

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

### **The importance of socialising your puppy**

Have you got a new four-legged addition to your family? If the answer is yes, then it's important that your puppy grows up to be as friendly and happy with people and animals as possible.

All animals, including dogs, have a sensitive period at the start of their lives when they're learning about their surroundings. Anything that is encountered before a puppy is 16 weeks old will be tolerated and perhaps even enjoyed. After this time, unfamiliar people, objects and experiences are approached with caution.

Puppy socialisation involves meeting and exploring new environments as much as possible. The most effective way of doing this is by allowing your puppy to have several new experiences a day and making sure they get plenty of rest in between. As your puppy gets older, they will be able to cope with longer encounters and it is important to ensure that these are enjoyable.

Socialisation can include:

#### **Humans – adults and children**

The more happy encounters your pet has with adults and children of different ages, the more tolerant he/she will become. This also applies to loud noises; exposure from an early age will often stop dogs developing a phobia of loud or unexpected sounds.

#### **Other dogs and puppies**

Allow your puppy to mix with sociable dogs and puppies and interrupt any behaviour you do not want your puppy to show to other dogs as an adult. It's also advisable to take him/her to a puppy party or puppy class, where he/she can learn to mix with others.

#### **Different experiences and environments**

Take your puppy on trips to enable him/her to experience car travel, traffic, crowds, towns and the countryside.

#### **Cats, livestock and horses**

Puppies should meet a variety of animals, but it's advisable to keep your pet on a lead to prevent him/her from learning to chase or harass them.

Don't forget - until your puppy is fully vaccinated, he/she will be unable to mix freely with un-vaccinated dogs or walk where other dogs have been.

Here at Hillside we run regular puppy parties which are an excellent way to start the socialisation process. Modern vaccine protocols mean we can in some cases complete a vaccine course for a puppy as early as 10 weeks. This means you and your new puppy can go out and about as soon as possible.

**For further information on puppy socialisation, puppy parties, local dog training clubs or the integration of your socialisation programme with the timing of vaccinations, please contact the practice on 01202 698899, email us on [mail@hillsidevets.co.uk](mailto:mail@hillsidevets.co.uk) or just pop in.**

*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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