



# COMPANION

ANIMAL HOSPITAL, SPRINGFIELD VA  
*Companions for life*

## **Congratulations on Adopting a New Puppy!**

You have taken on the awesome and wonderful responsibility of caring for another living, feeling individual. In doing so, you are making a promise that you will tend to your pet's needs, comfort, and well-being. Your puppy relies solely on you for adequate shelter, access to fresh water, and good daily nutrition. Your puppy will depend solely on you to assure that all health and medical needs are met and that he/she is kept safe. When bringing a puppy into your home and into your family's lives, you are responsible for seeing that this new family member receives daily attention, adequate exercise, proper training, and above all, love from the human members of the family.

Our job at Companion Animal Hospital is to help you meet the needs of your pet. The first visit is your first step in a lifetime of good care. All puppies go through a basic health care program, which includes the following:

1. Starting at 6-8 weeks of age, a series of **distemper** vaccines are given **every 3-4 weeks** until your puppy is at least **16 weeks old**. An examination accompanies most vaccinations. The final vaccine in the series is good for one year. Every subsequent vaccine is a 3-year vaccine.

**Distemper (DHLPP):** Commonly referred to as the "distemper-parvo" vaccine, is a combination vaccine usually containing 5 antigens which aim to protect your dog from the following diseases:

***Distemper:*** A virus affecting the neurological, respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous system of dogs. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and fever. This disease is easily transmitted and ALL puppies and dogs should be vaccinated.

***Hepatitis:*** Infection caused by adenovirus Type I and Type II.

***Leptospirosis:*** An infection which primarily causes damage to the kidneys and liver. This disease is easily spread between animals, and also can be spread to humans.

**Parainfluenza:** One of several causes of “kennel cough.”

**Parvovirus (Parvo):** Virus that causes life threatening illness characterized by severe diarrhea and vomiting, resulting in dehydration. Puppies and older, debilitated dogs are at greatest risk.

2. The first **rabies** vaccine is given between **12 and 16 weeks of age**. The initial (first) vaccine is a 1 year vaccine. A 3 year vaccine is given after the first year.

**Rabies:** Caused by a virus that is almost always fatal. Rabies poses a great risk to animals and human. Rabies is widespread (usually in wild animals) and is present in Northern Virginia. It is usually contracted through the bite of an infected animal. All dogs and cats are required by law to be currently vaccinated against rabies.

3. **Bordetella:** A bacteria that often contributes to “kennel cough.” Companion Animal Hospital requires that a bordetella vaccine is given within 6 months prior to boarding. Dogs who frequent kennels, grooming facilities, dog parks, and other areas where strange dogs may be present are at greater risk. Discuss your puppy’s risk with the veterinarian.
4. **Fecal Parasite Test:** Fecals are tested for the presence of intestinal worms and parasites at least once a year. Please bring your puppy’s sample to your appointment if possible.
5. **Heartworm Prevention:** Heartworms are transmitted to dogs through mosquito bites. So, wherever there are mosquitoes, there is heartworm disease. This is a serious, life-threatening disease. However, it can easily be prevented by giving your dog a heartworm preventative pill once a month. It takes 6 months for a heartworm test to become positive after the initial mosquito bite. For this reason, heartworm tests are not done on puppies until they are one year old. Yearly testing is recommended.
6. **Optional Vaccines:** These include leptospirosis only, Lyme disease, canine influenza, and bordetella (for non-boarding dogs). Discuss your dog’s individual risk factors with the veterinarian to determine which vaccines are best for your pet’s lifestyle.

- At these early visits, the doctor will also discuss how to care for your pet's ears, teeth, nails, and coat. Diet, obedience, leash, and house training will also be discussed.
- **We welcome *any* questions you may have about your puppy's health and well-being. Please do not hesitate to ask!**

***Congratulations on the addition of your new family member!***