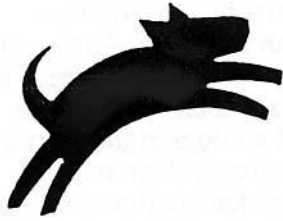


# A Comprehensive Wellness Program for Dogs



*Wellness is a conscious emphasis on preventing disease, enabling your dog to live a longer, healthier life. We work with you to provide the best preventative care beginning with your pet's first visit to our hospital and extending throughout its entire lifetime.*

**Ruxton Animal Hospital • 8014 Bellona Ave. • Towson MD 21204  
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## Physical Examinations

For a puppy's first visit, we perform a thorough physical examination. On each subsequent visit, the puppy is re-examined to monitor its growth and development. In adult dogs, a comprehensive physical examination and blood tests are performed once a year to ensure that he/she is healthy; free from internal and external parasites, and is not developing any medical problems.

## Vaccinations

Many pet owners are confused by the wide selection of vaccines and vaccine programs available at different hospitals. We work with you to decide on the best vaccination schedule based on your dog's history, age, lifestyle, current medical conditions, and the risk factors associated with each vaccine. The core vaccines which should be given to all dogs are Rabies and Distemper-Parvo. The non-core vaccines are Lepto, Bordetella, Influenza and Lyme. These are given selectively depending on your pet's risk of exposure.

**Maryland State law requires that a Rabies vaccination be given.** One injection is required at age 12 to 16 weeks followed by a booster one year later, and every three years thereafter.

**Distemper** vaccination is highly recommended for all dogs. Infection with the distemper virus can result in diarrhea, pneumonia, seizures, and death. This vaccine is given in combination with vaccination against **hepatitis**, a disease that affects the liver, **parainfluenza**, an upper respiratory disease, and **parvo**, a virus that causes life threatening diarrhea and vomiting. The **DHPP** combination vaccine is given initially as a series of injections followed by a booster one year later. The vaccines are then repeated every three years.

**Leptospirosis** is a disease of the kidneys and liver that is transmissible to humans. Dogs are at moderate risk for this disease in Maryland. Dogs that are larger than 10 pounds as adults will usually be vaccinated against this disease if there is a risk of exposure to mice or rat urine. The risk of an allergic

reaction to this vaccine is higher than for the other vaccines listed here. Still, for most dogs, the risk-benefit ratio leans in favor of giving this vaccine. The leptospirosis vaccine is given initially as a series of 2 injections and then repeated yearly.

**Bordetella and Canine Influenza** vaccination are advised for all dogs that may be in a kennel or hospital environment, or dogs that have frequent exposure to other unfamiliar dogs, such as when visiting the park or a dog show. These diseases cause respiratory infections. They are given initially as a series of 2 injections and then repeated yearly. See Influenza information sheet for a more detailed discussion of this disease.

**Lyme** vaccination is recommended for dogs that may be exposed to ticks carrying the disease. Symptoms of Lyme disease sometimes include fever, lameness, and lethargy, but are often vague and difficult to diagnose. The vaccine is not fully effective, but has been proven to have some protective benefit. It is given initially as a series of two vaccines, followed by an annual booster. A blood test to verify that your dog is free of Lyme disease is also performed yearly.

## Nutrition

Your dog's nutritional needs change as he grows and matures. We can offer you advice on choosing the optimal diet for your pet's needs, including growth, maintenance, weight loss programs, and special diets indicated for intestinal or organ related problems.

## Grooming and Behavioral Counseling

We will discuss nail care, brushing, ear cleaning, bathing, and other grooming concerns you may have. We will also provide a brief outline of how to housebreak your puppy, how to start basic obedience training, what to do when you suspect a behavioral problem is developing, and suggest reading material to help you learn more about your new pet.

## Parasite Control

Canine parasites include fleas, ear mites, heartworms, and intestinal parasites. On your first visit, we will establish a thorough parasite control program.

