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CARING FOR YOUR NEW PUPPY/DOG

OUR GUIDE TO KEEPING YOUR NEW ADDITION SAFE AND WELL FOR MANY HAPPY AND HEALTHY YEARS TOGETHER!



Firstly congratulations on your new arrival and thanks for choosing Natterjacks to look after your new member of the family. Here begins an amazing journey and we are looking forward to sharing it with you and being there for you when you need us.

This leaflet is designed to summarise the main routine healthcare requirements to ensure that the new member of your family is protected from illness and kept in tip-top condition. We have also included a section on some common training and behavioural issues that you may encounter but this is not exhaustive and please do not hesitate to contact us if you need further information or advice.

Bournemouth Surgery

The Old Bank Building, 1138-1140 Christchurch Road,
Boscombe East, Bournemouth, BH7 6DY

☎ 01202 427404

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VACCINATION

Vaccination is a very simple, safe and useful way to protect your pet against a range of nasty diseases. All the diseases vaccinated against are highly contagious and can be fatal. These disease include distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus and parainfluenza. Certain diseases such as leptospirosis (also known as Weils' Disease) can be passed on to humans from animals and can be fatal both to animals and humans. Contrary some recent rumours, there is no harmful long-term effect from vaccinating and our tailor-made vaccination regimes have been selected to provide the maximum of cover with the minimum of vaccines throughout your dog's life.



Puppy vaccination courses involve **two vaccinations given two to four weeks apart** and can start from 6 weeks of age with the second vaccination being given no earlier than 10 weeks of age. Before this age your puppy should be protected by the immunity they will have acquired from their mother's milk and vaccination cannot be done at an earlier age since this acquired immunity will prevent the vaccines from working. Your puppy can then start to go outside properly a week after the second vaccine. Before this time you can still introduce your puppy to other dogs as long as it is in a safe environment and the other dog is vaccinated and healthy. Safe places include the house, garden and the shoreline between low and high tide on the beach as this area is regularly cleaned by the sea. Any small risk from these environments is massively outweighed by the benefits of getting your puppy socialised at an early age (see later).

It is necessary to give your dog annual booster vaccinations for the rest of their life in order to maintain immunity from the above diseases. However we do not believe in vaccinating for every disease every year and we only do what is necessary – we even offer tests to check your dog's level of immunity to the various

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diseases ('titre testing') for those wishing for a more targeted approach. A vaccination also combines an annual health check which is a great way of finding problems early – the best time to treat any disease.

If your puppy needs to go to a boarding kennels in the future, they will need to be vaccinated against kennel cough. The Kennel Cough vaccine provides protection against a throat and chest infection caused by the bacteria *Bordetella bronchisepticum*. It is a highly contagious infection and the name is a bit misleading as it is rarely associated with kennelling – most cases arise from infected dogs or foxes in the local environment. It can be easily diagnosed as it causes a characteristic retching cough. In most healthy dogs it is not usually serious and often improves with a course of antibiotics. However it can lead to a chronic (long-term) bronchitis. It is an unusual vaccine to administer as it is squirted up the nose. The immunity lasts for 12 months and needs to be given at least 1 week before your dog goes into kennels.

MICROCHIPPING

Microchipping the most reliable method of permanently identifying your pet and is now a legal requirement in the UK (as of April 2016) – all dogs older than 8 weeks of age should already be microchipped when you acquire them (though this can be delayed until 12 weeks in working breeds or for health reasons). The microchip itself is implanted with an injection and contains a barcode. This barcode is your dog's individual identity number. After the microchip is implanted, you (or the breeder) will be asked to fill in a form with your personal details and these details will be sent to the national database alongside your dog's identity number. Once the microchip is in place, a handheld scanning device can be used to detect the barcode on the microchip.

Police stations, rescue centres and dog wardens all have access to scanners and this is what makes microchips so effective. When a dog goes missing and is then found, the barcode on the microchip is reported to a national database and is matched to your personal details. This makes reuniting you with your dog a much easier task!

Puppies can be microchipped from any age in theory though we usually recommend from 6 weeks of age and onwards. As dogs are now being microchipped at a much earlier age, we are now offering tiny 'minichips' at no extra cost as these are half the size of normal microchips and therefore much less painful to insert. It is important that we minimise any painful experiences on your puppy's first visit to the surgery so that they do not develop a fear of the surgery – we want our patients to look forward to coming to see us! For this reason we may also take your puppy away from the consulting room for microchipping (or vaccinating) so that they do not associate the procedure with the room or consult table – it also gives nurses a chance to give them a good cuddle as well!

