



## Health Care for Puppies & Dogs

As a responsible pet owner, it is important to be aware of the following health and wellbeing issues. Always practice good sanitary habits and wash your hands thoroughly after interaction with your pets.

**Intestinal Worms:** Puppies that are not treated for intestinal worms can become very sick and sometimes die. Some worms can also be spread from dogs to humans (particularly *hookworms*, *roundworms* and certain *tapeworms*)

Puppies require more regular deworming than adult dogs:

- Deworming plan or program varies depending on the puppy but keep in mind the following:
- Puppies **2-12 weeks old** should be dewormed **every 2 - 3 weeks**.
- Puppies **3-6 months old** should be dewormed **once a month**.
- Dogs **6 - 12 months** should be dewormed **every three months**.
- After one year of age discuss with your veterinarian an appropriate deworming schedule.

**Vaccination:** Protects your puppy (or dog) against three most common deadly diseases- *Canine Distemper*, *Canine Infectious Hepatitis Virus* and *Parvovirus*. For your puppy to be fully protected against these diseases a series of vaccinations is required.

SPCA recommended series follows:

Vaccination DHP (C3)	Age
1 <sup>st</sup> C3	8 weeks of age
2 <sup>nd</sup> C3 or 1 <sup>st</sup> if started as older pup	12 weeks of age +/- 1 <sup>st</sup> leptospirosis
3 <sup>rd</sup> C3 & 2 <sup>nd</sup> if started as older pup	16 weeks +/- 2 <sup>nd</sup> leptospirosis
Annual booster vaccination	Every 12 months until 3 years of age then frequency after discussion with the veterinarian

DHP protects against Distemper, Parvovirus and Hepatitis. Additional vaccines such as leptospirosis can be discussed with your veterinarian.

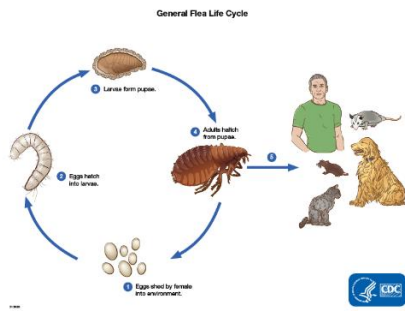
If your puppy is older or younger than above, discuss with a veterinarian when vaccinations should be given.

Your puppy should be kept away from unvaccinated dogs and areas where unvaccinated dogs could have been until two weeks after their final vaccination. See "Keeping Your Puppy Safe"

**Heartworm:** Heartworm is a disease that affects dogs and occasionally cats. The heartworm larvae size is microscopic and they are **spread by mosquitoes**. The larvae develop into adults and live inside the heart and blood vessels of your dog. Prevention for heartworm should commence when your puppy is 6 months of age and continue throughout the dog's lifetime. You can protect your dog against heartworm using medications such as a **monthly chewable, spot-on therapy or an annual injection**. You should take the time to discuss this with your veterinarian and decide which product will suit you best.

**Beware:** Store bought dewormers. We would not recommend "chocolate-labelled dewormers". There are good ones available that are safe and effective to use. Before you buy read the label – if it says Heartworm and it is to be given daily this is not the recommendation for Intestinal worms.

**Fleas:** Fleas feed on blood and are a common cause of anaemia, skin irritation and itchiness. They can help to transmit certain parasites to your puppy such a tapeworm. **Flea control** is recommended for all household pets. Please note: **DOG PRODUCTS SHOULD NEVER BE USED ON CATS AS THEY CAN CAUSE TOXIC REACTIONS.** Lots of different products are available for flea control and they are often combined with an intestinal wormer. Be careful if you use flea collars or flea products that are available in the supermarket, as some of these products are generally ineffective and often unsafe. Flea shampoo can assist in removing a heavy burden of fleas but does not eliminate fleas once the hair-coat is dry.



On the dog flea feces (commonly called flea dirt) appears like black pepper or dirt; in the environment flea eggs appear like salt; on the dog adult fleas move quickly and hop.

**Ticks:** Ticks are uncomfortable for your dogs and cause damage to their skin. Ticks feed on puppies and dogs blood and heavy tick infestations can cause anaemia (insufficient red blood cells), they are also responsible for the spread of certain diseases. You should check your pet for ticks every day and gently remove any that you find by grasping the tick right against the skin and pulling steadily until the tick is off.

