



Puppy Newsletter

Training and Behaviour

The 6 to 12 month period of a puppy's life is the time which corresponds to our adolescence. In a perfect world their toilet training would be coming together and there'd be no more accidents on the best carpet, they would walk perfectly to heel, never bark at ponies in the forest and not jump up when they get excited. However, we all know that this is often not the case and in my opinion if you're managing two or three out of the above list you are doing well.

Just like teenagers, young dogs don't always do what they are told and as their confidence grows they will often push the boundaries of what they are allowed to do (or get away with). This can happen both in the home and outside on walks. In fact many behavioural and obedience problems start in adolescence and if left unchecked can be harder to modify as the dog gets older.

It is very important to continue training your puppy, both as they grow and throughout their life. Many people have the best intentions, but once they've completed puppy classes neglect their puppy's training through the important adolescent time. Most puppy classes run follow on training programs, often multiple classes, for beginners, intermediate and advanced. These are an excellent way to continue your puppy's training and are a source of advice for helping to deal with any problems as soon as they develop. Not only that, they are a great way to strengthen your bond with your pet.

If you do feel that you are having problems with your puppy's behaviour or you just want general

behavioural advice please do contact our surgeries. A good opportunity is at the free adolescent check that we offer, with the nurse, to all our puppies when they reach 6 months old. We have nurses at both Lyndhurst and Totton with a keen interest in dog behaviour and they will be able to offer advice.

While the nurses and vets have a good knowledge of dog behaviour it may be necessary to refer some problems to a qualified animal behaviourist. These people have the benefit of being able to come to your house and spend time with you and your dog. This allows them to understand the root cause of any problems and the best way to work towards making them better. At Midforest we work closely with a number of local behaviourists and can help you make an appointment with them.



Microchipping

Microchipping is an excellent in-expensive method of identifying your puppy. For a one off payment your puppy will be implanted with the microchip and will receive life-long membership with Petlog (the National Microchipping Database). The microchip is roughly the same size as a grain of rice and is encoded with an unique number. It is implanted into the loose skin in the scruff of the neck and can be done at any age. If the unthinkable happens and your puppy goes missing, all vets, animal rescues and dog warden have scanners that can read the microchip number. Petlog can be contacted and the owners' details are instantly available enabling you to be re-united with your puppy as soon as possible.



Worming your puppy

When your puppy came in for its first vaccinations I'm sure the vet asked whether it had been wormed. This is because puppies are often born infected with a roundworm, called *Toxocara canis*, whose larvae cross the placenta during pregnancy to infect the unborn pups. The larvae can also be passed in the milk. Infected puppies then pass roundworm eggs in their faeces, re-infecting themselves, each other and the bitch.

In young puppies roundworm infections can cause diarrhoea, poor growth and weight gain and in severe cases even death. It is for these reasons that we recommend puppies are wormed every 3 weeks until 12 weeks old and then monthly until 6 months so that successive generations of roundworms are killed.

However, now that your puppy is 6 months or older we recommend that worming is carried out at 3 monthly intervals. Sadly many people who have correctly protected their young puppy with regular worming seem to neglect the worming of their dog as an adult.

The worming of dogs throughout their lives is extremely important. This is not only to protect their health, but more importantly it is to protect our health. Many of the species of worm that infect our dogs can infect humans too. Indeed some of these species can cause more severe disease in people than in our canine friends.

Roundworms

In the UK, about 2-3% of people are believed to be infected with roundworm at some stage in their lives. However, most of these will remain unaware that they've been exposed to the parasite, as infection is often symptomless, or causes nothing worse than a stomach ache.

The chance of serious human harm from roundworm infection is remote but there are 12 cases a year in the UK of eye damage and blindness as a result of roundworm infection. This is caused when the roundworm larvae migrate into the back of the eye. Although the risk is small, the consequences are severe. The story of Linda

Hughes, a veterinary practice manager, whose daughter suffered an infection can be read here: http://www.wormfree.co.uk/dog_cat_worms/en/roundworm/linda_hughes.shtml

Tapeworms

The most serious risk to human health comes from the tapeworms *Echinococcus granulosus* and *Echinococcus multilocularis*. Thankfully at present *E. granulosus* is only found in Central Wales and the Hebrides, whilst *E. multilocularis* is not thought to be a risk in the UK, despite being common in Europe. Infection can cause cysts which can occur in a variety of places in the body and require surgical removal. They often occur in the liver and result in liver failure.

A more common tapeworm *Dipylidium caninum* is spread by fleas. Although a dog tapeworm, it is also the commonest tapeworm found in children. It is often asymptomatic but can cause abdominal pain, diarrhoea, anal irritation and itchiness.

It is important to remember that dogs with both roundworm and tapeworm infestations are often asymptomatic and therefore show no outward signs. However they still pose an infection risk. This is the reason regular worming is so important. If you see worms in a dog's faeces then this is a sign of a severe worm burden. Also scooting along the floor is not a sign of worm infestation, but more likely indicates full anal glands that may need emptying in the vets.



Do you have trouble remembering when your pets' worm pill is due or when you should be giving the next flea and tick treatment. If so we can help you. You can sign up for our free text messaging service. Let us have your name, address and mobile number and how often you would like a reminder and we will send you a text message letting you know when the treatment is due. If you would like further details or would like to sign up to the text messaging service, then contact reception or ring 023 8028 2358/023 8066 0400.