogs are exposed to a wide variety of parasites. Some of these parasites can be fatal, some can cause gastrointestinal upset or itchy skin, and some can make humans sick if we get exposed from our pets. Parasite preventative medications protect both your pets and you from these organisms.

## Heartworm Disease

Heartworms are blood-borne parasites that are spread by the bites of mosquitoes. Heartworms are transmitted when a mosquito bites an infected dog, ingests the tiny larvae from the infected dog's bloodstream, then bites another dog and deposits the larvae into this new host. Larvae eventually move to the large vessels of the heart and lungs, where they mature into adult heartworms. Left untreated, heartworm disease is fatal. Treatment for heartworm disease is costly and carries risk, as the dying adult worms can form clots that damage the lungs. Preventing heartworm disease is much safer than treating a heartworm infection.

## Intestinal Parasites

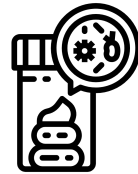
Most puppies are born with one or more intestinal parasites, including roundworms and hookworms. Puppies are often treated for intestinal parasites multiple times throughout puppyhood. Dogs can continue to be exposed to these parasites throughout their lives, especially if they are social with other dogs (i.e. if they attend dog parks or doggy daycare). Many heartworm preventative medications are also preventatives against intestinal parasites. Because several of these parasites can be spread to humans, protecting your dog also protects you!

## **Fleas and Ticks**

Fleas are tiny external parasites that cause itchy bites and can spread diseases. Most dogs get exposed to fleas from other infested pets or from exposure to wildlife such as rabbits or squirrels. Ticks, and especially deer ticks, carry a number of bacteria that can cause disease in dogs. Lyme disease and Anaplasmosis are the most common tick-borne diseases that we see in Minnesota. Flea and tick preventatives protect your dog both against the pesky parasites themselves as well as against the other diseases that can be caused by flea and tick bites.

## **Routine Screening For Parasites**

We recommend that all dogs have a fecal sample tested for intestinal parasites twice in their first year of life, and then fecal testing once yearly in conjunction with their annual exams lifelong. Heartworm and tick-borne disease screening is performed via a blood test called a 4Dx test. The first 4Dx test should be performed sometime after 7 months of age, and then once yearly thereafter. Dogs who were transported from the southern United States are at higher risk of having been exposed to heartworm disease as young dogs, and so we may advise an additional 4Dx test about 6 months after being transported to Minnesota.



## **Why should I have my dog tested for parasites yearly even though they are taking preventative medications?**

Preventative medications are excellent at decreasing the risk of becoming infected with heartworms, intestinal parasites, and tick-borne diseases, but there is still a small risk of infection. Additionally, preventatives cannot protect against every type of intestinal parasite or tick-borne disease. The earlier on in the course of disease we diagnose an infection, the easier it is to treat. Yearly screening helps us to diagnose and treat infections before they have the chance to make your dog feel ill.

## **When should I use preventatives for my dog?**

Fleas, ticks, intestinal parasites, and mosquitoes that carry heartworm disease can all be active any time that outdoor temperatures are above freezing, and several species of these parasites can overwinter indoors. We recommend using preventatives once monthly year round in order to provide the best protection for your pet. Preventative medications should be started around 6 to 8 weeks of age.

## **Preventative Products**

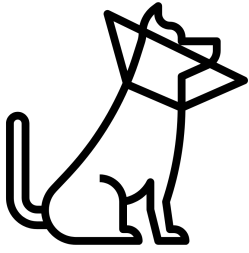
At St. Francis Animal Hospital, we recommend the following preventatives:

**Heartgard Plus:** A once-monthly chewable medication that prevents heartworm disease, roundworm infection, and hookworm infection

**Nexgard:** A once-monthly **chewable** medication that kills fleas and ticks (including deer ticks), and prevents Lyme disease

OR **Frontline Gold:** A once-monthly **topical** medication that kills fleas and ticks

There are many different options for heartworm, flea, and tick prevention, and sometimes we will recommend specific products because of a dog's breed, weight, or lifestyle. Please don't hesitate to ask your veterinarian about other options for preventatives!



## Spaying and Neutering

Spaying (ovariohysterectomy) and neutering (orchietomy) are surgical procedures that are performed to remove the reproductive organs of pets. These surgeries prevent dogs from being able to produce puppies, and also provide a number of health benefits. Spayed female dogs are much less likely to develop mammary (breast) cancer later in life than unspayed dogs. Spaying also prevents the development of pyometra, a life-threatening infection of the uterus. Neutered male dogs are protected against testicular cancer and against some types of prostate disease. Neutering also reduces unwanted hormonally-driven behaviors such as urine marking and mounting.