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INSURANCE

We strongly recommend pet insurance. Whilst minor ailments and routine procedures at Natterjacks should be easily affordable, costs of treatment for longer term illnesses or major injuries can be considerable. Whilst advances in veterinary medicine mean we can do more for your pet, treatment costs can soon mount up. For example, treatment of skin disorders (very common in both dogs and cats) and diabetes can easily exceed £12,000 over a lifetime whilst repairing a broken leg can cost £2500 or more. For most people these sorts of costs are not likely to be within the scope of the family budget leaving some very difficult decisions to be made.

It's important to be aware that not all pet insurance is the same. Don't just shop around on price alone. Some cheaper policies have disconcertingly low levels of cover which will cost you a lot more in the long run or may leave you without any cover at all. However with a bit of research you should be able to find an affordable policy that will provide you with ample cover for the lifetime of your pet – please see our online guide for more information: <http://www.natterjacksvet.com/insurance/>

We have independently researched the market thoroughly on your behalf and we believe that both Agria and Petplan offer the best policies at this moment in time. We offer a free 4 week insurance policy for animals less than 12 months with both Agria and Pet Plan to provide you with some immediate cover – there is no obligation to keep the cover going but we have found these companies to be consistently reliable and provide adequate levels of cover should you need them.

DIET

A healthy pet starts with a healthy diet and the choice of diets is bewilderingly large. Many puppies will have been weaned onto a certain diet already and this may or not be suitable for long term use. There is no one regime or diet that suits every animal and their owner but we generally feel that the better quality complete dry diets are the best option for most of our patients. They are painstakingly formulated to provide the correct nutrients for each stage of your dog's life.

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There are lots of good quality complete diets on the market and we can help advise you on a suitable diet to meet your pet's needs. We do not profit from the sales of pet food so you can be sure that our advice is unbiased and genuinely in the best interest of your pet. We currently stock diets made by Barking Heads, Lily's Kitchen and Purina (the ProPlan range and their Veterinary Diet range for treating certain health conditions). We have found them all to be highly palatable, good quality and cost-effective. However we can supply almost any diet and often at considerably lower prices than the big stores. Diets made by Royal Canin, Hills, Canagan, Calibra, Eukanuba, Burns, James Wellbeloved, Arden Grange and Wafcol are other reliable manufacturers. Be wary of budget brands, cheap supermarket diets or so called 'mixers' as these often have high levels of cheap cereals as well as added salt to improve palatability. This can lead to a range of problems including dental disease, obesity, diabetes, skin and digestive problems as well as heart and kidney disease.

Raw-feeding and home prepared diets have become more popular recently and can suit some dogs very well – particularly if your dog has problems with allergies or obesity. However in young puppies it can be difficult to ensure that you are providing the right balance of nutrients and there is also a greater risk of food poisoning (for dogs and humans!) caused by improperly stored or prepared raw food. If you are keen go down this road then ensure to do your research and seek plenty of advice to ensure that you get it right. Done properly it is an excellent alternative to conventional complete diets and it is possible to feed both raw and complete diets together to get the benefits of both. A reputable local supplier of raw diets is Nurturing by Nature (www.nurturingbynature.co.uk) and complete raw diets made by Nature's Menu are widely available in many stores.

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PARASITE CONTROL – FLEAS AND WORMS



We generally advise against using flea or worming products bought in supermarkets and pet shops as they are not effective at killing all worms and none of them contain an ingredient to kill lungworm. For this reason, we do not recommend the use of any pet shop or supermarket products for dogs living in this area of the country. Furthermore, many use older chemical insecticides which can cause serious side effects and result in a number of hospital admissions and deaths every year.

All animals develop infestations of worms – we live in an area with a high population of pets as well as wildlife such as foxes and rodents which can all carry worms of various kinds. The most common type found in puppies is roundworm. If monthly treatment is not carried out your puppy will become weak and will fail to grow properly. Adults tend to suffer from tapeworm, lungworm and roundworm, all of which can be picked up from the environment. The newest and biggest threat to dogs in this area comes from lungworm (*Angiostrongylus Vasorum*) which is a real concern as it can cause fatal internal bleeds without any prior symptoms. It is spread in the slime of snails and slugs and is thus found everywhere in the outdoor environment.



