



Puppy Wellness Care Overview

Welcome to Malta Animal Hospital. We are delighted that you have chosen us to care for the latest addition to your family. The following is a basic disease prevention program that we follow to keep your puppy as healthy possible throughout his/her life. At times we may modify this schedule to suit your pet's individual needs. We are here to answer your health care, diet, behavior and hygiene questions; we are available in- person, by phone and online. We encourage you to use the *PetSite* feature available at www.maltavet.com to help manage your pet's care. Using your personal *PetSite*, you can check your pet's health care reminders or communicate with us *whenever* you find it convenient. This **FREE!** tool will allow you to request appointments or refills, review lab results, print vaccine certificates, provide feedback and more! Our website also offers a Pet Library link where you will be able to access some of the most up to date pet care information available.

Parasite Prevention

Intestinal Parasite Prevention

During the first 4-6 months of your puppy's life, your puppy should be screened at least twice for intestinal parasites and dewormed frequently. Intestinal parasite screening can be accomplished by simply dropping off a small fresh stool sample at your convenience, or by bringing it to your next appointment. There is a lab drop-box situated at our front entrance for convenient after-hours sample drop off. Keep in mind that most intestinal parasites are microscopic so typically you will not see them with your naked eye. False negative test results can occur if the parasite does not happen to be shedding eggs at the time of sample collection. Some parasites can be contagious to people (zoonotic). It is for these reasons we encourage our clients to follow basic hygiene standards (hand washing and frequent "poop-scooping" of the yard) and have your pet's stool checked twice during the first four months. After that, your pet's stool should be checked at least once yearly and anytime your dog experiences vomiting, weight loss, or diarrhea.

To prevent infection or re-infection of your pet with some of the most common intestinal parasites, we recommend that you keep your dog on a heartworm preventive year round. Heartworm preventives are also **intestinal parasite** preventives and can help your dog and family remain healthy.

Flea and Tick Prevention

Ectoparasite (flea/tick) control is vital to your pet's health. We live in an area where tick-borne illness accounts for the majority of infectious diseases in dogs. There are several important steps to controlling these dangerous pests, but the first step is using a quality topical flea/tick preventive. Your veterinarian at Malta Animal Hospital can help you choose the best product for your pet.

Heartworm Prevention

Heartworm disease is a potentially fatal disease that is transmitted by mosquitoes. Once a dog is bitten by an infected mosquito, heartworm larvae migrate through the tissues and eventually lodge in the heart and lungs causing damage to these vital organs. Fortunately, heartworm disease can be treated if your dog becomes infected, but treatment is complex and expensive. It is much cheaper and easier to prevent this fatal disease! In fact, heartworm disease is **completely preventable** by administering a heartworm preventive once monthly. We feel so strongly that ALL DOGS should take a monthly heartworm preventive that we'll dispense your puppy's first dose of heartworm preventive at his/her very first preventive care visit. We recommend that you administer the heartworm preventive on the first of each and every month, year round. Your puppy will be tested for heartworm and tick-borne diseases at around 6 months of age, then annually.

Vaccinations

Distemper, Adenovirus (Hepatitis), Parainfluenza and Parvovirus (DHPP)

The DHPP vaccine is a multivalent (provides immunity against multiple disease agents) vaccine that provides protection against Canine Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis (adenovirus), Canine Parvovirus, and Canine Parainfluenza. This group of viral diseases are well controlled by appropriate vaccination, but still exist in both the domestic pet dog population and among wild canids (such as foxes and coyotes). Canine Distemper and Canine Parvovirus are two of the most dreaded infectious diseases in dogs with very high mortality rates in infected individuals. Puppies are vaccinated against distemper and parvovirus (both potentially fatal viruses), starting around 6-8 weeks of age, then receive booster vaccinations every 4 weeks until after he/she has reached 16 weeks of age. The age that your puppy receives his/her last vaccine is critical for providing protection against these diseases. Your dog will require regular booster vaccinations to maintain long term protection. Malta Animal Hospital veterinarians utilize the most up to date protocols to safely extend the interval between boosters. Usually, this means once every 3 years after a proper foundation of immunity has been established. As adults, vaccine titers may be measured against Distemper, Hepatitis, and Parvovirus to help guide booster vaccination, and potentially increase the interval between boosters.

Rabies

Rabies is a deadly but preventable viral disease that is primarily spread through bite wounds from infected animals. Rabies is a significant public health concern because people, cats, dogs, ferrets, and many other animals are susceptible, and the consequences of infection are FATAL! In fact, once symptoms begin, Rabies infection is almost universally fatal... vaccination is the **only** protection against this deadly virus, and is so important that it is *required by New York State Law!* Your puppy will receive his/her first Rabies vaccine between 12 and 16 weeks of age. As required by New York State Law, a second Rabies vaccine will be administered one year later. Thereafter, Rabies boosters must be administered once every 3 years. You will receive a *Rabies Certificate* and a Rabies tag at the time of vaccination.