Do not attempt to remove ticks using boiling water, kerosene or fire. Some products are available that treat both ticks and fleas; and some products can last up to 6 months – these generally need veterinary approval.



**Ticks attached to dog skin    Tick life cycle size comparison**

Fleas and ticks live in your pet's environment. You should regularly treat their bedding and living area with an appropriate insecticide, as well as vacuum +/- or launder bedding and surfaces. Talk to your veterinarian for information about what products are effective and safe to use.

**Biology of mating in dogs:**

Male dogs will investigate every female. A female in oestrus or 'heat' will attract many males dogs.

A female dog in oestrus or 'heat' will have swollen genitals which increase in size over a few weeks and have blood spots (bloody vaginal discharge) for 3-14 days at the end of her 'heat'.

It is at or just after the blood spots she will be very receptive to the male and allow breeding or mating.

Female dogs in 'heat' at that time will stand for the male and can have other signs such as flagging the tail – holding it off to one side.

**Mating leads to a tie where the male and female are stuck for a short period of time. Damage can occur if they are forced apart. Furthermore this is a vulnerable position for them and can lead to violent behaviour from ignorant humans which is why purposeful breeding of dogs and other domestic animals is supervised.**

**Domesticated dogs are a product of human behaviour. They are not wild. As such they need care from humans and that includes strict control of mating. Unrestricted mating should be completely disallowed by the human population while care of the domestic dog population should be enforced.**

### **Neutering (also called castration in males, spay in females or desexing):**

- It is strongly recommended that you neuter your puppy.
- This minimises the risk of certain unwanted behaviours such as roaming, aggression, fights and biting other dogs and humans.
- It prevents your pet from contributing to the population of unwanted stray animals.
- Spaying or neutering also helps prevent many life-threatening diseases such as the sexually transmitted disease TVT.
- Puppies should have this surgery **between 5-6 months of age** but, it is never too late for any adult pet.
- Neutering involves having the dog undergo a routine surgery, under general anaesthetic.
- Most pets undergoing this surgery are released to go home with their families the same day. Talk to your vet if you have any concerns or questions about anesthesia and surgery.
- If you keep your animal for breeding be aware that responsible breeders never turn their dogs out to breed unsupervised.
- The drive to mate is biologic to reproduce, not for sexual gratification.
- The drive to mate is a strong force of nature and can lead your dog into great harm or death – this is not fair to the dog, nor is it fair to the community.
- Neutered dogs generally are better companions and watchdogs than those that are unneutered.
- As soon as there is massive reduction in stray, roaming and street dogs then dog owners can consider other aspects (pro and con) of neutering which are not covered here.
- Domesticated animals are completely under the control of humans and as such need to be treated accordingly. If you own a male or female which can mate and reproduce you have a responsibility to the dog, and an obligation to society to keep them completely under your control.
- Uncontrolled domestic animal populations with owner resistance to neutering them are the single most important reason for huge stray and unwanted populations.
- Stray dog populations which get into fights, are dangerous to people who want to walk on the footpath (maybe with their own dog), who get into trash and use everywhere for their toilet are a health and welfare issue for communities.
- TVT is a common tumour of the genitals of dogs which can reproduce. It is frequently found in Fiji when dogs are allowed to roam and mate. Further information on this found below.

One of the reasons for us endlessly recommending neutering your cats and dogs – that is making them reproductively inactive – is to prevent spread of sexually transmitted disease (STD) such as TVT.

TVT is the short form of Transmissible Venereal Tumour. It is an STD in the dog population which is mostly transmitted by mating or breeding of an infected dog. This is actually tumour cells which are transmitted – not bacteria or virus which we normally think of with STD (sexually transmitted disease). During mating the cells are deposited in the reproductive tract and over time a tumour develops.

Signs of this tumour are bleeding from genitals such as vagina or penis, or a protruding red mass. These are a type of tumour which responds very well to chemotherapy. If not treated the tumour eventually can spread to other parts of the body including skin. As tumours progress they affect the quality of life and longevity.

If you prevent your dog from unwanted mating by having them neutered and keep them from unknown dogs not neutered, you will completely prevent this disease.



TVT in male dog



TVT in female dog



Unwanted female and puppies at SPCA – when breeding is allowed unchecked.



What happens when they roam on the street – breeding unchecked.

**Diet (Food and Water):**

Clean fresh water must be available at all times.

Good nutrition is very important for healthy growth and development of puppies from birth.

