

Prince Frederick Animal Hospital  
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## Vaccine Schedule

The first 4 months are often the most critical in the life of a dog. Many devastating diseases strike early: therefore preventative medicine is essential. It is strongly recommended to initiate a vaccine program by 6-8 weeks of age. Vaccines should be boosted yearly. Rabies is given every 3 years after the initial 1-year vaccine. Law mandates current rabies vaccinations, whether the animal is exposed to the outdoors or not. Females planned for breeding should be current on vaccines BEFORE breeding. Vaccines should not be administered to pregnant or debilitated animals.

\*6, 8, 10 Weeks:      **DHLPP** (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza)  
**Lyme** (a tick borne illness) start no earlier than 9 Weeks old  
**Corona** (a diarrhea disease) start at 8 weeks or Older

\*12 weeks:            **DHLPP**  
**Lyme** (then repeat annually)  
**Corona** (then repeat annually, stops at 4 years)  
**Rabies 1 year** (then repeat annually)

\*16 weeks:            **DHLPP** (then repeat annually)

\* Bordetella vaccines are available for protection against tracheobronchitis (kennel cough), which is usually a non-fatal upper respiratory infection. (Can be started at 8 weeks or older)

## **Heartworm Protection**

Heartworms are parasites that are easily transmitted to dogs (and cats) by mosquitoes. Chronic heartworm infestation causes heart and lung disease and is fatal if left untreated. Because heartworm treatment is expensive, it is recommended to start prevention between 8 weeks and 6 months of age (the sooner the better). Monthly prevention is available through your veterinarian. Dosage is according to weight. It is recommended to check a heartworm test yearly to catch the disease as early as possible. If the test result is positive, the treatment should start as soon as possible. A negative heartworm status is essential for all anesthetic events because the heartworm disease increases the risk of complications under anesthesia, including death.

## **Intestinal Parasites**

Puppies and strays should have feces analyzed for intestinal parasites (roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms, and coccidia) starting at 3 weeks of age. Up to 90% of puppies have worms! Worms can be acquired before birth, while nursing, from the environment, or from fleas. Multiple fecal samples are recommended initially in order to identify eggs that are shed intermittently. Parasite infestations can cause a wide variety of clinical signs including itchy skin, poor hair coat, stunted growth, pot-bellied appearance, vomiting, bloody or discolored diarrhea, and death. A fecal should be checked during routine yearly visits. Deworming treatment depends on the parasites identified. In order to prevent re-infestation of the environment, feces should be disposed of.

## **Fleas and Ticks**

Fleas can cause anemia and death in very young animals. Itching, especially of the hind end and pepper-like specks of “dirt” in the hair can indicate flea infestation. Ticks can cause very serious debilitating diseases, which left untreated, can result in death. Ticks must feed for several hours in order to transmit disease. To reduce the chance of infection, remove the tick promptly with tweezers, tissue or gloves, and clean the area. If the dog exhibits a rash, sudden joint pain and lameness, fever, anorexia or lethargy have you pet seen as soon as possible. If caught in time treatment can be effective. Flea and tick preventatives available from your veterinarian are safe, easy and effective in killing both fleas and ticks for dogs 10 weeks of age and older. They are applied to the skin once a month. Swimming, bathing and humidity does not effect the efficiency of these preventatives as long as dogs are dry 2 days prior and 2 days after application.

## **Surgical Sterilization**

Dog and cat overpopulation is a huge problem in the United States. Breeding of pets is highly discouraged, and should be left for professional breeders. Breeding can be costly, messy, and frustrating. Females should be spayed at 5 ½ to 6 months, while males should be neutered at 6 months. The first heat may occur in females as early as 6 months or as late as 1-½ years. The occurrence of serious disease (such as testicular and breast cancer, prostate and uterine disorder, etc.) are much reduced, especially when sterilized at less than 1 year of age.

## **Weather and Outdoor Pets**

If your dog is housed outdoors, provide a warm, insulate, and draft free shelter that is slightly elevated, so water does not accumulate. A plastic or canvas door should be used to keep out winter winds. If the weather becomes severe or temperatures drop below freezing, bring you pet inside. Water needs to be fresh and checked frequently for freezing. Snow removal substances may be toxic; read labels before use. Remove salt, snow, and ice from paws immediately. If you suspect frostbite, call you veterinarian. Antifreeze is very deadly (1 teaspoon can kill a small dog or any size cat) and has a sweet taste, so clean up spills immediately. During hot weather, dehydration and heat stress can be life threatening. Heat stress causes panting, high fever, rapid heart rate, fatigue, shock and collapse. Heat stress is especially likely in older or overweight pets, and pets with heart or lung conditions. Minimize the possibility of the heat stress by providing clean water, shade, and adequate ventilation at all times, especially for animal kept outdoors. Avoid overheating, and **NEVER** leave a pet in a parked vehicle. Hot surfaces can irritate or burn your pet's feet. Walk or play on grass or light colored surfaces where the temperatures are cooler.

## **Feeding**

Puppies should be fed a good quality puppy food until they are 1 year old: giant breeds until 2 years old. The recommended amount to be fed is 1 cup per 10 pounds, divided into three feedings a day until 12 weeks, then divided into 2 meals daily.

## **Grooming/Hygiene**

Frequent bathing can dry out skin. Do not bathe your dog more than every 2 weeks unless instructed by your veterinarian. Rinse well, otherwise skin can become irritated and itchy. Trim nails once a month. Gentle manipulation on the paws at an early age will help your puppy get used to handling and trimming nails. Clean ears every 2 weeks. Do not use Q-tips in the ear, only at the opening. Cleaning solutions are available through your veterinarian.

## **Microchip**

A microchip is a permanent source of identification that is implanted just beneath the skin surface. Prince Frederick Animal Hospital and Tri-County Animal Shelter both have a microchip scanner. If a microchipped dog is taken to either location, it can be traced back to its owner without delay.