Bordetella

Bordetella is one of the causes of the canine upper respiratory disease, infectious tracheobronchitis (ITB or "kennel cough"). It is a bacterial infection of the respiratory system of dogs characterized by severe coughing and gagging. It is a very contagious airborne disease. Most cases appear after contact with other dogs in kennels, grooming parlors and other places where dogs gather. Note that there are multiple infectious agents

that contribute to the signs and symptoms of canine infectious tracheobronchitis, and this vaccine is NOT 100% effective at preventing all infectious respiratory disease in dogs... the goal is to minimize respiratory illness and limit chronic cough and complications. Some Bordetella vaccines also include Parainfluenza for added protection against respiratory disease. Your puppy will receive his/her first Bordetella vaccine around 8 weeks of age. The Bordetella vaccination is boosted annually but recommended every 6 months for dogs that are frequently kenneled or have frequent exposure to other dogs. The vaccination should be administered at least 2 weeks prior to expected exposure to other dogs.

Lyme

We recommend that all dogs be tested and vaccinated against Lyme disease. A vaccine followed by a booster 2-3 weeks later is required initially, followed by annual booster vaccinations. We recommend using a topical ectoparasite preventive product that kills ticks along with vigilant monitoring for ticks in addition to vaccination because of the high risk of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases in this area. We recommend annual screening for Lyme disease in all dogs.

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis (Lepto) is a bacterial disease that affects many animals, including dogs, people, wildlife, and farm animals. This disease is zoonotic (can be transmitted from animals to people), and is found in Upstate New York. While most cases of Leptospirosis go undiagnosed, and maybe even unrecognized due the very vague flu-like signs most commonly encountered, serious cases cause liver and/or kidney failure and are often fatal. Leptospirosis vaccines are not administered to all dogs... this “non-core” vaccine is appropriate for all dogs that go outdoors in our area as transmission is most common from exposure to puddles or other stagnant water contaminated by wildlife urine.

At Malta Animal Hospital we initiate the Leptospirosis vaccinations around 12 weeks of age, and booster 3-4 weeks later. Thereafter the vaccination is boosted annually. The Leptospirosis vaccination is sometimes administered in combination with the DHPP vaccine, creating “DHLPP.”

Canine Influenza (influenza A H3N8)

The canine flu is a relatively new viral respiratory disease to which nearly all dogs are susceptible. It is present in a handful of states at this time, including New York. Similar to influenza in people, this disease can be uncomfortable, can spread among dogs, and is not typically fatal, though the very young, very old, and otherwise immunocompromised individuals are at increased risk of serious complications. This disease is not known to affect humans. The vaccine is not considered a “core” recommendation, but reserved for those dogs that are around other dogs frequently (doggie daycare, boarding situations, show dogs, etc.)

Your puppy may receive the first vaccination after 12 weeks of age, with a required booster vaccination 4 weeks later. Thereafter, vaccination against Canine Influenza is recommended annually for those dogs with ongoing increased risk.

Spaying or Neutering

At approximately 6 months of age we recommend that you schedule your puppy to be spayed (ovariohysterectomy of females) or neutered (castration of males). We schedule elective surgery on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. We will provide you with a complete outline of expected costs, and pre-

surgical instructions prior to the day of your pet's surgery. We will typically instruct you to withhold food after 10 pm the night before surgery and may ask you to take the water bowl away the morning of surgery. Your pet should be dropped off at Malta Animal Hospital between 8 and 9 am on the day of surgery. We will perform a same-day pre-surgical examination, pre-anesthetic blood testing (if not already performed), and administer a pre-anesthetic medication before surgery to reduce anxiety, and act as part of your dog's pain management plan. Your pet will then have an IV catheter placed to facilitate easy administration of anesthetic agents, supportive IV fluids during anesthesia, and vascular access in the unlikely event of an emergency. During anesthesia we will continuously monitor your pet's blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen level, CO₂ level, breathing rate, depth of anesthesia, and body temperature. Our sterile surgical suite is equipped with the very latest in patient warming devices (including medical grade warm water and warm air circulation, a warming cabinet for warm IV fluids and warm towels/blankets), anesthetic delivery and monitoring equipment, surgical lighting, even special air handling equipment to maintain positive pressure to help keep germs out! Your pet will be able to go home the same day (usually in the late afternoon or early evening). We dispense at least three days of oral pain medication and provide post-operative discharge instructions. Keep in mind that your pet will need to be kept quiet for at least one week after surgery. This means no running, jumping, hiking, playing catch, bathing, etc. All dogs are discharged with an Elizabethan collar to prevent licking/self-trauma of the surgical incision. We schedule an incision exam one approximately 1 week after surgery (at no charge), to ensure the incision is healing properly. Sutures are typically buried under the skin and are intended to dissolve. If your pet has any visible sutures or staples we will remove them ~14 days after surgery.

Microchipping

We recommend permanent microchip identification for all pets! This provides your pet with a form of identification if he/she is ever lost. The procedure consists of simply injecting a minute microchip (approximately the size of a grain of rice) under your dog's skin. Included in the cost of the microchip is registration in a national database. If your pet is ever lost, the microchip under his/her skin can be scanned with a handheld device, and the number can be traced back to you! One of the best times to have a microchip implanted is at the time of spay or neuter.

Dental Care

To keep your pet's teeth healthy and his/her breath nice and fresh, we recommend daily home care. Initiating dental home care at a young age is recommended so your pet will be more accepting of dental care. During one of your pet's wellness visits we will teach you how to brush your pet's teeth and discuss other home dental care options. You should brush your dog's teeth EVERY DAY- this brief investment of time pays big dividends in the form of not just a healthier smile, but improved systemic health, comfort, and even reduced cost of care!