

# NEW PUPPY HANDBOOK

---

Your guide to raising a healthy, confident dog.



 **COBB & CO**  
VETERINARY CLINIC

847-741-6770  
[www.cobb.vet](http://www.cobb.vet)

# WELCOME TO COBB & CO

Congratulations on bringing home your new best friend.

The veterinarians and team at Cobb & Co Veterinary Clinic created this health and training guide to help you start off strong with your new puppy. Training and healthy habits begin the moment your puppy comes home. Early guidance helps build good behaviors before unwanted ones develop.

During the first few months, your puppy will receive a series of wellness exams and vaccines to support a growing immune system. These visits also give us the opportunity to answer questions, monitor development, and guide you through each stage of puppyhood.

As your dog grows:

- Puppies are seen every 3–4 weeks during their vaccine series
- Adult dogs are seen yearly
- Senior dogs benefit from twice-yearly exams

Our goal is for you to leave every visit feeling confident, informed, and supported in your dog's care.

We're here to guide you every step of the way.

# NEW PUPPY QUICK GUIDE

## CALL IMMEDIATELY IF...

---

- Vomiting or diarrhea more than once
- Blood in vomit or stool
- Refuses food more than one meal
- Extreme lethargy
- Bloating or painful belly
- Repeated dry heaving
- Pale, white, or blue gums
- Trouble breathing
- Seizure or collapse
- Ate something toxic
- Swallowed foreign object
- Hit by car or injured
- Straining to urinate or not urinating

Do not give human medications!  
When in doubt – call. Puppies decline quickly.

## VACCINE SERIES

---

Every 2–4 weeks  
until approximately 16 weeks of age

Core:

DAPP • Leptospirosis • Bordetella  
Rabies • Lyme

Lifestyle: Canine Influenza

We'll tailor the schedule to *your* puppy.

## YEAR-ROUND PREVENTION

---

Heartworm prevention  
Flea & tick prevention  
Fecal test now + every 6 months  
Heartworm/tick test yearly

## CRITICAL SOCIALIZATION (3–16 weeks)

---

Expose positively to:

- People (all ages)
  - Sounds
  - Surfaces
  - Car rides
- Gentle handling

Go slow. Keep it positive. Build confidence.

## WHAT'S NORMAL

---

4–6 months:

- Teething, chewing, testing boundaries

6–18 months:

- Selective listening, high energy

Consistency now = easier adult dog later.

## DENTAL CARE

---

Start brushing early.

Small habits now prevent painful disease later.

## SPAY / NEUTER

---

Timing depends on breed and size.

We'll guide you on the best plan.

## WELLNESS VISITS

---

Puppies: every 3–4 weeks  
Adults: yearly  
Seniors: twice yearly

# WHEN YOUR PET NEEDS CARE

## DURING BUSINESS HOURS – CALL US FIRST

---

We offer same-day urgent care and emergency appointments during business hours whenever medically appropriate.

We prioritize urgent cases and make every effort to accommodate same-day needs.

If your puppy is sick, injured, or you're unsure how serious something is – call us. Our team will guide you on the next best step.

When possible, we prefer to examine your pet here – where we know their history and can coordinate follow-up care.



Call: 847-741-6770



Text: 847-713-1530



Book Online: [www.cobb.vet](http://www.cobb.vet) or scan here



---

## AFTER HOURS OR LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES

For true emergencies outside our business hours, proceed directly to the nearest emergency hospital.

### Thrive – Hoffman Estates Emergency

2700 W Higgins Rd  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169  
618-495-5010

### Dundee Animal Hospital Emergency

199 Penny Ave  
East Dundee, IL 60118  
847-428-6114

### Elk Grove Veterinary Specialty & Emergency

1050 Bonaventure Dr  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
847-584-0200

### VEG (Veterinary Emergency Group) – Schaumburg

1287 E Higgins Rd  
Schaumburg, IL 60173  
847-430-4938

### Emergency Veterinary Services - St. Charles

530 Dunham Rd  
St. Charles, IL 60174  
630-584-7447

### Veterinary Specialty Center – Bannockburn

2051 Waukegan Rd  
Bannockburn, IL 60015  
847-459-7535

# COMMON HOUSEHOLD TOXINS

Accidental exposures happen — especially with curious puppies.  
If you suspect or are unsure if your puppy has ingested something harmful, call us right away.