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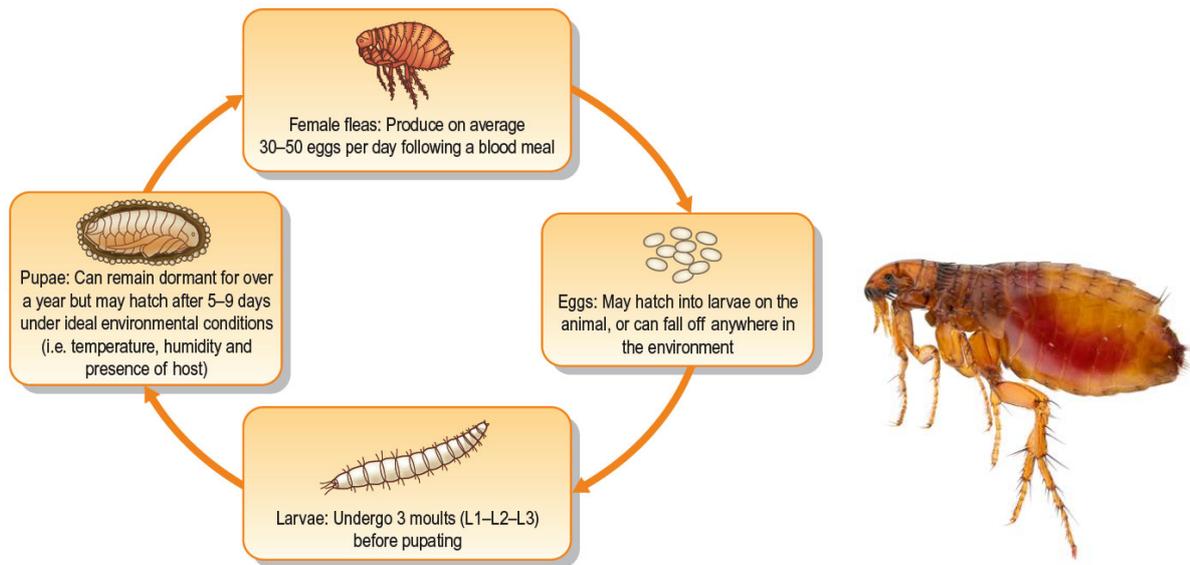
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Fleas are the other most common parasite found on puppies. They cause painful and itchy skin problems as well as carrying tapeworm. They will also bite humans as well! A common misconception amongst pet owners is that flea infestations are clearly visible or that the puppy only has one or two fleas because they have only seen a couple at a time. The reality is that 5% of the flea infestation is on your puppy and that 95% of the problem is actually in the environment where the various stages of the flea are developing! It is only when they have matured that they will jump on your pet to feed. If the environment remains untreated, an infestation can continue for 3 years even without an animal being present! Often the only evidence of a flea infestation seen is the 'flea dirt' they leave behind. It is important not only to treat your puppy if fleas are present but to also prevent fleas from infesting in the first place by treating your puppy regularly with flea treatments available from your vet. A lot of products sold at pet outlets and supermarkets do not provide a persistent, satisfactory level of protection. Furthermore there is also a lot of evidence to suggest that fleas in this area have developed resistance to products containing fipronil (e.g. Frontline, Effipro, Eliminal, Bob Martin FleaClear) so we advise using alternatives to these.



Initially after a flea problem, flea treatments needs to be used in conjunction with a household insecticide spray (Indorex) to treat the developing stages of the flea already in your home. This is also available from the practice and one can will treat a 3-4 bedroom house. Once this is done, regular preventative flea treatment should guarantee protection for your house and animal.

We therefore recommend that you use **Prinovox (Advocate)** Spot-On pipettes every month plus a tapeworm treatment (Prazitel) every 3 months. Prinovox is the only topical product licensed for prevention and treatment of lungworm infection and also protects against fox mange as well as all the various types of roundworm.

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Advocate does not cover ticks very well so if you are having problems with ticks then we may recommend **Bravecto** which is a new tablet that offers THREE months control against ticks and fleas. Being a tablet is particularly useful if your dog spends a lot of time in water etc.

A **Seresto** collar is another alternative that protects against fleas and ticks for up to 8 months. Prac-tic (fleas and ticks) and ClearSpot (an affordable but effective flea treatment) are alternative products that are also supplied at the surgery.

