



*Shepherd Veterinary Clinic*  
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**PUPPY TALES**  
*Care of your new Puppy*

**1. FEEDING**

Young puppies have small stomachs and high metabolic rates, so they must be fed several times a day. For the 6 to 8 week-old pups this means at least four times a day. When the pup is 6 months of age feeding can be done twice daily. Feed a good quality, brand name puppy food.

**2. HOUSETRAINING**

Puppies are much easier to houstrain if food is not left out all the time. As with all infants, eating sets the entire digestive tract in motion. 10-15 minutes after a meal the pup will have to urinate and defecate. Feed your puppy and then take it outside to eliminate. Praise the pup when it has finished; you may even give a small treat at that time as further positive reinforcement. If you find that the pup has had an accident in the house do not punish the puppy after the fact. Never rub a puppy's face in its urine or feces; it will have no idea why you are being so mean. If you catch the pup eliminating in the house, make a loud noise and show your displeasure with a strong NO. Immediately take the puppy outside. If houstraining is very difficult, crating the pup at night or when unattended may help.

**3. CHEW TOYS**

Be sure to always have plenty of chew toys available. Even adult dogs like to chew and a puppy will also be teething. Pet stores have a large variety of chew toys; the safest are soft rubber chews and ropes of fabric. Dogs can crack their teeth on very hard toys.

NEVER give any dog real bones. Cooked bones splinter and can pierce through the stomach and intestines. Pieces of bone can become stuck and cause obstructions. Large hard bones can crack the dog's teeth. All of these problems can be very expensive to treat and can be life-threatening.

**4. PARVO and OTHER VACCINES**

Keep your puppy at home until it has had its last vaccinations at four months of age because it is at risk of exposure to parvo disease. So, no beach, no park, no cruising until after the last shots.

All dogs should have a core vaccine which protects against distemper, upper respiratory virus, and parvo. After the puppy series this vaccine should be boosted at one year of age. Depending on exposure, your dog may go on an every three year program for the core vaccine. Leptospirosis vaccine can be added to the core if your dog goes hiking or playing in fresh water streams.

If your dog is going to be boarded or is in contact with other dogs at a dog park, it should be vaccinated against kennel cough with a Bordetella vaccine.

**5. OBEDIENCE TRAINING**

It is a good idea to go to obedience classes with your pup when it is old enough. This is especially true of large-breed dogs. Not only does this help you bond with your dog, but also a well-behaved pet will make everyone happier.

## **6. LICENSING**

All dogs over four months of age in the County of Maui must be licensed. This is important identification for your pet. If your dog is lost, only if it has identification can it be traced back to you. It is tragic the number of lost animals that end up at the animal shelter and are never reunited with their owners. Licenses can be obtained at the Maui County Animal Shelter on Mokulele Highway, or from satellite county offices.

## **7. SPAYING AND NEUTERING**

I recommend spaying and neutering at 5 to 6 months of age. It can be done even sooner if necessary. A sterilized animal makes a much better pet, and there are several health advantages to spaying and neutering. An identifying tattoo or microchip can be placed at the time of surgery.

Over a thousand dogs and five thousand cats are euthanized at the animal shelter on Maui every year because there are not enough homes for them. You may be able to find homes for your litter, but then there are that many less homes for the other animals.

If you do breed your pet, be sure it does not have any genetic faults that will be passed to offspring. Do not breed animals that are related.

## **8. TRUCKS**

All dogs in the beds of pickup trucks must be cross-tethered; this is a Maui County law and it is for the protection of the dog. How many times do people get thrown out of pickups and are either killed or seriously injured? The same thing happens to dogs but it does not get into the newspaper. The pet stores have special rigs for cross-tethering, or you can do it with two leashes.

## **9. BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS**

Dogs are pack animals and by nature they need companionship. As with humans, solitary confinement is the worst thing to do to a dog. Many canine behavior problems, which appear to be deliberate destructive behavior, are signs of distress: barking, digging, or chewing inappropriate objects. If you are having these problems with your dog, please call us to discuss solutions. The best answer may be to get your dog a companion.

## **10. INTERNAL PARASITES**

Your dog should be on monthly heartworm preventative for life. The current preventatives also give protection against the intestinal parasites, hookworm and roundworm. However, if your puppy already has intestinal parasites, they must be treated with specific wormers to clear them from its body. A stool check will let us detect four of the possible five intestinal parasites: roundworm, hookworm, whipworm and coccidia. The other common intestinal parasite is tapeworm, and is visible as rice-like segments on the stool or around the tail.

## **11. EXTERNAL PARASITES**

Most dogs will pick up fleas and sometimes ticks unless they are confined to a treated area. There are several new products that are non-toxic and highly effective to treat these external parasites. Program is a once-monthly, flea birth control pill that keeps fleas from reproducing. Advantage, Revolution and Frontline are flea adulticides applied topically once a month.

## **12. NAIL TRIMMING**

It is important to begin trimming nails early. If you wait until the nails are long and the dog is older, it will be very difficult.

## **13. DENTAL CARE**

Begin dental care early in your puppy's life. Dental disease is very common in mature dogs, causing periodontal infections, and even kidney and heart conditions due to the constant bacterial exposure. Begin brushing your puppy's teeth now to prevent the tartar build-up which leads to periodontal infections. Special toothpastes are available in flavors your puppy will enjoy and which will not cause stomach upset like the toothpastes designed for human use.