## Call Cobb & Co First

Call: 847-741-6770

If after hours, contact:  
ASPCA Animal Poison Control  
888-426-4435

Save these phone numbers in your phone now.

## TOXIC FOODS

- Chocolate
- Xylitol (found in sugar-free gum, candy, some peanut butter)
- Grapes and raisins
- Onions and garlic
  - Alcohol
  - Caffeine

## TOXIC MEDICATIONS

- Ibuprofen, naproxen, acetaminophen
  - ADHD medications
  - Antidepressants
  - Heart medications
- Vitamins and supplements

Even small amounts can be dangerous.

## HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

- Cleaning solutions
  - Rodenticides
  - Insecticides
  - Fertilizers
  - Essential oils

## PLANTS

- Lilies
- Sago palm
- Tulips
- Daffodils
- Houseplants of unknown safety

## SIGNS OF TOXICITY

- Vomiting or diarrhea
  - Drooling
  - Tremors or seizures
- Lethargy, weakness, or collapse
  - Pale gums
  - Difficulty breathing

If you notice any of these symptoms, seek care immediately.

## IMPORTANT

Do not induce vomiting at home unless instructed by a veterinarian.

Bring the product packaging or a photo of the label if possible.

# PREVENTATIVE WELLNESS CARE

## VACCINES

---

Vaccines protect against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases. At Cobb & Co, we use both “core” vaccines (recommended for all dogs) and vaccines recommended based on exposure risk. Your puppy’s schedule is tailored to their age, health, and immune development for optimal protection.

### DAPP

Protects against four serious viral diseases commonly encountered anywhere dogs gather – even sidewalks and backyards.

- **Distemper** – A severe virus affecting the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems.
- **Adenovirus (Hepatitis)** – Causes liver infection.
- **Parainfluenza** – Contributes to kennel cough.
- **Parvovirus** – Highly contagious; causes severe vomiting and diarrhea and can be fatal in puppies.

### Leptospirosis

A bacterial infection spread through wildlife, standing water, and contaminated soil. Can cause kidney and liver failure and is transmissible to humans. Even suburban backyard dogs are at risk.

### Lyme

Spread by ticks common in Illinois. May cause joint pain, fever, lethargy, and in severe cases, irreversible kidney damage.

### Bordetella

Protects against kennel cough, a highly contagious respiratory infection spread in training classes, daycare, boarding, grooming, and dog parks. We consider this a core vaccine for puppies due to how easily respiratory disease spreads. For adult dogs, it becomes lifestyle-based depending on risk.

### Rabies

Required by Illinois state law. Rabies is a fatal viral disease that affects the nervous system and can be transmitted to humans and wildlife.

### Influenza

Protects against canine flu, a highly contagious respiratory virus. Symptoms may include coughing, fever, nasal discharge, lethargy, and pneumonia (in severe cases). Recommended for dogs that frequently socialize in daycare, boarding, grooming, training classes, or dog parks.

# PARASITE PREVENTION

Parasites are common – even in suburban environments. Consistent, year-round prevention protects both your puppy and your family.

## HEARTWORM DISEASE

---

Spread by mosquito bites, heartworms live in the heart and lungs. If untreated, they can cause serious, life-threatening disease.

- Can occur at any age
- May lead to heart failure if untreated
- Highly preventable with consistent year-round protection
- Test yearly beginning around 7 months of age

Monthly chewables are available in-clinic or through our online pharmacy. Once fully grown, some dogs may opt for a yearly injectable preventative.

## INTESTINAL PARASITES

---

Puppies are commonly born with intestinal parasites and may also become infected through grooming, fleas, prey animals, or contact with infected stool.

- Many puppies show no visible symptoms
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or poor growth may occur
- Routine fecal testing and deworming are essential
- Some parasites can infect humans

## EXTERNAL PARASITES (FLEAS & TICKS)

---

We recommend year-round flea and tick prevention.

- Fleas reproduce rapidly and can quickly infest a home environment
- Ticks spread Lyme, Ehrlichia, and Anaplasma
- Ticks can be active anytime temperatures exceed 40° – which in Illinois can even happen in January
- Test yearly beginning around 7 months of age

## PREVENTATIVE PRODUCTS

---

We recommend purchasing preventatives through a veterinarian or trusted veterinary pharmacy to ensure proper storage, manufacturer guarantees, and product authenticity.

