



Puppy Wellness Information Vaccines

Vaccines have helped prevent many widespread diseases in pets. Puppies are continuously exposed to microorganisms like bacteria, viruses, protozoans, fungi, and parasites. The immune system's role is to recognize those foreign microorganisms and prevent infection. Vaccinations help stimulate the immune system to respond appropriately, allowing the body to prevent infection or reduce the severity of disease in the future.

How often will my pet need to be vaccinated?

The series of vaccines typically start around 6 weeks of age and will end around 16 weeks of age. Some vaccines must be repeated every 3-4 weeks to ensure proper protection. After the initial series, certain vaccines will be administered annually, while others provide immunity for several years. The most appropriate vaccine schedule will be determined by your veterinary team based on your pet's lifestyle.

Here are 6 Reasons to vaccinate your pet given by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA):

- Vaccination prevents many pet illnesses
- Vaccination can help avoid costly treatments for preventable diseases
- Vaccinations prevent diseases that can be spread among animals from animals to people
- Life-threatening diseases found in wildlife, such as rabies and distemper, can affect unvaccinated pets
- Reputable pet boarding, daycare, and training services require vaccination against certain diseases to protect all participating animals
- Many local and state laws require that household pets - including indoor-only pets - be vaccinated against certain diseases

Vaccine schedule

6-8 weeks	Start Distemper + Adenovirus + Parvovirus + Parainfluenza (Distemper/DHPP) Bordetella Monthly flea/tick/heartworm prevention
9-11 weeks	Start/booster Distemper + Adenovirus + Parvovirus + Parainfluenza (Distemper/DHPP) If needed, Bordetella Monthly flea/tick/heartworm prevention
12 weeks	Start/booster Distemper + Adenovirus + Parvovirus + Parainfluenza (Distemper/DHPP) If needed, Bordetella Start Leptospirosis Monthly flea/tick/heartworm prevention

16 weeks	Final Distemper + Adenovirus + Parvovirus + Parainfluenza (Distemper/DHPP) Final Leptospirosis If needed, Bordetella Rabies Monthly flea/tick/heartworm prevention
Between 17 weeks and 8 months	Monthly flea/tick/heartworm prevention (weight checks required)
9 months	Start Flu Start Lyme Monthly flea/tick/heartworm prevention
10 months	Final Flu Final Lyme Heartworm & Tick Borne disease screening test Monthly flea/tick/heartworm prevention (up to 6 doses)
1 year	Yearly vaccine boosters Eligible for longer lasting flea/tick prevention Eligible for longer lasting heartworm prevention

***Rabies** - Viral disease that attacks the nervous system and is transmitted by saliva of infected animals, primarily via bite wounds. Common wildlife carriers include skunks, bats, foxes, coyotes, and raccoons. In the state of Iowa, this is a required vaccination. **Distemper (DHPP)** - A combination vaccine protecting against distemper, hepatitis (adenovirus), parainfluenza, and parvovirus. Distemper can cause neurologic signs such as seizures, as well as gastrointestinal and respiratory symptoms. Parvovirus is a highly contagious and often fatal disease causing severe gastrointestinal illness and surviving in the environment for up to seven months.

***Leptospirosis** - Bacterial disease that is transmitted through contaminated water, food, soil, bedding, bite wounds, and through direct contact with infected urine. Leptospira bacteria survive in warm, moist environments and can cause renal failure with or without liver disease.

Bordetella (Kennel cough) - Highly contagious airborne respiratory bacteria, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, that causes a dry, "goose-honk" cough, with or without nasal discharge. **Lyme disease** - Transmitted disease, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, that is carried by ticks that are attached for a minimum of 48 hours. Symptoms include joint pain, fever, swollen lymph nodes, kidney disease and rarely neurological symptoms.

Canine influenza (Flu) - A contagious upper respiratory disease causing cough, fever, nasal discharge, and occasionally pneumonia. Recommended for dogs that travel, attend daycare or boarding, or frequent dog parks.

Parasites

Parasites can live externally or internally and can cause diseases in pets and people. External parasites include fleas, ticks, mites, and lice, which can cause skin irritation, infection, or blood loss.

Fleas feed on blood to complete their full life cycle that can take place on the host, their bedding, and anywhere else the host has been. It can take 3 months to fully eliminate an infestation.

Ticks attach and feed on blood and transmit parasitic, bacterial, viral, and other diseases (like lyme disease).

Internal parasites are transmitted through contaminated food, water, surfaces, and feces. Puppies may acquire internal parasites from the mother before birth or through nursing. Common internal parasites include hookworms, whipworms, roundworms, tapeworms, and giardia. Signs of infection may include vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, anemia, and poor coat health.

Parasite testing

Intestinal parasites are detected using a fresh stool sample that's examined under the microscope. Some parasites can be seen in the stool as worms or rice-like segments. External parasites may be identified visually or microscopically.

Heartworms

Heartworms live in the heart, lungs, and blood vessels, causing severe lung disease, heart failure, and organ damage. They are transmitted through mosquitoes.