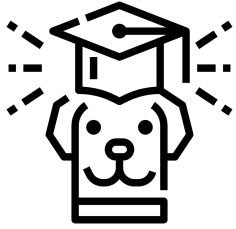
Timing for spaying and neutering depends on several factors, including your dog's breed and lifestyle. For female dogs, spaying prior to their first heat cycle (which usually means spaying around 6 months of age) provides the greatest protection against mammary cancer. If a dog is spayed before her first heat, there is a 0.05% risk of developing a malignant mammary tumor. The risk increases to 8% if spayed after one heat cycle, and 26% if spayed after the second heat cycle.

Because the sex hormones impact the closure of growth plates, there is some evidence that there may be orthopedic benefits to keeping dogs intact until their growth plates have closed. This benefit is most pronounced in large and giant breed dogs and for athletic dogs (i.e. dogs who perform agility, dock diving, or hunting). Growth plate closure occurs between 12 to 18 months of age in most dogs. Your veterinarian can help you decide the best timing for spaying or neutering your dog based on your pet's breed, adult weight, and lifestyle.



Regardless of the age at the time of spaying or neutering, it is important to remember these procedures will decrease your pet's metabolic rate. You will likely need to decrease food intake accordingly to prevent your pet from becoming overweight.

We perform these surgical procedures at St. Francis on an outpatient basis, meaning that pets come into the clinic in the morning and go home that evening. Dogs need close attention the evening following surgery, and usually feel nearly normal by the next day. Dogs need to be activity restricted and wear a cone or a surgical suit for 10 to 14 days following their procedure. Be sure to prepare a small space like a crate or a bathroom for activity restriction. You will receive thorough guidelines about pre-surgical preparation and post-surgical care closer to the time of surgery.

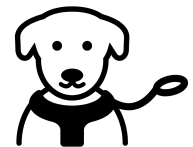


# Socializing and Training Your New Puppy

All puppies need to be shown their new world in ways that allow them to feel safe and comfortable with the sights, smells, and sounds that they'll be exposed to throughout their lives. They also need help learning how to be polite with people and with other dogs, how to go potty in the right places, and how to allow us to do the things we need to do to keep them healthy such as brushing their teeth and trimming their nails. The following guidelines are just a starting point- be sure to check out the recommended resources for more in-depth information, and develop a good relationship with a trainer who can help you navigate puppyhood successfully!

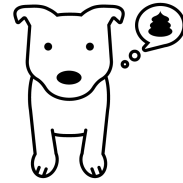
## Socialization

Socialization is the process of teaching a puppy what to expect from his world. The different environments, textures, scents, animals, and people that your puppy experiences during her socialization window (between about 8 and 16 weeks of age) will set the foundation for what she considers to be normal. Your puppy can certainly learn how to accept new experiences after the socialization window has closed, but it becomes more difficult to teach her that new things are normal and not scary. The goal of socialization is to expose your puppy to her world in a controlled, safe, and positive way. Puppy classes offer a great setting for socializing your new puppy to other dogs, but don't forget that socialization includes things like teaching your puppy to enjoy nail trims, baths, ear cleaning, and tooth brushing, exposing him to children, meeting different species of animals like cats, and showing him unique places like lakes. A good puppy trainer can help you navigate the socialization period successfully. Careful attention to socialization in the first few months of your puppy's life will pay off for years to come!



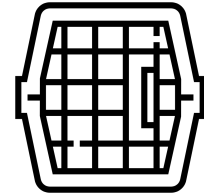
## House Training

House training a puppy means teaching them to urinate and defecate outdoors. Most puppies need the opportunity to go potty at least every 30 to 60 minutes during the day. Aim to get your puppy outside immediately after they wake up in the morning and after naps, within 15 minutes of drinking or eating, and any time you notice cues that they are about to go potty (stopping play, sniffing, circling). Bring your puppy outside and stay still and quiet until they've gone potty. Then give a treat and lots of praise! After going potty outside, they can have playtime indoors. If you take them outside and they don't go potty, they should go into their crate for 15 minutes, then should be taken out to try again. Only allow free play time after they've gone potty outdoors to avoid accidents. If you catch your puppy in the middle of an accident, startle them just enough to interrupt them and run them outside to finish. If they've had an accident that you discover after the fact, don't scold your puppy- they won't understand why they're being scolded, and you may make them scared of you when you want to be building trust. Accidents are a sign that you waited too long or missed their cues that they needed to go out. If you can't have close eyes on your puppy, you can keep them in their crate or you can tether him around your waist so he can't sneak away to have an accident. Preventing mistakes is much more effective than trying to re-train a puppy that has learned he can sneak away to have an accident.