Curious about parasite trends in our area? Visit [www.capcvet.org](http://www.capcvet.org) for interactive maps based on local testing data.

# FECAL SCREENING

Many intestinal parasites show no visible symptoms. Early detection protects both your puppy and your family.

## When Should I Submit a Sample?

---

- Bring a fresh sample (about a teaspoon) collected within 24 hours
- Puppies are tested frequently during the first several months of life
- Adult dogs should have fecal testing twice yearly
- Samples may be dropped off during business hours

## Why Do We Test?

---

- Parasites shed intermittently – a negative test does not always mean parasite-free
- The CDC recommends frequent testing and deworming in young puppies
- Some parasites can infect humans, especially children
- Routine testing and hygiene greatly reduce this risk

*If you have concerns about parasite transmission to people, speak with your (human!) physician.*

## How to Collect a Sample

---

- Provide a fresh sample (approximately one teaspoon)
- Avoid contamination with soil, grass, or lawn chemicals
- Use a sealed plastic bag or small container
- Collection kits are available at Cobb & Co free of charge
- Avoid paper towels, wipes, glass jars, or medication bottles

## Results

---

- Results are typically available within 48 business hours
- Negative results are sent via text message
- Positive results are communicated by phone with treatment instructions

# SPAY & NEUTER

Spaying or neutering is an important part of preventive health care. Timing depends on breed, size, and individual risk factors, and we will guide you in choosing the best plan for your puppy.

## Why Consider Spay or Neuter?

---

- Prevents unwanted litters
- Eliminates the risk of uterine infection (pyometra) in females
- Significantly reduces mammary cancer risk when performed early
- Prevents testicular cancer in males
- Reduces roaming and some hormone-driven behaviors

Research shows that optimal timing varies by breed and individual risk factors. In some cases, delaying or adjusting timing may benefit long-term musculoskeletal and orthopedic health. We will discuss these factors at your wellness visit and help you decide the best timing for your puppy.

## How We Approach Timing

---

There is no “one-size-fits-all” answer.

We consider:

- Breed and adult size
- Growth plate closure patterns
- Behavior and lifestyle factors
- Current clinical evidence, including breed-specific outcome data

Your veterinarian will recommend a timing plan that balances long-term orthopedic, oncologic, and reproductive health considerations.

## What to Expect Around Surgery

---

- Pre-surgical exam and bloodwork to ensure safety
- Same-day procedure and discharge in most cases
- Pain management tailored to your puppy
- Clear written aftercare instructions
- Activity restriction (play and jumping) for several days post-surgery

Recovery is typically smooth, and most puppies resume normal activities quickly with proper rest and pain control.

# MICROCHIPPING

A microchip provides permanent identification and significantly increases the likelihood of reunion if your pet becomes lost.

Collars and tags can fall off. A microchip stays with your pet for life.

## How Microchipping Works

---

- A small microchip (about the size of a grain of rice) is placed just under the skin
- Each chip contains a unique identification number
- Veterinary clinics and animal shelters can scan the chip to access your registered contact information

Placement is quick and similar to a routine vaccine. Microchipping can be performed during a wellness visit or at the time of spay/neuter surgery.

## Why We Recommend It

---

- Provides permanent identification
- No batteries or maintenance required
- Dramatically increases reunion rates
- Safe and widely used

Microchipping is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect your pet.

## Registration Is Essential

---

We use Petlink as our microchip registry and register all microchips we implant on your behalf at the time of placement.

You will receive confirmation from Petlink with instructions for accessing and managing your account. Please review your contact information to ensure it is accurate.

If your pet was microchipped elsewhere, we are happy to help you identify the chip company and confirm that registration is complete and up to date.

If your phone number, address, or email changes, update your Petlink account promptly to ensure you can be reached if your pet is found.

# DENTAL CARE

Dental health is an important part of your puppy's overall wellness. Starting early makes care easier and helps prevent painful disease later in life.

## Why Dental Care Matters

---

- Dental disease causes pain, bad breath, and tooth loss
- Advanced disease can impact the heart, liver, and kidneys
- Prevention is far easier (and less costly) than treatment

Dental disease is *the most common medical condition* in adult dogs. Without consistent home care, most dogs show signs by three years of age.

## Home Care Recommendations

---

Daily brushing is the gold standard for preventing dental disease.

