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## **New Dog Checklist**

Congratulations! Your new addition to the family will provide you with years of unconditional love and companionship. Our job is to help you ensure those years are as healthy and happy as possible. Please read this checklist to make sure that all of these issues are addressed:

### **Vaccinations**

The Da2PP (“distemper”) vaccine is ideally started at 8 weeks of age and is given every 3-4 weeks through 16 weeks (4 months) of age. At least two doses should be given (3-4 weeks apart).

Rabies vaccination can be done at a minimum of 12 weeks of age, but we recommend giving it at 16 weeks (4 months) or older.

Bordetella is the “kennel cough” vaccine and helps protect puppies from developing this common cough that is frequently contracted from areas densely populated by dogs (ie. dog parks, grooming/boarding facilities). We recommend the less-invasive oral or intra-nasal vaccine over the injectable version.

Leptospirosis is a bacterium that can cause liver failure, kidney failure, and even death in unvaccinated dogs. This disease is so dangerous that even vaccinated dogs can still get sick – but to a much lesser degree. This vaccine should first be introduced before your pet’s first spring, summer, or fall season. We will work with you in order to customize a vaccination plan that fits each dog’s needs. The leptospirosis vaccination must first be given twice, 3-4 weeks apart. After this initial series, only one yearly booster will be needed provided it is received each year.

### **Spay/Neuter**

Unless you have plans to show your dog or become a professional breeder, the spay or neuter procedure should be done by 5-6 months of age. This surgery will prevent a number of different diseases, including some types of cancer. It will also decrease your dog’s desire to roam around the neighborhood, looking for a mate. This drive is sometimes so high that dogs have been known to break through fences, run away, and be struck by cars crossing streets in an effort to find a mate. These behaviors can be drastically reduced by spaying or neutering your pet. A female dog’s first heat occurs at about 6 months of age but it can be slightly different for each dog. Spay your female dog before she has her first heat in order to maximize the health benefits.

### **Identification (Microchip)**

Protect your furry family member! Ten million pets become lost every year and without identification, 90% never return home. Only about 14% of dogs and 4% of cats who end up in shelters are returned to their rightful owners. Approximately 30-60% of pets in shelters are euthanized because they cannot

be properly identified and returned to their owner. Collars and tags are good, but they can easily fall off or be removed. Microchipping is permanent, completely unalterable, and does not harm or change the appearance of the animal in any way. The procedure is safe, inexpensive, fast, and virtually painless.

### **Heartworm & Parasite Prevention**

All dogs need to be protected against heartworm disease and intestinal parasites. Roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms are all contagious to humans. All of these infections are easily and effectively prevented by giving your dog a small pill (at home) once a month, year-round. Our recommended heartworm preventative is Trifexis, which also protects against fleas. Dogs over 6 months of age or dogs who have missed doses must be tested before starting their heartworm preventative. Routine heartworm testing is done annually, while intestinal parasite screening is conducted every 6 months.

### **Training**

Solid training provides a great foundation, protecting against many undesirable behavior problems. It will make the years you spend with your dog less stressful and more enjoyable. It all starts with proper socialization of young puppies with other people and dogs. For more information, ask any of our staff or doctors for excellent and friendly trainer recommendations or, visit [www.TheBalancedCanine.com](http://www.TheBalancedCanine.com).

