



TOLLESON ANIMAL CLINIC

[A Guide to Maintaining Good Health in your Puppy's First Year](#)

If you haven't already noticed, you are embarking on a fun and occasionally trying journey. You are about to discover your pup's personality and help to shape the dog they are going to become. We strongly recommend that you and your family participate in some training classes to help your puppy learn proper socialization and to provide you with guidance on the special demands a puppy needs as they mature.

Our goal here at Tolleson Animal Clinic is to help maintain a healthy pet throughout their life. The following is a guideline through the first year of health exams, vaccines, deworming, heartworm prevention, flea control, neutering/spaying, and general health care.

1) Average Preventative and Vaccination Schedule

We recommend vaccinating your puppy every 3-4 weeks, starting between 6-8 weeks old, until they're at least 16 weeks old.

Average Age	Preventative Care	Vaccinations
6-8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Examination, Fecal Analysis, start Heartworm Preventative, Flea and Tick	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Distemper Combo #1
9-11 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Examination, continue Heartworm Preventative, Flea and Tick monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Distemper Combo #2, Kennel Cough
12-14 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Examination, Continue Heartworm Preventative, Flea and Tick monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Distemper Combo #3/Leptospirosis #1
15-17 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Examination, Fecal Analysis, continue Heartworm Preventative, Flea and Tick monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final Distemper Combo/Leptospirosis #2, Rabies 1 year
6 – 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Schedule Castration or Spay, Microchipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Neuter or Spay; Large breed male dogs, we recommend postponing neutering until almost 12 months
15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Examination, Fecal Analysis, Heartworm/Lyme/Anaplasma/Ehrlichia Test (4Dx), continue heartworm/flea/tick prevention monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Distemper and Rabies 3 year, Leptospirosis, Kennel Cough

After looking through the above table, I am sure the question on your mind is why does my puppy need so many vaccinations? The first reason is initially, puppies are born with some protection against disease called maternal antibodies from the mothers. After this, the puppy needs to make its own antibodies, which occurs in 2 ways; contracting the disease (getting sick) or preferably, through vaccinations. Unfortunately, the same maternal antibodies that protect the puppy can also block the vaccination from working completely. The issue with this is that there is no known "window" of opportunity for when the maternal antibodies are low enough for the vaccine to work completely, but before the puppy is at risk of contracting disease. The second reason is with each "booster" vaccine, the body develops more memory cells or immunity to the disease, forming a stronger immune response, and thus protection. All cells have a limited life span and therefore we booster at recommended intervals to maintain full protection. During your puppy's vaccination series, we do not recommend they go out into public spaces: no walks, dog parks, pet stores, your front yard, etc. This is because your puppy is still vulnerable to the viruses and may contract them during that time. 2 weeks after their last vaccine, they can go out into the world and explore to their heart's content. We understand it's difficult to keep them indoors/in your own backyard, but we also want to keep them safe and healthy. They are more than welcome to visit the homes of family or friends that, if they have pets, the pets are fully vaccinated and healthy. This would help with socialization and exploring a new environment.



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Distemper Combo (DAPP): This vaccine is a 5 in 1. It protects against the viruses distemper, parvo, adenoviruses 1 & 2, and parainfluenza. These are all **very contagious** diseases. The most commonly known one is parvo. Parvovirus is generally thought of as a puppy disease and while it's more commonly seen in puppies, it's also infected adult dogs that have not had the vaccine. Symptoms for parvovirus will start to present themselves about 14 days after infection. Unfortunately, there is no cure for parvo. We give your pet supportive care while they fight off the infection. Sometimes, hospitalization is recommended depending on how the disease is progressing. Parvo is extremely difficult to get rid of in your environment because it is not visible to the naked eye and can be anywhere. It also lives in the environment for 7-9 years, even in this desert heat. In fact, parvo loves heat, so parvo loves Arizona. The best way to protect your puppy is through vaccination and keeping them indoors while they're still vulnerable.

Bordetella: This vaccine helps protect against different strains of kennel cough. Kennel cough is a **very contagious** upper respiratory virus. This is considered a lifestyle vaccine. So if you're planning on activities like dog parks, boarding, or grooming, we recommend this vaccine.