- Use a soft toothbrush or finger brush
- Use toothpaste formulated for dogs (never human toothpaste)
- Start slowly and keep sessions positive
- Consistency matters more than perfection

If daily brushing is not possible, we can discuss alternatives such as dental diets, chews, or water additives. Visit [www.vohc.org](http://www.vohc.org) for additional proven methods to help prevent dental disease.

## Professional Dental Cleanings

---

Even with good home care, most dogs require professional dental cleanings over time.

- Performed under general anesthesia for safety and thorough evaluation and cleaning
- Includes full oral examination and dental x-rays to look for disease we can't see with our eyes alone
- Allows treatment of painful or infected teeth

Routine dental assessments are part of every wellness visit.

## Our Philosophy

---

Small, consistent habits started in puppyhood make a lifelong difference. Routine dental cleanings are an important part of overall wellness care.

# NUTRITION

Proper nutrition supports healthy growth, immune function, brain development, and long-term wellness – especially during the rapid growth of the first year.

## Choosing a Diet

We recommend feeding a complete and balanced commercial diet formulated for puppies.

Look for diets that:

- Meet AAFCO standards for growth
- Are produced by companies with veterinary nutrition expertise
- Have undergone feeding trials
- Large and giant breed puppies should be fed a diet specifically formulated for large breed growth.

If you have questions about specific brands or ingredients, we're happy to guide you.

## Feeding Schedule

- 8–12 weeks: 3–4 meals daily
- 3–6 months: 3 meals daily
- 6 months and older: 2 meals daily

Portion sizes should be adjusted based on body condition, not just the feeding chart on the bag.

Your puppy should have a visible waist and a gentle abdominal tuck when viewed from the side.

Fresh water should be available at all times.

## Treats and Supplements

Treats should make up no more than 10% of daily calories.

Avoid:

- Excessive table scraps
- Rawhide chews (risk of obstruction)
- Unbalanced homemade diets

## When to Ask Us

Contact us if you notice:

- Poor growth
- Excessive weight gain
- Persistent diarrhea
- Food refusal
- Skin or coat concerns

We are happy to review your puppy's diet at any visit.

# GROOMING & COAT CARE

Regular grooming supports skin health, comfort, and early detection of problems. Starting early helps your puppy feel comfortable with routine handling.

## Brushing

Frequency depends on coat type:

- Short coats: weekly brushing
- Medium to long coats: several times per week
- Curly or continuously growing coats: daily brushing may be needed

Brushing helps remove debris, prevent matting, and reduce shedding.

## Bathing & Professional Grooming

- Bathe as needed (typically every 4–6 weeks)
- Use a shampoo formulated for dogs
- Avoid over-bathing, which can dry the skin
- Some breeds require professional grooming every 4–8 weeks
- Introduce grooming early and choose experienced, patient groomers

If your puppy develops itching, redness, or persistent odor, contact us before using medicated products.

## Nail Care

- Most dogs require trims every 2–4 weeks
- Nails should not click loudly on hard floors
- Early positive exposure reduces future stress

We are happy to trim nails during visits or demonstrate proper technique if needed.

## Ears

Check ears weekly. Healthy ears are clean, dry, and odor-free.

Contact us if you notice redness, discharge, odor, or frequent head shaking.

# PUPPY DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Your puppy will change rapidly during the first year of life. Understanding normal developmental phases helps you respond with patience, consistency, and confidence.

## Socialization Period (3–16 weeks)

This is the most important learning window. Puppies are highly receptive to:

- New people
- Sounds
- Surfaces
- Gentle handling
- Other animals

## Juvenile Period (4–6 months)

Often known as the “land shark” phase. Common behaviors:

- Teething and chewing
- Increased independence
- Testing boundaries
- Selective listening

This is normal. Consistency and structure matter most here.

## Fear Periods (8–11 weeks and again 6–14 months)

Puppies may suddenly become cautious about things that never bothered them before.

You might notice:

- Startling easily
- Hesitating on walks
- Barking at new things

### **The key during fear phases:**

- Stay calm
- Avoid forcing exposure
- Keep experiences positive
- Don't punish fear responses

These phases are temporary. If your puppy suddenly stops listening, chews everything, or seems fearful – this is normal development.

**We are here to guide you through it.**

# PUPPY DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

## Adolescence (6–18 months, sometimes longer)

---

This stage is often described as the “teenager” phase. You may notice:

- Regression in training
- Increased energy
- Testing limits
- Distractibility
- Selective listening (again)

This stage can feel frustrating, but it is normal development. Consistency, structure, and mental enrichment are especially important during this time.