Puppies need to start eating solid food as they are being weaned from milk (either their mother's milk or hand fed – and cow milk is OK, as is goat milk, as is puppy milk replacer if available. It is unnecessary to feed human milk replacer.) If young puppies are hand fed milk and develop diarrhea then add water to double the volume of milk and feed this until diarrhea resolves, then gradually decrease the amount

You can buy puppy food that is specially designed to meet the nutritional needs of your growing puppy or you can feed home-cooked meals – remember to use a variety of ingredients safe for your puppy.

Home-cooked food for your puppy should be a mixture of

- protein source (cooked meat, fish or egg),
- calcium supplement (which might come from dairy products),
- carbohydrate (eg rice, potato, bread) and
- micro nutrients such as minerals and vitamins from vegetables (pumpkin, peas, carrot, green leafy veg);
- adult dogs can be fed similarly but will not need calcium supplement as majority of bone growth is complete.

Feed puppy food until about 8 – 12 months of age when it can then go onto adult dog food.

Puppies require more regular feeding than dogs and should be fed:

- **3 – 4 small meals a day** between 6 and 12 weeks of age
- **2 - 3 meals a day** when 12 weeks to 6 months of age
- **Daily food split into 2 meals a day** when older than 6 months

**Do not feed:**

- Dogs should never be fed bones (what they can chew off and swallow) – especially cooked, long chicken bones or small pork bones as these can splinter and cause damaged digestive tract or blockages – even uncooked bones can lead to these problems.
- Chewing is different than eating - Large bones which puppies can chew on without swallowing bits is OK and helpful as their adult teeth come in.
- Do not feed rotten or spoiled food to dogs – they can get tummy aches and food poisoning just like us.
- Do not feed chocolate, coffee, onions, garlic, grapes, yeast dough, raisins, nuts or alcohol as some can cause illness and others death
- Avoid feeding raw eggs on a daily basis as this can result in a biotin deficiency. Cooked eggs however provide a great source of protein, fats and other nutrients
- Processed foods such as those purchased in the store can be used as a complete diet or a supplement to cooked food.
- The body condition; skin and hair-coat; energy level; and basic body functions are excellent measures of good nutrition from a good diet.

The website <http://www.dogcathomeprepareddiet.com/> provides some good examples of recipes for those who cook their pet food. The author explains some good reasons why cooking your pet food is a better option than processed food. This is a more grassroots or basic group of recipes – there are many other sites which provide gourmet ingredients or recipes, excellent if you can do it.

**Housing and environment:** Pets should have shelter from the weather available to them at all times. This includes shade from the sun and warm bedding if it is cold. Part of their space should be elevated off the ground to prevent moisture accumulation from the ground, or rain leaking in. Dogs should be confined to the property by solid fences to prevent them roaming. This decreases the risk of them being hit by cars, fighting, poisoning or becoming lost. Chains, ropes or other ties should not be used continuously as this can cause serious injury to the dog. To tie your dog continuously is cruel and abusive treatment – please do all you can to avoid this. It is OK to tie your dog for short periods to accustom them to being tied, and to keep them safe during short periods like when the gate is open. Young puppies should not be tied until they know how to walk with a collar and leash because they can be seriously injured. They must have space to run and play for a few hours each day.



Lots of options to build a simple safe outdoor space with shelter for dogs

### **Keeping Your Puppy Safe**

Until your puppy is fully vaccinated and its immune system is developing well, keep your puppy in a confined space.

Wandering outside your yard allows exposure to poisons, deadly viruses, trash and many other harmful things.

Wandering allows exposure to dangers it is unaware of such as vehicles and cruel people.

You can bring viruses (such as parvovirus) to your puppy on your shoes and hands – don't let the puppy have access to your shoes – put them up and outside where the puppy lives. Wash your hands before handling your puppy. Many of us change clothes as well before handling our puppies to further minimize risks.

Puppies lick and chew and eat everything. This is how they explore their world but we know this can be unhealthy and unsafe. Do not leave your puppy unattended in a different environment just as you should not leave a small child unattended. They both can get severely injured or even die without supervision.

Training and Education

# The Do's and Don't's of Dog Training

## DO's



**DO** use rewards like treats to train your dog so your dog will enjoy training.



**DO** use comfortable, dog friendly equipment so that your dog feels relaxed and happy.



**DO** have your dog work for valued resources like meals, walks and toys so your dog looks to you for guidance.



**DO** build a cooperative relationship based on mutual respect, communication and trust so both you and your dog enjoy being with one another.