Leptospirosis: This vaccine helps protect against the Leptospira bacteria. This is generally passed through wildlife urine. This is considered a lifestyle vaccine. If you're planning on doing activities like camping, hiking, or lake days, we recommend this vaccine. This is especially important because the bacteria is **zoonotic- meaning it's transmissible to humans**.

Rabies: This vaccine helps protect against the rabies virus. Rabies is typically transmitted from wildlife. **This virus is also zoonotic.** The vaccine is required by law in most counties, Maricopa County included. Once your pet has been vaccinated, you need to register them with Maricopa County. There are 3 ways to do this. You can visit their buildings (one is on 27th Ave and Durango. The other is out in Mesa, on Rio Salado and the 101), mail in an application, or submit an application online at pets.maricopa.gov.

2) Fecal Analysis and Deworming

Puppies are often born with worms in their gastrointestinal tract, which came from their mothers but also are picked up from fleas, other pets, their environment, and wildlife. Some of these worms can cause serious illness (vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, anemia, poor growth), others are very contagious to their housemates and to their owners. For this reason, we strongly recommend checking a fecal sample for internal parasites at your earliest convenience and then rechecking a few months later. Monthly heartworm preventatives do also deworm for some of the most common intestinal parasites.

3) Heartworm Preventatives and Testing

Heartworm disease is a potentially fatal disease in dogs. Mosquitos bite your dog, inject microfilaria (baby heartworms) into their bloodstream, then they mature in the vessels of the heart and lungs. In heavy burdens, infection could result in heart failure and death. At this point, treatment is too late. Prevention is important and affordable. We can provide you with monthly heartworm preventatives that should be given year-round and also treat intestinal parasites. The product we carry is Interceptor Plus. This should be started at 8 weeks of age. We have more options available in our online pharmacy. We'd be happy to help set up your account and auto-ship the preventative to you at your desired interval. Annual blood testing for heartworm along with the tick-borne diseases Lyme, ehrlichia, and anaplasma starts at 15 months of age unless there is reason in their history to do so sooner such as adopted dogs from southern states.

4) Flea and Tick Control

Fleas and ticks are pesky insects in the environment waiting for your dog. They can transmit disease and also expose you to disease as well such as bartonella and Lyme disease. Thankfully, we are able to provide some protection for you and your pet. We recommend year-round flea and tick treatment because, contrary to popular belief, they don't hibernate. The products we provide in hospital is monthly Credelio. We have more options available in our online pharmacy. We'd be happy to help set up your account and auto-ship the preventative to you at your desired interval.

5) Spaying and Neutering

We strongly recommend that you have your puppy neutered. We recommend female dogs be spayed between 4-6 months of age. Having your female dog spayed before her first heat (which occurs between 6-8 months of age) decreases the likelihood of her developing breast cancer by 80%. After her first heat but before the second reduces the chance by about 50%. Serious conditions such as a pyometra (uterine infection), uterine, or ovarian cancer are also eliminated. Castrating a male dog eliminates potential testicular cancer and reduces the odds of prostatic cancer or abscesses. Behaviorally this can decrease sexual, aggressive, and marking behaviors. Male dogs, we recommend castration between 6-12 months. For large breeds or active dogs, waiting until 12-24 months of age may have some benefit in reducing joint disease and some cancer



TOLLESON ANIMAL CLINIC

[A Guide to Maintaining Good Health in your Puppy's First Year](#)

development later in life. This is based on 1 study performed on golden retrievers but still worth mentioning. For 10-14 days after the surgery, we recommend your dog wear an e-collar (cone of shame) so they don't lick and potentially open up their incision site. We have some available to purchase or you can bring your own. It just needs to come past their nose 1" to 2". Other products available are inflatable donuts and post surgery suits. They are available for purchase at pet stores or online. We offer Phovia, which is a LED light treatment. This treatment reduces the healing time up to 50%. It's great for those rambunctious dogs that have two speeds: sleep and run. 😊

6) Microchipping

Implanting a Home Again microchip in your pet is recommended. This is placed under the skin between the shoulder blades. If your dog were to ever become lost and then potentially injured, a veterinary clinic or shelter would be able to scan him and identify the personal identification code that is associated with your contact information. This can be performed anytime, most commonly at the time of neutering. It is your responsibility to update your contact information for your pet's microchip. It is important to keep the information up to date just in case your pet gets out and picked up. The first thing people think of when they see a stray dog is to check for a chip. If that's the first thing they think of, it is wise to microchip your pet and keep the information up to date.