Heartworm symptoms and testing

Symptoms may include coughing, weight loss, abdominal fluid, heart enlargement, and exercise intolerance. Testing is done with an annual blood test that detects heartworm antigen from adult female worms. It takes approximately 6 months after an initial bite for an infection to become detectable. Heartworm treatment can become a lengthy process that includes different testing, strict activity restrictions, and a series of expensive injections.

* According to the [American Heartworm Society](#), Iowa ranges from 1-5 and 6-25 cases of reported heartworm cases per clinic as of 2022.

Flea/Tick/Heartworm Preventatives

Year-round prevention is recommended against fleas, ticks, heartworms, and other parasites (external and internal) that can cause greater harm when left untreated. Fleas can survive temperatures as low as 46°F, but it can take up to 5 consistent days below freezing for adult fleas to die off. Ticks can survive temperatures as low as 40°F. Their most active months tend to be March through November which is why we recommend using it all year round.

Our recommendation for puppies (<1yr old) is Credelio Quattro, a monthly chew that prevents fleas, ticks, heartworms, hookworms, tapeworms, and roundworms. We do require monthly weight checks until 10 months of age to make sure they're getting prevention in their correct weight range, but it is also used as good socialization and practice for coming to the clinic. Once your puppy is 12 months of age, we'll discuss preventive options that will last longer than one month at a time.

Spaying and Neutering

Surgery is recommended between 4 and 6 months of age, but some pets can benefit from waiting until they're a little older. This can be discussed better with a veterinarian for what

age surgery should be performed.

Spaying removes the uterus and ovaries, preventing pregnancy, reducing the risk of mammary cancer, uterine diseases, pyometra (infection of the uterus), uterine prolapse, and neoplasia (tumor).

Neutering removes the testicles, helping prevent roaming, behavior problems, unwanted breeding, prostate disorders, and testicular tumors.

*Large, deep-chested breeds may benefit from preventative stomach tack (gastropexy). Talk with the veterinary team to determine if this surgery is for your pet!

Microchipping

Microchipping is a permanent identification that is implanted under the skin. When scanned with a microchip scanner, the scanner will display a series of identifying numbers that are associated with the chip and can be searched to find the associated phone number and address attached. We recommend that every pet gets microchipped so in the event that your pet gets lost, a smoother return can happen.

* The success rate of a microchipped pet returning home is approximately 52%.

Nutrition

Puppies should be on a puppy specific diet until at least a year of age. Commercial dog foods are complete and balanced for their daily nutritional needs and come in a variety of dry and canned options. Family Pet's general food recommendations are IVet, Royal Canin, Hill's Science Diet, and Purina Pro Plan.

How much should my puppy be eating?

Most directions are included on the bag for what the product recommends as a starting point.

To best assess how much your puppy is eating, their meals should be split into two to three feedings with each one being measured out. At each veterinary visit, your pet's body condition and weight will be assessed to determine if they're being fed too much or too little.

Should my puppy get treats?

Treats are a great way to reward your pet for good behavior! Once you find a treat that your puppy enjoys and can tolerate, it is recommended to stick with it. Puppies can have sensitive gastrointestinal tracts, so switching food and/or treats could cause some upset. Jerky treats should be avoided as these types of treats have been associated with some medical problems.

Toxic foods: onions, grapes, garlic, chocolate, alcohol

Non-toxic foods: blueberries, apples, cooked eggs, bananas, xylitol (gum and some peanut butter brands)

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Toys/Puppy classes/Socialization

Puppies use their teeth to explore their surroundings and should have puppy safe toys to use. All toys should be bigger than their mouths to prevent swallowing, bendable, and durable. Avoid using bones, antlers, or hard plastic toys that can not be indented with a fingernail or bend as these can lead to broken teeth.

After completing vaccines, puppies should be introduced to new sites, sounds, surroundings, touches, and smells in a positive manner. Their early months of life are the most

important, as it impacts their behavior for the future. Each experience should be rewarded with treats and praise to keep it positive. Puppy classes are great for learning basic commands and socialization skills! Some things to start at home are getting your puppy used to being touched around their face, ears, paws/nails, and generally being held/restrained.

Recommended Dog Trainer: [Elite Obedience Training](#)

Insurance

Pet insurance can help offset the unexpected veterinary expenses that can come with sick or injured pets. There are many different companies out there that can create plans to best fit your pet and your needs. Some companies have options to pay clinics directly, otherwise they will reimburse your submitted invoices.

Are there other forms of payment?

Family Pet Veterinary Center does accept Scratchpay, All Pets card, and Care Credit as forms of payment, but other clinics may choose to not accept these forms.

Emergency Clinic

If your pet is experiencing any serious symptoms - such as those listed below - we recommend seeking care at an emergency clinic. If you're unsure, calling your established veterinarian for guidance can help make the best decision. The examples below include common concerns but do not cover every situation. For issues considered non-emergent, please contact your veterinary clinic to schedule an appointment within the next 1–2 days.

- Iowa Veterinary Specialties: (515) 280-3100
- Blue Pearl: (515) 727-4872
- UrgentVet (515) 215-9696

<u>Emergency</u>	<u>Non-Emergency</u>
Unconsciousness	Ear infection
Labored breathing	Limping
Hit by car	Eye discharge
Ingesting poison/chocolate	Frequent urination
Sudden collapse	Coughing