



## **Love your pet... love your vet**

### **Puppies – a guide to your new puppy**

Congratulations on the new addition to your family. This is an exciting time for everyone and we hope that you will have many happy years together. This handout covers some of the basic facts about keeping a new puppy. We hold regular Puppy Parties which you are welcome to attend to find out more, as well as establishing good socialization skills from an early age – just ask a member of the team when these run.

#### **Suggested feeding guidelines**

- 6-12 weeks: four meals daily of Hill's Science Plan puppy food
- 12-16 weeks: three meals daily of Hill's Science Plan puppy food
- From about 16 weeks: two meals daily of Hill's Science Plan puppy food. Change to an Adult Complete Hill's diet at about one year for small breeds and at about 10 months for large breeds
- Large breeds should be fed the Hill's Science Plan large breed puppy food
- Remember if you are feeding a Hill's diet you do not need to add any supplements or give milk

Getting the right food for your dog is one of the most important decisions you will make and making that right choice will help keep your pet fit for life.

At Hillside we believe that Hill's Science Plan is the best for your puppy. The Science Plan range is designed to satisfy all of your dog's dietary needs from the beginning of its life, through adult-hood and when more mature. It's a fact that if you feed your dog a diet like Hill's Science Plan it will live a longer healthier life because it is less likely to suffer from problems like obesity and dental disease.

As your dog gets older its dietary requirements change and different breeds have different needs. With Hillside recommending Hill's Science Plan food, you will not need to worry about this because we will recommend the right diet for your dog regardless of its age, breed or lifestyle.

Actions speak louder than words though and it's a fact that our own staff feed their pets on Hill's, so we really do practice what we preach.

## **Vaccinations**

- Your puppy should have a primary course of two vaccinations starting with the first at eight weeks and the final one at ten weeks. This allows early socialization to be undertaken
- Remember older puppies still need vaccinating if the breeder has not already done this
- We recommend that puppies should not go out in public places until fourteen days after their second vaccination
- Once vaccinated your puppy should receive yearly booster vaccinations at its annual health check – Hillside will remind you when this is due

## **Parasite Control - worms, fleas and fox mange**

There are a number of parasites that pose a threat to both you and your puppy. Understanding them and using the right products to protect your pet is the key to avoiding problems.

Did you know that most puppies are born with roundworms? It is very important that your puppy is treated regularly to eliminate these intestinal parasites. Untreated puppies can suffer from slowed growth, tummy upsets and occasionally death.

Puppies that are in close contact with children should be wormed, as children can be infected with roundworms too. Roundworm infection in children can be extremely serious with the potential to cause liver damage, asthma and even blindness.

The other worm of concern in dogs is French heartworm - it can kill your pet! Dogs can only pick up this parasite by eating slugs or snails. Affected animals are often young and frequently develop a cough.

Fox mange is caused by a tiny mite that burrows into the skin of your dog. Fox mange is intensely itchy and an infected dog will cause great damage to its skin by scratching almost constantly.

Fleas are one of the most common parasites. They infest both the pet and the home making them difficult to treat. Infestations are therefore best avoided or dealt with quickly.

We will assess the risk to your pet and your family from each of the above parasites and recommend a personalized prevention plan accordingly.

The products recommended by Hillside Veterinary Centre are prescription only medicines and in order for you to obtain these products from us, your pet will need to have been examined within the previous 12 months.

We would recommend not purchasing flea and worm products from a pet shop or supermarket as they are rarely effective enough to protect your pet.

## **Exercise**

Your puppy should not be allowed to exercise heavily until it has reached maturity. In small breeds this will be about 12 months of age, in some larger breeds it can be as much as 18 months of age. Excessive boisterous exercise (jumping, agility or fly-ball for example) can increase the chances of joint problems, especially in large susceptible breeds. It may therefore be necessary in some individuals to exercise them mostly on the lead until they are more mature.

## Neutering

- We recommend that both dogs and bitches are neutered after the age of six months. Not only does this prevent unwanted pregnancy, it also has several health benefits to our pets
- Neutering males can reduce the likelihood of testicular tumours, prostate problems and anal tumours
- Neutering females at an early age can reduce mammary gland cancers and prevent serious womb infections in later life
- Neutering your pet will not change him/her from being a happy personality but can in some individuals reduce any aggressive tendencies that may exist. In males it may also reduce the tendency to wander off
- It is not necessary for a bitch to have a season before neutering. However, bitches that are only six months old should be checked by a vet before the neutering operation to ensure that they are physically mature enough
- If you are considering breeding from your pet you should weigh up the pros and cons carefully beforehand. If things do not go according to plan it can be time consuming and expensive. Further advice about breeding can be obtained from reference books or ask us at the surgery

## Insurance & Microchips

**Insurance** for your puppy is something we strongly recommend as veterinary fees can be expensive. There is no NHS for animals but many people expect the same quality of care and treatment for their pets. Please ask a member of the team regarding pet insurance and we will give you our recommendation.

**Micro-chipping** is a unique way of identifying your pet. A small microchip is implanted under the skin of your puppy's neck. Should your pup go missing, organisations like animal rescue centres, vets, dog wardens and the RSPCA are able to scan for these chips and identify you as the owner. Hillside stocks the Biotherm™ microchips that read your pet's body temperature at the same time, without the need for a thermometer in the bottom (which can be unpleasant for both the pet and the vet!).

## Dental care

Dogs' teeth like our own are susceptible to cavities and tartar. Regular oral hygiene is therefore an essential part of the care of your pet. Daily tooth brushing with a soft child's toothbrush is recommended and we stock flavoured pet toothpaste. We also recommend a dry food formula (Hill's t/d) to support daily brushing.

Your puppy/dog should be encouraged to chew daily to reduce plaque and tartar. Rawhide chews, tugger ropes and dental kongs™ are effective aids to dental hygiene.

## Toys, playing & training

Your puppy will need lots of toys to keep him/her occupied and interested. Try not to buy toys with bits that come loose and can be easily swallowed (these can cause blockages and make your pet unwell). We encourage the use of toys that can be chewed safely to help clean the teeth.

Toilet training can be frustrating with your puppy. Newspaper should be used indoors initially and your puppy should be encouraged to use this. Praise should always be given when your puppy goes to the toilet in the correct place.

Remember, like children, each puppy will take different lengths of time to acquire toilet training skills. Always be patient and consistent. Our nurses are available to give more information on training and behaviour should you need this.

**Finally...** we hope that you will have lots of fun and pleasure from your new puppy/dog over the coming years and enjoy your life together. We look forward to helping you achieve this.

If you would like further advice about the health or welfare of your puppy or dog please contact Hillside and we will be more than happy to help.

*Disclaimer: The information and advice contained in this handout is for general information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for a veterinary examination and/or specific treatment or advice. You should always seek advice from your veterinary surgeon.*

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