7) Hip Evaluation

Large breed dogs are often predisposed to hip issues, primarily hip dysplasia. This occurs when the head of the femur does not sit well inside the hip socket resulting in abnormal wear, pain, and damage to the joint over time. Though large breed dogs grow until they are 2 years old, we can do some preliminary radiographs while under anesthesia for neutering to screen for early disease. If noted, intervention and treatment may be initiated.

8) Handling and Training

Work with your puppy every day to get them used to being handled. Play with their feet, ears, mouth, pinch their skin, hold them in weird positions, hold them still standing and laying down, etc. Get them used to as much manipulation as you can and have multiple people do it. This allows the puppy to become used to being worked with and more tolerant of treatments or procedures that need to be done such as vaccines, nail trims, blood draws, teeth brushing, and so on.

We also recommend training your puppy. Either on your own or using a trainer. There are several great dog training videos on the internet available to you. The key to training is consistency. Everyone in the household needs to be consistent with the training. Mixed messages often result in delayed and even poor training. Training helps you have a better-behaved dog. This helps lower the stress that can occur with a dog that misbehaves.

9) Grooming

Keeping your pet well-groomed is important for their health and comfort. You don't need to do it perfectly, but regular brushing and nail trimming will help prevent mats, tangles, and other problems.

Brush your pet's coat daily. This will help remove loose hair and dirt, and prevent mats from forming. Use a brush that is designed for your pet's fur type.

If you find mats, **don't** try to cut them out with scissors. This could cut your pet's skin and cause an infection. Instead, take your pet to a groomer or use grooming clippers.

Trim your pet's nails regularly. This will help prevent them from growing too long and curling into their paw pads, which can be painful and cause an infection.

If you're not comfortable grooming your pet yourself, you can always take them to a professional groomer. They will have the experience and tools to keep your pet looking and feeling their best.

Here are some additional tips for grooming your pet:

- Start grooming your pet when they are young, so they get used to it.
- Make grooming a positive experience for your pet by being gentle and patient.
- Use a comfortable grooming table or surface.
- Reward your pet with treats and praise after grooming.

By following these tips, you can help keep your pet looking and feeling their best.



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10) Nutrition

What should you feed your pet? There are a lot of differing opinions on this topic. It boils down to: Whatever your pet is thriving on. You don't need to break the bank on a boutique brand because marketing has convinced you that's what your pet needs. Costco brand food is good food. Purina, Pedigree, and Iams are good foods as well. Prescription diets, such as Hill's and Royal Canin are great foods. They have a veterinary nutritionist on staff and have several diets to meet the needs of different ailments. We don't recommend grain free food. It has been linked to DCM- Dilated Cardiomyopathy.

If you want to make your pet's food, great! We recommend visiting [Balanceit.com](https://balanceit.com) to ensure you're meeting the nutritional requirements for your pet. The site was created and is run by a veterinary nutritionist. She has information on what your pet's dietary requirements are and recipes for you to follow.

Just Food For Dogs is also a great resource for homemade foods. They have food that is already prepared and a section that allows you to create recipes.

11) Websites

Here are some good resources for additional information. There are more available on our website:

<https://indoorpet.osu.edu/dogs>
<https://healthyhabitsforpets.com/>
<https://www.pawlicy.com/>
<https://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/>
<https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/>
<https://linktree.com/drradostadogresources>

Veterinary Nutritionists

- Balance It: www.balance.it
- Tufts University: <https://vetnutrition.tufts.edu/>
 - <https://vetnutrition.tufts.edu/petfoodology/>
- Weeth Nutrition: <http://www.weethnutrition.com/>
- The Pet Oncologist (Nutrition for pets with cancer):
<https://www.thepetoncologist.com/blog/nutrition-in-pets-with-cancer>
- WSAVA: <https://wsava.org/global-guidelines/global-nutrition-guidelines/>

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Did your dog or cat just eat something poisonous? Call your veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline® at 855-764-7661 for help immediately! The sooner a dog poisoning or cat poisoning is diagnosed, the easier, less expensive, and safer it is for your pet to get treated!