If you are not using Advocate every month then it is essential that you use another type of wormer called **Milpro (or Milbactor/Milbemax)** every month up to six months of age and every 3 months as an adult as this is the only other product that protects against the deadly lungworm as well as treating tapeworms and roundworms.

We will advise you of the most appropriate treatment to suit your puppy's individual needs. Please remember that these products are only available from your vet and are prescription medicines. This means that your puppy needs to be seen annually in order for us to re-prescribe them to you. This will be done at annual vaccination or free of charge with a nurse if we have not seen your pet previously.

NEUTERING

If you are not planning to breed from your dog it is advisable to have them neutered.

This procedure can be carried out from 4 months of age in both sexes and involves them being admitted for the day (typically between 8.30 and 9am) having had no food since 11pm the night before. They will then go home in the afternoon/evening.

Neutering has many advantages and contrary to popular belief, neutering your dog will not adversely change their personality – they will be every bit as fun, affectionate and playful as before. Young male dogs will often be a bit less exuberant but this is usually seen as an advantage! It will not cause them to gain weight either, it is just that they often need a little less food after neutering (often around 25% less) as the hormones prior to neutering cause them to burn more calories. Therefore a close watch must be kept on their weight in the months following neutering to ensure that the diet is adjusted accordingly.

Male dogs (castration) - benefits include:

- Better recall with a decreased tendency to run off after other dogs
- Reduction in nuisance behaviours such as urine marking and 'humping'.
- Much less likely to be attacked by other dogs - entire dogs smell threatening to other dogs who may bite in self-defence - even if your dog has not displayed aggressive behaviour.

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- Numerous medical benefits – reduction in anal cancer, testicular cancer, prostate enlargement and some types of hernia

Female dogs (spaying) - benefits

- Less attention from other dogs and less risk of injury as a result
- Protection against breast/mammary cancer (risks can be as high as 40% in unneutered females)
- Prevention of uterine infection (also very common and life-threatening in older dogs)
- Prevention of unwanted puppies

When to neuter?

All dogs can be neutered any time from 12 weeks of age onwards. However we tend to suggest waiting a little longer until they are 4 to 5 months of age and some people may prefer to wait until they are adults or in the cases of bitches until after their first season. You will find that there are a lot of differing opinions on the correct time to neuter and this is largely because there is no right or wrong time as every dog – and owner – is different.

With bitches, neutering before they have had their first season (which is typically at 7-10 months of age) can slightly reduce the chances of breast (mammary) cancer later in life compared with those that have had a season, whereas those that have had a season may be slightly less at risk of developing urinary incontinence later in life. However the differences are very slight between the two groups.

In general, the recovery from surgery is quicker at a younger age as healing rates are higher. There is also the added advantage of not having to manage a bitch through their season or deal with a hormonal adolescent male. However there are occasions when delaying neutering can be advantageous - nervous animals may benefit from being allowed to reach maturity and there are some rare growth abnormalities that may also benefit from such a delay.

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WHAT ELSE DOES MY PUPPY NEED?



- **Feed bowls** – purchase two bowls big enough for a fully grown dog – ceramic or stainless steel are better than plastic as they are resistant to chewing!
- **Temporary puppy collar and lead** (they will soon outgrow them), soft and light but strong enough to hold the puppy. The collar should be a full collar, not a choke chain or a half choke. A soft rope slip lead is the best form of restraint for training purposes – a lead that clips onto the collar is not advised as dogs can reverse out of collars when panicked. A good slip lead can be looped around the nose in a figure of eight fashion to control the head and prevent pulling whilst relieving strain on the neck. Harnesses are also a secure means of restraint though again puppies will soon outgrow them and larger dogs can pull very forcefully against a harness using the strength in their shoulders and are therefore not suitable for all dogs.
- **Toys** – Kongs are great indestructible toys for play and can be stuffed with food to help keep your puppy occupied when they are on their own. Nylabones are good, robust chews/toys as well. Beef shin bones, pigs ears and rawhide chews are good, natural treats and chews though too much rawhide or edible chews can cause stomach upsets.
- **Bed** - your puppy will probably chew the bed so do not spend a fortune until he has grown out of the chewing phase. Items impregnated with your scent are a good idea but the puppy will not be able to decipher between the threadbare old jumper you gave him and your favourite cashmere sweater so be careful. This especially applies to old slippers!
- **Identity disc** - It is a legal requirement for your dog to wear an identity disc bearing the owner's name, address and contact phone number (even if microchipped)

