



Welcome

We are so glad that you have added a puppy to your household, and we wish to welcome you to our clinic! In this folder you will find information that is primarily oriented towards puppies, however, most of the information can be applicable to adult dogs as well. **Please feel free to ask us any questions about these or any other issues you have involving your pet!**

Hours and Directions:

Monday-Friday: 7:30am - 6:00pm

Saturday: CLOSED

Sunday: 2:00pm – 4:00pm *

Phone: 304-343-6783

Email: staff@valleywestvets.com

Address: 301 Virginia Street West, Charleston, WV, 25302

**On Sunday the lobby is open. There is no doctor on staff at this time.*

Doctors:

Dr. Thomas L. Isaac, Jr., DVM

Dr. Amy Keith, DVM

Dr. Amy Isaac, DVM

DR. Allyson Tupta, DVM

Dr. Katie Kobyra, DVM

Dr. Megan Graham, DVM

Dr. Ashley Payne, DVM

Examinations: Every new puppy should have a full physical examination upon acquisition, then with each set of vaccines. This will allow the doctor to make sure your new puppy is in good health, and to discuss preventative medicine, and answer any questions you may have. These exams are as important as the vaccines we give!

Fecal Flotation: This test checks for various intestinal parasites and is recommended for all puppies. One thing that you can do is bring a small, fresh stool sample with you to your puppy's appointments in a plastic bag or container. *Please see the handout included in this folder for additional information regarding intestinal parasites that can affect your puppy.*

Heartworm and Intestinal Parasite Prevention: Heartworms are a blood parasite that can be carried by mosquitos to dogs. They live in the heart and can cause heart failure and death. A monthly oral prevention is recommended year-round to kill heartworm larvae and common intestinal parasites. It can be started at 6 weeks of age and is recommended lifelong.

Flea and Tick Prevention: Charleston (and the surrounding areas) is home to a thriving population of fleas and ticks, which can cause discomfort, anemia, and other diseases in your puppy. We have several products here that are effective in eliminating fleas and preventing re-infestations.

Spay/Neuter: We recommend this procedure for our patients for health and behavioral reasons as well as population control. It is usually recommended when your puppy is around 6 months of age, with exception granted to large breeds of dogs. For large breeds, it is recommended that you wait to spay or neuter until 18-24 months of age. Spaying a puppy before their first heat cycle can prevent pregnancy and uterine infection and minimizes their risk of mammary (breast) cancer. Neutering a male puppy minimizes the risk of prostate cancer, and the desire to roam and mate with females. **Please discuss these procedures and the best time to perform them with your veterinarian.**

House Training: The first learning curve a puppy needs to overcome in a new home is house training. Your puppy's bladder has minimal control when under 4 months of age. The general rule is monthly age plus 1 hour of control (Ex. 2-month-old puppy has 3 hours of control; 3-month-old puppy has 4 hours of control). Setting a timer to remind yourself to take your puppy outside and bringing your puppy out on a leash will help focus them on going to the bathroom. A small food reward (a training treat or piece of kibble) or playtime in the yard can positively reinforce using the bathroom outside. Common times that a puppy should be taken out to potty are: when you or the puppy wakes up, right before bedtime, immediately after your puppy eats or drinks, 20-30 minutes after eating or drinking, during and after physical activity.

Nutrition: We recommend puppy food that is labeled for their growth phase and size. Because there are so many different kinds of food, we recommend feeding based on the guidelines on the bag or can. **We do not recommend grain-free or raw meat diets.** Puppies should be fed on a feeding schedule. Ages 6-16 weeks: 3-4 meals per day. Ages 3-6 months: 2-3 meals per day. Ages 6-12 months: 2 meals per day. Small and medium sized dogs can be weaned off of puppy food and onto adult food between 9 and 12 months of age. Large breed dogs should remain on puppy food until 1 year of age. Treats (and pieces of kibble) are great for training and enrichment, but they should not constitute a large portion of your puppy's diet.

Enrichment: Whether your puppy is an indoor couch potato, or a high energy super pup, enrichment is super important for their mental wellbeing. Basic obedience and proper leash walking are easy ways to provide mental stimulation. Puzzle toys are a great way to keep your high energy puppy busy through the day.

Dental Health: Puppies in particular need to chew to allow for proper formation of teeth. Having a few different types of chew toys (kongs, ropes, chews, etc) will decrease the chance of your puppy destroying household items. **Please do not allow your puppy to chew rocks, antlers, or bones, as these can fracture their teeth.** The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) has helpful information in selecting toys that are safe for your puppy's teeth. www.vohc.com

Happy Visits: Your puppies first few appointments can be scary. They will experience new sounds, smells, and will be getting vaccinations. Many puppies go through fear periods, which can cause their lifelong impression of the Vet to be negative. We recommend monthly "Happy Visits" through their first year of life. Happy visits include treats (bring some of their favorites from home), getting weighed so they can pick up their monthly heartworm/flea preventative, and belly rubs from the staff. ☺ These visits will hopefully allow your puppy to feel comfortable while at their veterinary appointments!

Socialization: Early socialization is one of the most important aspects of puppy care. It involves started around 7 to 8 weeks of age. Your puppy needs to experience safe and varied experiences involving people, dogs, and various objections/situations. One way to do this is through a puppy class. Ask us where you can get a quality puppy class, and when your puppy should enroll and when your puppy will be vaccinated enough to safely enroll. Also, feel free to ask us when it is safe to start socializing your puppy, and for any additional tips/tricks we may have to offer.