What to do if your dog or cat is poisoned:

- Remove your pet from the area.
- Check to make sure your pet is safe: breathing and acting normally.
- Do NOT give any home antidotes.
- Do NOT induce vomiting without consulting a vet or Pet Poison Helpline®.
- Call Pet Poison Helpline® at 855-764-7661.
- If veterinary attention is necessary, contact your veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic immediately.

Detailed Instructions:

- Immediately remove your pet from the area, and make sure no other pets (or kids!) are exposed to this area. Safely remove any remaining poisonous material from their reach.
- Check to make sure your pet is breathing normally and acting fine otherwise.
- Collect a sample of the material, along with the packaging, vial, or container, and save it – you will need all that information when you talk to your veterinarian or to a Pet Poison Helpline® expert.



TOLLESON ANIMAL CLINIC

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- Do NOT give your dog any milk, food, salt, oil, or any other home remedies! Also, never inducing vomiting without talking to your veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline® – it may actually be detrimental or contraindicated to induce vomiting!
- Don't give hydrogen peroxide to your pet without checking with a vet or with Pet Poison Helpline® first. For you cat lovers, hydrogen peroxide doesn't work well to induce vomiting (it just causes massive foaming and salivating instead!), and stronger veterinary prescription medications are necessary to get your cat to vomit up the poison Kitty ingested!
- Get help. Program your veterinarian phone number, along with an ER vet and Pet Poison Helpline®'s phone number (855-764-7661) in your cell phone so you will always have immediate access to help.
- Keep in mind that the prognosis is always better when a toxicity is reported immediately, so don't wait to see if your pet becomes symptomatic before calling for help. It's always less expensive, and safer for your pet for you to call immediately. Remember that there's a narrow window of time when we can decontaminate (induce vomiting or pump the stomach) in the case of a poisoning!

Poisonous Substances **This is not a comprehensive of all poisonous substances*

- Toxic Foods
 - Almonds
 - Apricots
 - Avocados
 - Balsam pears
 - Chocolate
 - Coffee grounds
 - Fatty foods
 - Grapes
 - Japanese plums
 - Macadamia nuts
 - Moldy or spoiled food
 - Mushrooms (if also toxic to humans)
 - Onions and onion powder
 - Pear and peach kernels
 - Raisins
 - Xylitol- sweetened products
 - Yeast dough
- Common poisonous household substances
 - Alcohol
 - Acetaminophen
 - Antifreeze & other car fluids
 - Bleach
 - Boric acid
 - Cleaning products
 - Compost piles
 - Deodorants
 - De-icing salts
 - Detergents
 - Disinfectants
 - Drain cleaners
 - Flea products (used incorrectly or due to individual hypersensitivity)
 - Fertilizers
 - Furniture polish
 - Gasoline
 - Hair colorings
 - Insecticides
 - Kerosene
 - Matches
 - Mothballs
 - Nail polish and remover
 - Paint
 - Pennies, post 1982 (due to high concentration of zinc)
 - Prescription and non-prescription medicine like ibuprofen
 - Potpourri, liquid
 - Rat poison
 - Rubbing alcohol
 - Shoe polished
 - Sleeping pills
 - Snail or slug bait
 - Turpentine
 - Vitamins (human or overdose of pet vitamins)
 - Weed killers
 - Windshield washer fluid
- Toxic Plants
 - Azaleas
 - Dieffenbachia
 - Lilies
 - Rhododendrons
 - Rhubarb
 - Sago palm
 - Spinach
 - Tomato and potato leaves and stems
 - Tulip and narcissus bulbs
 - Mistletoe
 - Mushroom and toadstools (if also toxic to humans)
 - Wild Cherry