## Crate Training

Crates are small plastic or wire enclosures that are just large enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around, and lie down. Crates should not be used for punishment; you want your puppy to find her crate to be a cozy, comfortable resting space where she can relax and where she knows she won't be bothered.



Crates allow your puppy to be safely confined while you cannot directly supervise her. They also are an invaluable tool for housebreaking, as puppies naturally have a strong aversion to urinating or defecating in the same spot where they are sleeping. In the veterinary clinic or in boarding facilities, your dog will be so much more comfortable if she knows how to relax inside a kennel or crate. You do need to do some training to be sure your puppy enjoys her crate before you start closing her inside. Start by feeding your puppy just inside the door of the crate and gradually move her food deeper inside the crate as she becomes more comfortable with being inside. Then, close the door for short periods and work your way up to longer and longer periods. If your crate training has been successful, your puppy should willingly enter her crate on her own and should not whimper, bark, or paw at the kennel door when the door is closed. If you need some step-by-step guidance on crate training, the book "Perfect Puppy In 7 Days" has a great guide.

## **Resources for training and socialization**

*Before and After Getting Your Puppy* by Dr. Ian Dunbar

*The Puppy Primer* by Patricia McConnell and Brenda Scidmore

*Perfect Puppy in 7 Days: How to Start Your Puppy Off Right* by Dr. Sophia Yin

Dog Training By Kikopup:

[www.youtube.com/channel/UC-qnqaajTk6bfs3UZuue6IQ](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-qnqaajTk6bfs3UZuue6IQ)

Fear Free Happy Homes: [www.fearfreehappyhomes.com](http://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com)



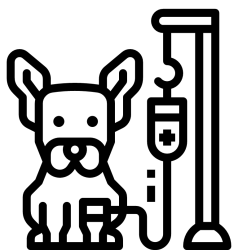
## Feeding Your Puppy

Dog foods are available in a wide variety of forms, flavors, and formulas. It's no surprise that choosing a food can be a challenge! A good puppy food should be formulated specifically for growing puppies or all life stages. If your puppy is expected to be 50 pounds or larger as an adult, they should be fed a diet specifically formulated for large breed puppies in order to meet their specialized energy and calcium requirements. Puppies should be fed a puppy diet until about 12 months of age, then transitioned to an adult dog food. Grain-free diets and boutique diets have been linked to the development of heart disease, so we recommend avoiding these types of foods. We suggest choosing a diet made by a company that employs a board-certified veterinary nutritionist to formulate their foods, such as Hills, Royal Canin, and Purina.

Feeding puppies meals (as opposed to offering free access to food all day) allows you to keep close control over the amount of food they are fed, monitor their food intake to be sure they have a good appetite, and regulate when they will need to go potty which makes housebreaking easier. Puppies should be fed two to three meals a day until they are six months old, at which point they can be transitioned to one to two meals per day. For most puppies, feeding guidelines on the package are a good starting point for deciding how much food to offer per day. Your veterinarian will monitor your puppy's growth and help adjust their food intake if needed.

Treats should constitute no more than 10% of their daily calorie intake. Because puppies should be getting lots of treats as positive reinforcement while training, we recommend reserving a portion of their daily kibble to use as training treats.

Keeping your dog at a lean, healthy body condition can add years onto their life and may prevent a wide range of health issues.

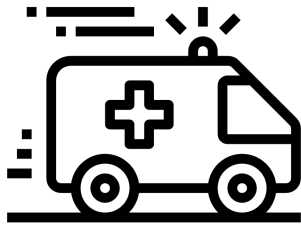


## Pet Insurance

Just like people, dogs can sometimes get sick or injured unexpectedly, and medical bills can add up quickly. Pet insurance can help remove the financial stress when making decisions about your pet's medical care. Because most policies don't cover pre-existing conditions, puppyhood is the best time to enroll your pet in an insurance program. Some car insurance policies have inexpensive pet insurance policies that can be added, and some employers offer pet insurance as a benefit. Pet insurance can be a relatively inexpensive cost that helps provide peace of mind should your pet suddenly have a big medical need. We strongly recommend it!

