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Congratulations on your new puppy. This is the beginning of a long and happy relationship. As a responsible pet owner, it is important to be aware of the following health and wellbeing issues:

- **Vaccination:** it is important to protect your puppy against the three most common deadly diseases- *Canine Distemper, Canine Infectious Hepatitis Virus and Parvovirus*.
 - Full protection requires an initial vaccination at **6-8 weeks of age**, followed by a booster injection 4 weeks later (at **10-12 weeks of age**). A 3rd booster injection 4 weeks later (at **14-16 weeks of age**) is required for *Parvovirus* to provide full protection.
 - PLEASE KEEP YOUR PUPPY ISOLATED AT HOME UNTIL 2 WEEKS AFTER THE FINAL NEEDLE.**
 - There is an additional vaccine for "*Kennel Cough*" which can be given at 8 or 12 weeks age. It is recommended for travelling/working/show dogs, and is mandatory for boarding kennels.
 - Optional vaccines include *Leptospirosis* and *Coronavirus* (combined). These diseases are more likely to be a problem in environments where many puppies are housed together eg: breeders or farm/hunting dogs.
 - After the primary puppy vaccinations, an **annual booster** and health check is required for on-going protection.
- **Heartworm:** Although heartworm is relatively uncommon in the Wagga area, we recommend you protect your dog against infestation as the disease can be devastating. The disease is **spread by mosquitoes** (not via dog-to-dog contact) and, once fully developed, the adult worms live in the heart and associated vessels. Prevention should commence at **4 months of age** (at the same time as the 3rd and final puppy vaccination) and continue throughout the dog's life. Protection comes in **monthly chewables or spot-on therapy, or annual injections**. You should discuss the options with your vet to decide which formulation suits you and your dog. 
- **Intestinal Worms:** Treatment for intestinal worms is very important, particularly in puppies. Infestation can lead to poor growth & immunity, diarrhoea, and/or "scooting". Puppies should be wormed **every 2 weeks until they are 3 months of age**. From **3 months to 6 months of age**, worming should be done **monthly, and can include heartworm prevention**. After **6 months of age**, your puppy should be wormed at least **every 3 months** for the rest of its life. This is an important public health issue as intestinal worms can be spread from dogs to humans (especially children). 
- **Fleas:** Fleas are a common cause of skin irritation and itchiness. **Monthly flea control** is recommended, especially in the **spring/summer months** when the fleas are most active. Several different formulations are available at the clinic, and it is best to discuss your situation with the vet to decide which product is best for you and your pet. It is important that **all animals in the household (especially cats) are treated** on a regular basis. Please note, **DOG PRODUCTS SHOULD NOT BE USED ON CATS FOR RISK OF REACTIONS**. 
- **Ticks:** Similar to heartworm, Wagga is not a high risk region for paralysis ticks, although we do find less harmful Bush Ticks. If your pet is travelling to the coast, we strongly recommend starting tick prevention well before you depart (2 weeks prior). If you suspect your pet has a paralysis tick, please contact the clinic to arrange an immediate consultation.
- **Desexing:** If you are not intending to breed, it is recommended that your puppy be de-sexed. The recommended age is **5½-6 months**. Once puppies reach this age, they are better able to cope with a general anaesthetic and surgical procedure. However, with females it is important that the operation be carried out **before your puppy has its first heat** (usually as early as 6-7 months of age) to reduce the risk of certain conditions (such as mammary tumours) developing later in life. It also means that your dog is less likely to "roam" in search of a mate. There are many 'myths' relating to de-sexing, so please ask your vet if you are unsure. 

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- Microchipping: By law all puppies must be micro-chipped by 12 weeks age. The procedure involves a vet inserting a microchip under the skin in between the shoulder blades, and can be performed at the time of vaccination or desexing. If your dog was ever lost, microchip implantation allows for immediate identification by any vet or pound. You will then be contacted immediately, so it is important that **your contact details always remain up-to-date**. Please note, if your pet is neutered, then it will attract a cheaper registration fee.



- Insurance: To enable our hospital to take the best care of your animal, we recommend considering pet insurance. There are many different policies available ranging from emergency cover to all-inclusive for routine vaccinations. Please use the internet to find the best policy for your needs.

- Diet: Puppy nutrition is very important. We recommend feeding a good quality brand of "Puppy" food to make up at least 75% of the diet. This can be either wet or dry.

- Puppy Preschool: To ensure your puppy develops into a happy and friendly dog, it is critical to socialize your puppy at an early age. Puppy preschool is a great opportunity to socialize with other puppies and owners in a controlled environment. The classes include basic training and helpful health care tips, and are always a lot of fun for puppy and owner! The best age to commence puppy preschool is **between 8-16 weeks of age, provided they are vaccinated**. Please contact the clinic for further details.



If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at the clinic.
Our friendly staff are here to help.

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