Intestinal parasites can cause diarrhea, weight loss, coughing, failure to thrive, and anemia in puppies and dogs. Many puppies are infected with some intestinal parasites that they acquire from the mother or other puppies. Puppies are given a series of dewormings and fecal exams to verify clearance and to check for any parasites that are not controlled by the routine deworming medication. Some common intestinal parasites are transmittable to humans and can potentially cause serious health problems. After the initial dewormings we recommend having a fecal checked for parasites at six-month intervals.

Advances in flea control allow us to eliminate and prevent infestation with less potential toxicity to your pet. We will discuss these options with you during your first visit. We will also examine the ears for evidence of mites or yeast infections.

Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes, which may be found year-round in this region depending on the severity of environmental conditions. Puppies will be started on a once-a-month medication at an early age to prevent infection. This may be dispensed as individual doses while the pup is growing, but can be provided as a 6 or 12-month supply once the dog reaches his/her adult size. Adult dogs should have a blood-screening test yearly (a test for Heartworms, Lyme, Anaplasmosis, and Ehrlichia can be done at the same time). Heartworm infection in dogs is usually treatable, but the damage done to the heart cannot be reversed.

## Spaying/Neutering

A critical step in responsible pet ownership is having your dog spayed or neutered. Spaying/neutering prevents several types of potential medical and behavioral problems, including mammary cancer, uterine infections, aggression, roaming, and urine marking behavior. The procedure is usually performed at four to nine months of age but the optimal age may vary depending on the size or health status of your dog.

## Dental Care

Care of teeth and gums is an important part of your dog's healthcare program. Brushing your pet's teeth and gums 3 times a week with a special enzymatic toothpaste and using the appropriate type of food will decrease plaque and tartar build-up that can lead to oral disease, tooth loss, and spread of infection to other organs, such as the heart and kidneys. Depending on the condition of your dog's teeth, we may recommend scaling and polishing on a yearly basis.

## Microchips

There are two competing chip systems and no universal reader that is 100% accurate in picking up the chip on a scan. Please discuss with the doctor whether a chip is recommended for your pet.

## Laboratory Testing

In general, we recommend that all dogs on a yearly basis have blood drawn to check for liver and kidney functions, diabetes and anemia (chemistry panel and complete blood count). By comparing changes from one year to the next, we are better equipped to detect many diseases at an earlier age, so that we can provide more effective treatment and extend your pet's life expectancy.

## Senior Care

Different breeds have different life expectancies; large breeds are considered seniors at an earlier age than small breeds. Though aging is a natural part of life, watching our pets get older is difficult for most of us. We can however take certain steps to extend the length and quality of your dog's life. We monitor your pet's health on a yearly basis with both physical and laboratory exams. We also monitor its nutrition, set up an exercise program and discuss weight control. Thin dogs, in general, live at least a year longer than overweight dogs. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and Glucosamine/Chondroitin/avocado/soybean preparations (Dasuquin) can give older pets a new lease on life and provide some relief from arthritic pain.

## General Health Schedule

The first visit to the veterinarian typically starts at approximately 6 to 8 weeks of age. This schedule may be adjusted accordingly if your dog first visits us at a younger or older age.

### First visit:

Physical exam, DHPP, deworming, fecal exam, first dose of heartworm (HW) & flea preventative

### 3 weeks later:

Follow-up exam, DHPP, Lepto\*, deworming, HW preventative

### 3 weeks later:

Follow-up exam, DHPP, Rabies, Lepto\*, HW preventative

### 3 weeks later:

Follow-up exam, Bordetella\*, Influenza\*, Lyme\*, HW preventative, (& additional DHPP in some breeds)

### 3 weeks later:

Follow-up exam, Bordetella\*, Influenza\*, Lyme\*, HW preventative, baseline blood work and urinalysis

### Following completion of vaccines:

Preoperative exam, spay or neuter

### 1 year later:

Physical exam, DHPP, Rabies, Lepto\*, Bordetella\*, Influenza\* Lyme\*, fecal, heartworm, Chemistry panel/CBC, dental evaluation

### Annually:

Physical exam, appropriate tests and vaccines, fecal exam, dental scale and polish if indicated

### 8 years or older:

Additional screening tests, (thyroid and urinalysis), plus above.

*\*Non-core vaccines - Optional*