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- **Brush/comb** - The type of brush or comb will depend on the breed of dog. However even short hair dogs benefit from a daily groom. It is a perfect opportunity to build the bond between owner and dog. We recommend Zoom Groom brushes.
- **Crate/pen** – Crate training can be very useful but is not essential. Firstly it can be good for your dog to have their own hideaway /den where they can retreat to if they feel threatened e.g. with visitors, children etc. Dogs are “den” animals and readily adapt to sleeping and resting in a crate that replicates a den. Keep the crate in a busy convenient location such as the kitchen or any other room where the family spends a lot of time. When you’re travelling in the car, visiting the vet or any other time you may need to confine your dog (eg. after surgery or if it has been injured), it’s much easier and safer if your dog has been trained to enjoy being in a crate. You can also take the crate with you when you visit friends, go on holiday or leave your dog in kennels where the crate will provide them with a ‘safe zone’.
- **Treats** – make sure they are healthy (meat/fish based rather than cereal or biscuit based), have no added salt and importantly SMALL – treats should not comprise more than 5% of their daily diet or you risk upsetting the careful nutritional balance of their main diet. Remember dogs only appreciate the fact that they have had a treat at all – not how much they have received!
- **First Aid Kit** – a few basic first aid bits and pieces are a good idea as puppies can be accident prone! We can supply you with a good basic first aid kit and also have a comprehensive first aid guide on our website which is available for download.

BASIC TRAINING

This is a huge area to cover and we recommend that you sign up for some training classes to help learn how to teach your dog the basics as well as being a great opportunity to socialise your dog and share experiences with other owners. There are numerous classes that operate in the local area – please ask at reception for more details as these are always subject to change.

Socialisation

Socialising is vital to ensure that your dog learns to cope with new situations and learns how to communicate properly with other dogs. All dogs are, by default, scared of new things – this is a natural instinct to protect them in the wild. Dogs are much less able to deal with new experiences after 16 weeks of age which means that it is so important to take every opportunity to ‘throw the world’ at your dog before they reach this age. This means exposing them to every possible new experience. Try to ensure that you have ‘ticked off’ all these experiences before your dog reaches 16 weeks of age:

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- **New/different animals** – large and small dogs of various breeds and ages, cats, horses, cattle, sheep, chickens, pigeons
- **New/different people** – old people (wheelchairs, walking sticks, zimmer frames), young children, babies (prams), people of different races/colours, joggers, binmen, postman, beards, hats, sunglasses, uniforms, visitors to the house
- **New places** – pubs, shops, school playgrounds, vet clinics (!), large crowds, subway, beach, busy roads, railways
- **New surfaces** – carpets, wooden floors, cattle grids, tiles, sand, puddles, mud, man-hole covers, metal grates
- **Get touchy feely** - make sure your pet is used to being brushed, bathed, nail-clipped and generally prodded and poked all over – regularly feel and examine the ears, feet, tail, mouth, rear end, legs etc so that it is possible to examine these areas later in life
- **Vehicles/moving objects** – get them used to car travel as well and expose them to buses, mopeds, rubbish lorries, cyclists, horse riders
- **Loud noises** e.g. vacuum cleaner, fireworks, lawnmower, loud music, hairdryer, doorbell, noisy toys
- **Scary objects** – umbrellas, brooms, wheelbarrows

Toilet-training

Patience is the key here – every dog is different and some learn by 10 weeks of age and some take up to 10 months!

When training a puppy or dog to toilet in an appropriate place, you should ensure that they have frequent opportunities to do so during the day – they are not able to ‘hold on’ for long periods and regular visits outside are essential and will provide you with more opportunities to teach your dog about where it is appropriate to go to the toilet.

Puppies should be taken outside:

- after every meal
- on waking
- after play or exercise
- after any excitement e.g. visitors to the home
- at least every hour depending upon the puppy’s age

There are signs in your dog’s behaviour that will enable you to predict when they will need to go to the toilet. For example, they may become restless, often sniffing around and then begin circling before squatting. Times to look out for these signs are after naps, after feeding and after they have been left alone!