A few questions to consider as you research options for pet insurance include:

- Does this plan cover injury, illness, routine wellness care, or all of the above?
- Does this plan have breed-specific exemptions that would affect coverage for your puppy?
- Are there specific types of diseases or therapies that are not covered by this plan (i.e. behavioral issues, integrative therapies)?
- Are dental procedures covered as routine wellness care or are they only covered if there is an injury such as a fractured tooth?
- Are there waiting periods prior to coverage taking effect?
- Does the plan require a new deductible be paid for each condition your pet is diagnosed with, or is the deductible an annual cost regardless of the number of conditions your pet has?



## Emergency Care for Your Puppy

Some types of medical emergencies are best handled by clinics that are specially designed and staffed to handle such cases. If your pet is experiencing any of the following, we advise that you take them straight to an emergency facility rather than bringing them to St. Francis:

- Difficulty breathing
- Seizures
- Severe trauma (i.e. hit by a car, dog attack)
- Excessive bleeding
- Inability to urinate
- Collapse, severe weakness, or unresponsiveness
- Pale gums
- Acute neurological disease (i.e. paralysis)
- Severe pain
- Severe vomiting, bloat, or retching without vomiting
- Heatstroke

If you aren't sure whether your pet needs to be seen by an emergency facility, we may be able to triage your pet's condition over the phone and help you decide if she should go in for emergency care.



The following clinics offer emergency and urgent care in the Twin Cities area. Be sure to call ahead if you can to let them know you are on your way and to confirm that they have the capacity to care for your pet.

**Animal Emergency & Referral Center Oakdale**

1163 Helmo Ave N  
Oakdale MN 55128  
[www.aercmn.com](http://www.aercmn.com)  
(651) 501-3766  
Hours: Open 24/7

**Animal Emergency & Referral Center St Paul**

1542 West 7th St  
St Paul MN 55102  
[www.aercmn.com](http://www.aercmn.com)  
(651) 293-1800  
Hours: Open 24/7

**Blue Pearl Blaine**

11850 Aberdeen St NE  
Blaine MN 55449  
<https://bluepearlvet.com/hospital/blaine-mn/>  
(763) 754-5000  
Hours: Open 6 pm to 8 am Monday through Friday, 24 hours on weekends

**Blue Pearl Eden Prairie**

7717 Flying Cloud Drive  
Eden Prairie MN 55344  
<https://bluepearlvet.com/hospital/eden-prairie-mn/>  
(952) 942-8272  
Hours: Open 24/7

**Blue Pearl Arden Hills**

1285 Grey Fox Rd. Ste. 100

Arden Hills, MN 55112

<https://bluepearlvet.com/hospital/arden-hills-mn/>

(763) 754-5000

Hours: Open 24/7

**University of Minnesota Small Animal Hospital**

1365 Gortner Ave

St Paul MN 55108

<https://www.vmc.umn.edu>

(612) 626-8387

Hours: Open 24/7

**Como Park After Hours**

1014 Dale St N

St Paul MN 55117

<http://www.comoparkanimalhospital.com>

(651) 487-3255

Hours: Open 24/7

We work closely with each of these urgent care and emergency facilities. We trust their teams to provide the care your pet needs when we cannot. Afterwards, we will receive a comprehensive report for your pet's medical record at St Francis.



## Top 10 Toxins

Puppy-proofing your house means being aware of the most dangerous household items that could hurt your puppy if ingested. According to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, the following are the 10 most commonly reported toxins:

1. **Over-the-counter medications** such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen (Tylenol), joint rubs, and herbal supplements
2. **Human prescription medications**, especially cardiac, ADHD, thyroid, and antidepressant medications
3. **Toxic human foods**, especially xylitol, grapes, raisins, onions, garlic and protein bars
4. **Chocolate**, particularly baking cocoa and bittersweet chocolate
5. **Veterinary medications**, especially flavored chewable medications such as Rimadyl
6. **Household chemicals** such as paint, adhesives or spackle
7. **Rodenticides** such as D-con and Tom Cat mouse and rat poisons
8. **Plants**, especially sago palm, garlic plants, milkweed, and deadly nightshade
9. **Insecticides**
10. **Garden chemicals** like fertilizers and herbicides

If your pet has ingested something and you are concerned it might be toxic, you can call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center for guidance and treatment recommendations 24 hours a day at (888) 426-4435 (note that a consultation fee may apply).