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canine factsheet

This factsheet will give you some valuable information regarding your lovable pet and some of the services we provide at the Ark Veterinary Centre. We hope this will help you make a major contribution to your pet's longevity, happiness and quality of life by providing him/her with good nutrition, loving attention in a safe, clean environment and regular checkups at the veterinary practice.

factsheet Contents

Page 1	Healthchecks
Page 2	Other Services / Advice <i>Vaccinations</i> <i>Worming</i> <i>Feeding</i> <i>Neutering</i> Caring for Geriatric Dogs
Page 3	Common Problems

puppy's basic "healthcheck"

Your puppy should visit us as soon as possible. The first visit will include:

- **Physical examination** to determine his state of health
- **Parasite check** (fleas, ticks, lice, ear mites and worms)
- **Initial vaccination/discussion** of the types of vaccination your puppy needs and when they should be scheduled
- **Dietary and care advice**
- **Discussion** about whether the puppy should be neutered and when

The first visit will create a "knowledge base" from which, on subsequent checkups throughout your pups life we can better evaluate, monitor and manage your pets health.

6 Month "healthcheck"

This is a FREE service we offer where we carry out a full physical examination and where we can discuss changes in feeding associated with age to minimise joint abnormalities (OCD) and maximise growth, we can discuss Neutering and can look at correct care of your pet's teeth.

Vaccinations

Our policy is to vaccinate all puppies at 10 and 12 weeks of age. This will give a solid immunity against distemper virus, parvovirus, adenovirus-2, parainfluenza virus and leptospirosis. These are important life threatening conditions that are easily prevented. This course of vaccination should be followed up annually with a booster injection. Full immunity has developed by seven days after the second injection. At vaccination a full free health check of the animal is carried out to detect any problems in the early stages.

Worming

All puppies are born with an infestation of *Toxocara canis*, common roundworm. They acquire these through placental transmission and the bitch's milk. All puppies should previously have been wormed at two, five and eight weeks old. The next treatment is at twelve weeks old and then at six months old. We recommend Panacur granules should be used as a three day course which will specifically target roundworms. At six months of age tapeworm treatment is advised. Tapeworms are acquired from ingestion of fleas, lice and carrion. We recommend Drontal Plus tablets for the control of tapeworms and roundworms in adult dogs every three months.

Fleas

Fleas are the most common ectoparasite of dogs. A frustrating problem where we believe prevention is better than cure. Only 5% of the flea population is adult feeding intermittently on your pet, 95% are immature in the form of eggs, larvae and pupae all in your house. Each female flea can lay up to 50 eggs a day. Fleas can cause a variety of problems:

- Skin irritation in dogs (and humans!)
- Flea allergic dermatitis
- Transmission of tapeworms
- Anaemia in severe cases

We can supply a variety of flea products both for prevention and treatment as well as household sprays. Advances in treatments of spot-on now mean we can use drops for fleas that also prevent mites, lice, ticks and even worms.

Feeding

A dry complete puppy diet is the ideal choice. A brand called Hills Science Plan is superior and contains a balance of nutrients including vitamins and minerals. This can be fed until 12 months of age, however, if your pet is a giant or heavy breed please discuss your puppy's needs with us. Water must be available at all times. If you are changing diets do this gradually over a period of seven days

Neutering

(Spaying or castrating). This is best done at six months old. Bitches usually come into season every six months, starting at eight to twelve months. The advantages of spaying bitches at this age are reduced incidence of breast cancer, eliminating a potential infection of the uterus called pyometra and actually extending the life span of your bitch. Spaying also stops your bitch from coming into heat again so avoiding any unwanted pregnancies.

Castration can be done from five months of age. The advantages of this operation are reduced aggression, reduced unwanted roaming or inappropriate sexual behaviour. It is also associated with reducing the risk of prostate disease and other hormone related problems.

Your Geriatric Dog

The best time to start caring for your aging dog is when he/she is a puppy. Starting off your dog's life with good nutrition, regular exercise, scheduled veterinary appointments and a happy home life sets the foundations for a high quality of life in older years. However as your dog ages there will be changes to the metabolism. Paying attention to your dog's behaviour will make detecting problems easier.

- Check your dog's mouth, eyes and ears regularly. Watch for loose teeth, redness, swelling and discharge.
- Keep the sleeping area clean and warm
- Groom your pet often. You'll detect any unusual sores or lumps and keep his/her coat healthy
- Make fresh water available at all times
- Maintain a regime of proper nutrition, exercise and loving attention.

Common Problems

Obesity

Obesity is a big health risk. An older dog is a less active dog, so adjustments to your pet's diet to reduce caloric intake are imperative. This will relieve pressure on joints as well as manage the risks of heart failure, kidney or liver disease, digestive problems and more. Other changes to nutrition should include increasing fibre and vitamins while decreasing sodium, protein and fatty acids

Diabetes

Diabetes is common especially in older dogs. It is a disease in which our dog's pancreas can no longer produce enough of the hormone insulin.

Arthritis

Arthritis severity can range from slight stiffness to debilitation. An exercise programme to maintain muscle tone and mass, can be adjusted to his/her condition. Anti-inflammatory medication can help relieve the pain in addition to joint supplementation, which helps cartilage repair. Our vets will prescribe any necessary medicine.

Dental

Tooth loss or decay not only makes it harder to chew but also increase the likelihood of infection or tumours. Brushing and cleaning the teeth will help keep these to a minimum.

Prostrate / Mammary Gland

Prostrate enlargement or mammary gland tumours are mostly diagnosed in unneutered dogs. Have the prostrate or mammary glands examined at checkups.

Incontinence

Urinary incontinence in female older dogs can become a problem. This inconvenient condition can be successfully managed by a choice of medications available from the surgery.