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When you recognise that your dog is thinking about going to the toilet, there are a few steps to follow:

- Always go with your dog into the garden or correct place so that you are there to reward the successful actions. This will tell them that this is the right place to 'go'. Always try to take your dog to the same place so they get into a routine – dogs are creatures of habit and tend to always go back to the same place.
- As your dog begins to toilet, use a toileting command that he/she can then associate with correct behaviour; for example, 'be clean!' However, patience is important if your dog is initially distracted.
- Going to the toilet in the correct place should be rewarded immediately with lots of praise, a treat or play. Reward-based training in this way also helps build a good relationship between you and your dog and will be useful in future training.
- Walk your dog around for a bit longer before going back inside or initiate some play. This will ensure that they do not learn that relieving themselves ends time outside otherwise your dog may start to hold on to the last minute in order to extend playtime!
- If you see your dog going to the toilet in the wrong place you should interrupt them in a way that does not punish them. This is important as otherwise your dog may learn that it is only safe to go when you are not around, which will have a negative effect on housetraining. Take them to the correct place immediately and give lots of praise if they perform appropriately.
- If you find an accident after the event, you should never punish your dog – this may cause your dog to become confused as they will not associate the punishment with the earlier accident.
- Carefully clean all areas your dog has previously soiled using a warm solution of biological washing powder. Mix one part biological washing powder to ten parts warm water, leave for 10 mins and then rinse with water. This will remove all the biological chemical 'markers' from the soiled area that can draw your dog back to use the same area again. Do not use ordinary cleaning solutions or detergents – particularly any cleaning agent that contains ammonia or bleach, as this will not remove the smell of uric acid. In fact it will add to it. This will attract the puppy back to the same spot, and the smell will stimulate a dog to relieve themselves.
- Toilet training should be fun and rewarding for you both! Continue to accompany them to the garden and reward your dog's actions with lots of praise to reinforce their behaviour in a positive way. If training is continued in this way, your dog will eventually begin to ask to go

Play biting and mouthing

Just as children like to explore the world with their hands, puppies like to explore the world with their mouths. Mouthing is a common and normal behaviour in most young puppies. Although often thought to be a teething behaviour, nipping, mouthing and biting in puppies is generally a form of social play and exploration. However puppies need to learn how to play gently and to learn bite inhibition. Teething is more likely to involve gnawing or chewing on household objects.

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Natterjacks Vet

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All puppies require toys and things to chew as they are teething and exploring the world and providing appropriate chews and toys is essential for play as well as the teething process. Chews and toys such as Kongs, Nylabone, beef shinbones, pig ears and rawhide are just some examples of suitable items. To keep your puppy interested, use them on a rotational basis so that your puppy has something new to chew every day.

Bite inhibition - All dogs and puppies need to learn that human skin is very sensitive and the slightest pressure from their jaws causes pain. This is called bite inhibition. Bite inhibition occurs naturally when puppies in a litter play together – for example, if puppy (A) bites on puppy (B) too hard, puppy (B) will yelp. If that does not work, puppy (B) will get up and walk away. This tells puppy (A) that if it bites too hard the game will stop. Therefore, puppy (A) will learn that in order for the game to continue, it needs to be gentle. You can do a similar version of this by teaching your puppy that nipping ‘turns off’ all attention and social interaction with you. As soon as you feel their teeth on your skin, yelp in a high pitched voice and if necessary, stand up and walk away. This sends the message to the puppy that the bites are painful and that biting will cause play to be terminated. Leave the puppy alone for around a minute before returning. If the wild playing begins again upon your return, leave again for another minute.

Re-direct the behaviour - if your puppy is chewing on your hand, grasp a toy or dog chew nearby and encourage it to play with this instead. Remember to quietly praise your puppy every time they successfully redirect their behaviour and when they are seen chewing something appropriate.

Limit rough play - Although wrestling and tug-of-war games can be fun, they may lead to play that is too rough or unruly leading to biting.

What if the biting persists?

Sometimes these techniques are not sufficient and you may need to use some means of telling your puppy that they have overstepped the mark. One technique is to hold the muzzle and briefly squeeze until they whimper – a technique that their mother will often use. However, pain can cause the puppy to become increasingly agitated and more excited – or even fearful.

Alternatively an abrupt noise could be used to interrupt the behaviour – a tin can containing a few pebbles and then shaken to make a loud rattling noise can be a very useful deterrent. In severe cases, and generally more suitable for older dogs who are being extremely unruly, we can supply you with a ‘Pet Corrector’ spray which emits a sharp noise that dogs find very unpleasant.

Bournemouth Surgery

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