## DON'T's



**DON'T** use force or punishment when working with your dog or your dog will not think training is fun and will be afraid of you.



**DON'T** use aversive equipment like choke collars, prong collars or shock collars or training will be painful and scary for your dog.



**DON'T** use confrontational methods that may frighten your dog or worse, cause your dog to react aggressively.



**DON'T** use methods or equipment that are uncomfortable, painful, forceful, scary or intimidating to your dog. Positive reinforcement training is so much more fun for both the dog and owner.



**EAST BAY DOG TRAINERS**

[www.eastbaydogtrainers.org](http://www.eastbaydogtrainers.org)

illustrated by Lili Chin | [doggiedrawings.net](http://doggiedrawings.net)

Local appropriate dog trainer contact: one contact is Viliame 8900741

Dog trainers do not train your dog – they teach you how to train and work with your dog.

## **Bathing and Grooming**

Eyes - Use a soft damp cloth to wipe around your dog's eye but don't use this on your dogs eyes. Dirt and crust (from tears) tend to collect at the corners and eyelids, and can lead to skin irritation and infection. Get any eye problem checked by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

### Ears

Dirt and wax can collect in your dog's ears. Ear cleaning solution made specifically for cleaning animal ears, or mild soapy water are cleaners of choice for giving ears a bath. Ear canals fill with water if your dog goes swimming so there is no problem under normal conditions to avoid water in ears.

Fill the ear canal with mild soapy water or ear cleaning solution, gently massage at the base of the ear to 'wash' the solution around the ear canal lifting wax, dirt and other debris. Using a cotton ball or tissue inserted at the outer part of the canal continue massage while the solution gets soaked into the cotton ball or tissue. Change the cotton frequently until most of the liquid is absorbed. Rinse the canal with warm water in the same way. The dog will shake and get the remainder of the solution from its ears. If there is any sign of pain, inflammation or infection have a veterinary exam first. Normal dog ears can safely be kept clean in this way.

Never use Q-Tips (human-style cotton swabs) to clean your dog's ears at home. They can push material deeper into the ear canal and can damage their eardrums. Q-tips or ear buds should only be used to clean the outer visible parts of the ear flap – don't insert them deeper where you cannot see.

### Teeth

Dogs develop bad breath and dental disease if their teeth are not cleaned regularly. Plaque and tartar build up over time on teeth without frequent care.

Many people brush their dog's teeth daily using products safe for dogs. Do not use human toothpaste on your dog's teeth. Use toothpaste formulated for cats and dogs only. Letting your dog chew on certain types of bones and other products will also help clean their teeth.

### Nails

When dog nails get too long, it can lead to pain and can even lead to difficulty walking, lameness or serious injury; especially if they're so long that they touch the ground.

Be extra careful when deciding where to cut, as dog nails are supplied with blood. An accidental clip in the wrong spot could lead to pain and bleeding. It's easier to find the right spot to clip for dogs with clear or light colored nails, while it can be a bit trickier with dark nails. A flashlight helps you see the blood supply.



All dogs should have nails checked and trimmed as needed.

Many pups grow to be very sensitive to having their paws or nails handled. If you have a young puppy, start handling their feet and trimming their nails from a young age to get them used to the process.



## Bathing

Bathing once a week will help remove dead hair, dirt and dander. Do not use bar soap or detergents. Use shampoo specifically made for dog or human hair. Each time you bath your dog clean the ears. Medicated shampoos usually have additives which are for a specific purpose such as insecticides to kill fleas, or antimicrobials to help get skin infection under control. All dogs should have their ears cleaned as well during bath times with some dogs requiring ear cleaning outside regular bath times.

## Coat

Brushing your dog's coat daily helps remove dirt & dead hair, get rid of tangles, keep the coat smooth & shiny, and prevent matting. If your pup has long hair, a metal brush comb is perfect to keep those strands smooth and lush. Brush your dog's hair daily to keep it neat.

Matted hair should always be addressed immediately if you notice it. Matting reduces air circulation and can lead to severe medical problems for dogs of all ages, from skin irritation, infection to other wounds. There are a variety of brushes you can use. Brushing your dog helps build a bond, helps them to learn patience and most importantly helps keep their skin healthy.

