



PUPPY INFORMATION

St James Veterinary Group are committed to the best possible patient and client care. Our staff are friendly and approachable and will be happy to help you with any queries you may have. Please feel free to discuss any problems with the vet, or telephone for advice from one of our experienced reception/nursing staff at any of our branches.

Vaccinations

The vet or nurse will always perform a thorough health check and examination of your puppy before administering any vaccines. Injectable vaccines are combined into a single injection, so your puppy only has to have one needle each time. This is given under the skin at the back of the neck, and is well tolerated by the vast majority of puppies.

Your puppy will need a course of two or three injections to protect them from the main infectious diseases of dogs – **Distemper, Infectious Hepatitis, Parvovirus (DHP vaccine) and Leptospirosis (L4 vaccine)**. They may have already been given a vaccination before you got them, if so, our vet will look at the vaccination card and discuss which additional vaccinations are needed. **Please bring any vaccine information you have with you to your appointment.**

Your puppy can go out for walks and socialise 1 week after their final DHP vaccine but must avoid waterways/ farm areas for a further 3 weeks after the 2nd L4 vaccine to allow full protection against Leptospirosis.

We recommend an annual health check and booster vaccines to make sure your dog's protection is kept up to date. Booster vaccinations are given yearly for Leptospirosis protection and every 3 years for Distemper, Infectious hepatitis and Parvovirus.

- **D = Distemper:** This is fortunately very rare in the UK as so many dogs are vaccinated. It can take several forms, which often makes diagnosis difficult. It can cause high temperature, respiratory problems (rhinitis or bronchial pneumonia), digestive problems (gastroenteritis), eye, skin or nervous problems, and is often fatal.
- **H = Canine hepatitis:** The symptoms range from slight fever and red/purple gums to vomiting, jaundice, stomach enlargement, depression, reduction of white blood cells, pain in the liver and severe hepatitis.
- **P = Canine parvovirus disease:** This is sadly still a relatively common disease in unvaccinated puppies. Parvovirus is highly contagious and can survive in the environment for a long time. It attacks the gastrointestinal system, creates loss of appetite, vomiting, fever and often severe, bloody diarrhoea. Even with prompt treatment it can be fatal within 48 - 72 hours.
- **L4 = Leptospirosis:** Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease, which means it can be passed to humans and other animals. It is caused by bacteria transmitted in rodent urine. For dogs, symptoms include fever, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, severe weakness and lethargy, stiffness, jaundice, muscle pain, infertility and kidney failure (with or without liver failure).

We also recommend that your puppy is vaccinated against Kennel Cough (KC). This vaccination goes up the nose so sometimes they can have a runny nose or sneeze afterwards. It can be given during the same appointment as one of their other vaccinations. This vaccine is usually a requirement if your dog is going to training classes, day care, home boarding or boarding kennels and needs an annual booster to keep it up to date.

- **KC = Kennel Cough:** This is actually a general term for several diseases (bacteria and viruses) that cause severe coughing, fever and loss of appetite in dogs. It is caught from close contact with other dogs at any time, not just in kennels! It is unpleasant but not usually life threatening unless the dog is very old, very young or has other underlying health conditions. The vaccination covers for two of the most common causes of Kennel Cough Canine Influenza Virus and Bordetella bronchiseptica.

Your puppy might seem a little quiet after their injection, especially for the first day or so. This is normal whilst their immune system is responding to the vaccination. If they seem very unwell, are not eating, or have other signs of ill health, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Worming and Flea Treatments

There are many flea, tick and worming products available, and it can be a bit confusing to know what to choose.

Prescription treatments are the most effective; these can only be supplied to animals that have been examined by a vet in the last 12 months. We recommend treating your dog for fleas all year round as effective prevention is much simpler than curing an infestation. Some dogs are at risk of ticks depending on the areas where they are walked (grasslands, etc.). Dogs are most commonly at risk of roundworm, tapeworm, hookworm, and whipworm. There is a high prevalence of lungworm (*Angiostrongylus Vasorum*) in South Wales. Dogs get lungworm by eating slugs and snails or by eating grass or licking surfaces that are contaminated with the slime trails they leave behind. Lungworm is a life-threatening disease, so we recommend that you use a prescription product monthly to prevent infection.

Please let your vet know any worming or flea treatments that your puppy has already received with the breeder or since you got them home.

Pet Health Club

To help spread the cost of yearly vaccinations and regular parasite treatment we offer a Pet Health Club.

This is a monthly direct debit scheme that gives you great savings each year on the costs of preventative products for your pet as well as discounts on neutering, food and dental treatment. Please ask for more information.

Neutering

In pet dogs not intended for breeding, neutering is usually recommended. The ideal timing of the procedure varies depending on the sex, breed and lifestyle of your dog. We suggest discussing the pros and cons with our vets to make an informed decision. Neutering has many physical health benefits for your pet. It can prevent them from developing serious health issues in the future, such as certain types of cancer or pyometra – a life-threatening infection of the womb. Neutering also stops your pet from having unwanted litters, there are already hundreds of thousands of unwanted animals in shelters across the UK and neutering your pet means you won't add to the problem.

Pet Insurance

Just like us, pets will at some point fall ill or have an unexpected injury; but for pets there is no NHS to absorb the cost. Pet insurance helps owners plan and cover unexpected vet's fees. We strongly advise you to have pet insurance. To give peace of mind, after your puppy's first visit to us we can introduce you to PetPlan®, who offer 4 weeks of FREE cover whilst you consider the options. There are numerous pet insurance companies in the UK offering many different types and levels of cover. For more information, please request a copy of our leaflet "understanding pet insurance".

Socialisation and Training

In order to become a confident adult dog, puppies need to get used to the world of humans! Socialisation starts with their mum, littermates and breeder and continues with you in their new home. The first 16 weeks of their life is known as the "critical socialisation period"; this is when they do most of their learning about what is safe and what is scary. Try introducing your puppy to as many objects/noises/dogs/people as you can during this time. Introduce your puppy to new things in a calm manner. If they seem fearful, don't force them to interact, just try again tomorrow. Always reward appropriate behaviour with treats and verbal praise.

You may not be able to walk your puppy yet if they haven't had their vaccinations, but if they are small enough you can carry them. They can go out for walks and socialise 1 week after their final DHP vaccine but must avoid waterways/farm areas for a further 3 weeks after the 2nd L4 vaccine to allow full protection against Leptospirosis.

It is also important to get your puppy used to being left alone, initially this will be for very short periods of time, only a few minutes. As they become more relaxed about being alone you can extend the time they are left for. Crate training can help with getting a puppy used to being left by giving them a safe and familiar space. Puppies that are not used to being left can go on to develop separation anxiety later in life and practicing when they are young can help prevent this. We recommend puppy socialisation and training classes and suggest looking for those that use positive reward-based training methods. If these are not available in-person during periods of social restriction, then there may be online training available instead. Further good advice can be found at <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk>.