## Emotional Maturity (1.5–3 years)

---

Many dogs do not fully “settle” until 2–3 years of age, depending on breed and temperament.

Patience pays off. The work you put in early creates the adult dog you will live with for years.

## Socialization: Do's & Don'ts

---

### Do:

- Expose your puppy to new experiences gradually and positively
- Keep interactions safe and controlled
- Pair new situations with praise and rewards
- Prioritize quality over quantity
- Advocate for your puppy if they seem overwhelmed

### Don't:

- Force interactions
- Flood your puppy with too much too fast
- Punish fear responses
- Assume a bad experience will “toughen them up”
- Wait for behavior problems to seek help

## When to Reach Out

---

Please contact us if you notice:

- Persistent fearfulness
- Aggression toward people or other dogs
- Resource guarding
- Severe anxiety
- Difficulty settling despite structure

# HOUSE TRAINING

House training takes consistency, patience, and realistic expectations. Accidents are part of the learning process – not a sign that your puppy “isn’t getting it.”

Most puppies are reliably house trained between 4–6 months of age, though individual timelines vary.

## The Basics

- Take your puppy outside first thing in the morning
- Take them out after meals, naps, and play
- Offer frequent potty breaks (every 1–2 hours at first)
- Praise immediately after they eliminate outside
- Supervise closely indoors

Consistency matters more than perfection.

## Crate Training

Crate training supports house training and provides a safe, predictable space.

- Choose a crate large enough for your puppy to stand and turn around
- Use positive reinforcement – never force your puppy inside
- Avoid using the crate as punishment
- Puppies cannot “hold it” for long periods. Plan regular breaks

When used correctly, a crate becomes a comfort zone – not confinement.

## When Accidents Happen

Accidents are expected.

- Clean thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner
- Do not punish after the fact
- Avoid rubbing your puppy’s nose in accidents
- Increase supervision and frequency of outdoor trips

Punishment creates fear – not understanding.

## When to Call Us

Contact us if you notice:

- Blood in urine
- Straining to urinate
- Frequent small urinations
- Excessive thirst
- Persistent accidents despite consistent training

Medical causes can sometimes contribute to house training difficulties.  
House training is a process. With patience and structure, most puppies learn successfully.

# TRAINING RESOURCES

Early, positive training builds confidence, strengthens your bond, and helps prevent behavior problems before they develop.

We strongly encourage structured puppy classes during the first few months of life.

## What to Look For in a Trainer

Choose trainers who:

- Use positive reinforcement methods
- Avoid punishment-based techniques
- Emphasize socialization in a controlled setting
- Encourage owner involvement

Training should build trust — not fear.

## Puppy Classes

Puppy classes typically focus on:

- Basic obedience (sit, stay, recall)
- Leash manners
- Social skills with other dogs
- Confidence-building exercises

The socialization window is short — early exposure in a safe, structured environment makes a lifelong difference.

## When to Seek Additional Help

Contact us if you notice:

- Persistent fearfulness
- Aggression toward people or other dogs
- Resource guarding
- Severe separation anxiety
- Escalating behavior concerns

Early intervention leads to better outcomes.

We are happy to discuss trainer referrals and behavior resources that align with our approach.

# PET INSURANCE

Unexpected illness or injury can happen at any age. Pet insurance helps families prepare for the financial side of medical care so decisions can be based on what is best for your pet – not just cost.

## Why Consider Pet Insurance?

---

- Helps offset the cost of accidents and unexpected illness
- Provides financial flexibility during emergencies
- Allows access to advanced diagnostics and treatment when needed
- Can reduce stress during already difficult situations

## When to Enroll

---

Pet insurance is most effective when started early.

- Most policies do not cover pre-existing conditions
- Premiums are often lower when pets are enrolled young
- Waiting periods may apply before coverage begins

Review policy details carefully so you understand what is covered and what is excluded.

## What to Look For in a Policy

---

Every company and policy is different. We encourage families to compare options and choose the plan that best fits their needs and budget. Consider asking:

- What is covered / not covered?
- How are reimbursements calculated?
- Are there per-year or lifetime caps?
- Are pre-existing conditions excluded?

## Our Role

---

We do not endorse specific insurance companies. We are happy to provide medical records and documentation needed for claims and to answer questions about treatment plans.