Some breeds require more detailed grooming such as cutting back long hair with grooming scissors or clippers.

**First Aid:** SPCA has a website with a work in progress to provide first aid instruction for some of the more common situations we come across here in Fiji so please stay tuned to this site. One of the single most important preventives to keep your dog from illness is not to let them roam the footpaths and streets.

## **Normal Growth and Behavior From Puppyhood**

- Pregnancy is approximately 2 months
- Puppies are born with eyes and ears closed. These should open by 2 weeks of age. Use warm water on cotton balls to gently encourage mucous seal to open if needed but not before eyes are opening normally within the litter.
- If puppies are orphaned or need to be fed milk then Rewa or other brands cow milk is OK. Liquid is preferred because mixing the powder to the correct consistency is difficult. For the first week or two a warm moist cotton ball gently stimulating under the tail will encourage proper urine and poop to pass.
- By 3 weeks they will be standing and learning how to walk but not with grace until they are about 6 weeks old.
- Between 3 and 5 weeks they should be transitioned to solid food while still nursing so that full weaning, finding a new home can occur with minimal diet difficulty by 6-8 weeks. By this time, the mother will appreciate not having nursing puppies who have teeth.
- Bathing and handling are important in the period up to 4 months of age
- Using appropriate and gentle collar and leash for short schooling sessions should be started after 4 months of age. Repeat sessions daily so that routine acceptable behaviour becomes habit.
- We carry small puppies but as they get older they should learn to walk on a leash –don't wait for an emergency to happen – your dog will get frightened even more if it is not comfortable on a leash.
- If you have to carry your dog then support front chest and hind end – don't carry or drag by the front legs.

## **Socialisation:**

Socialization means getting along with other people and animals without being afraid or trying to bite or run away.

Puppies should be well socialised with other dogs and people to ensure that they do not develop unwanted behaviours such as aggression. Your puppy will learn from both positive and negative experiences. You should never physically (hit or punch with hands or object) punish your puppy if it does something you do not like.

A stern 'no' is the best way to teach your puppy that the behaviour is not acceptable. Remember they are still learning. They need to know what is OK for them, and what is not OK. Just like kids, they are going to try everything out. Always try to encourage and reward your dog when it does something right. This will help to build trust and strengthen the bond between you and your pet – you will have a good dog for life because that puppy is quickly going to be a dog.

Keep them out of trouble as much as possible while they are learning. For example a young puppy will follow people and other dogs onto the road but does not know what danger is. Many puppies and dogs get injured or killed on the roadways because of this – they should never be on the road on their own.

Remember your puppy is a puppy for a short period of time, and soon becomes a dog – you want to establish good habits for both of you. Repeating and rewarding on a daily basis will soon become good habit.

A well socialized dog is a great companion and neighbour. There are very good resources to help you socializing and training your puppy – two authors to look for are Sophia Yin and Patricia McConnell.

**Dog Licences:** If you have a dog, you must have a dog licence in Fiji. This should be purchased before your dog is six months old. Licenced pets wear a collar with the pet's registration tag attached, this makes it possible to identify your dog if they are lost. To enquire about getting a dog licence, contact your city council or the Animal Health and Production section of the Ministry of Agriculture or one of the veterinary offices including SPCA. Dog licences are renewed every year. Owners who do not comply with the rules of pet licences can be fined.

SPCA Fiji supports levels of licensing which would place a higher levy on unneutered dogs.

Helpful Websites include:

SPCA Fiji Islands <https://www.spcafiji.com/>

CAPC – Companion Animal Parasite Council <https://capcvet.org/guidelines>

TroCCAP - Tropical Council for Companion Animal parasites <https://www.troccap.com/>

<https://www.aaha.org/your-pet/pet-owner-education/aaha-guidelines-for-pet-owners/>

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare>

<http://csu-cvmb.colostate.edu/vth/small-animal/community-practice/Pages/owner-care.aspx>

<http://www.dogcathomeprepareddiet.com/>

SPCA Fiji Islands has been a presence in Fiji since 1953.

SPCA stands for Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It consists of a shelter for unwanted dogs, an adoption centre and a veterinary clinic. Along with services associated with the shelter and clinic are spay/neuter and educational programs. Email: [SPCAfijireception@gmail.com](mailto:SPCAfijireception@gmail.com)

Office Landline 3301266    Office mobile 9980023    Only Outside regular open hours 9922634

Phone and text message options available and answered as soon as possible.