



# Routine Canine Care Suggestions

## Routine Veterinary Care

Annual examinations for your canines are recommended until they reach 7 years of age, then bi-annual examinations are recommended. Canines are considered geriatric patients after the age of 7 and metabolic changes can happen quickly.

## Yearly Vaccinations

It is recommended to vaccinate you canines every year with either a 5-way or 7-way vaccine that helps their immune systems to recognize deadly viruses so they can fight them off. The 5-way vaccine contains the modified live viruses of distemper, hepatitis (adenovirus), leptospirosis, parainfluenza and parvovirus. The 7-way vaccine includes the previous five viruses and a second leptospirosis strain and a second adenovirus strain. Other yearly vaccinations that are recommended but not considered a core vaccine are the bordetella vaccine – helps their immune system recognize a strain of the kennel cough virus and a lymes vaccine.

## Rabies Vaccinations

Every 3 years a rabies vaccine is given to your canines after having a 1 year vaccine first.

Rabies can be transmitted to humans thru a bite from an infected animal. The most common wild animals that can transmit rabies include but are not limited to: raccoons, skunks, bats, foxes, and coyotes. People usually do not survive a rabies infection therefore it is important to keep your

canines and felines vaccinated against rabies. The only way to test your pet for the rabies virus is to submit brain tissue, so having the pet quarantined for 10 days after a biting incident is recommended as most signs of rabies will show in the first ten days.

## Annual Heartworm Check

It is strongly recommended to have your canines blood tested for heartworm once a year and to keep them on a monthly heartworm preventive. Most heartworm preventive has a guarantee and requires a negative heartworm test in the past 12 months to activate that guarantee.

## Grooming

Recommendations for regular grooming for your canine friend include but are not limited to: regular nail trims if needed to prevent ingrown toe nails and ripped or broken toe nails. Keeping the canines undercoat combed to prevent mats, skin infections and heat exhaustion.

**Regular ear care:** biting flies like to feast on erect ears and the fold of folded ears. Some topical flea and tick products prevent fly bite along with fly sprays. Keeping floppy ears clean to prevent ear infections with a labeled ear (otic) cleaner as maintenance.

**Flies:** Along with biting flies pestering canines' ears, flies also pose a problem with wounds or moist matted skin where they lay eggs and maggots emerge and can cause dogs to become septic.

**Fleas:** Consult your veterinarian for their recommendations for individual and area treatments. Individual treatments can either be a topical or spray, and area treatments are either sprays or powders. A highly recommended topical individual treatment is Frontline or Frontline plus.

**Bees:** Some canines have allergic reactions to bee stings or biting/eating bees. Consult your veterinarian for antihistamines to keep on hand (usually benadryl) and the dosage to give to your dog. If a severe reaction occurs immediate medical attention is needed.

## Hyperthermia (a.k.a Heat stroke)

Canines have a poor cooling system and they cannot sweat, therefore their main way of cooling is thru panting. Canine's normal body temperature is between 100.5 and 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit rectally and anything above that is some degree of hyperthermia, however anything about 103.5 can cause seizures to start.

**Signs:** of heat stroke include but not limited to include skin or gum tissue that is hot to the touch, vomiting, drooling, rapid panting, distress, pale mucous membranes (gums), loss of consciousness or death.

Ways to cool a dog is with cool water and ice packs or wet cool towels placed in the main cooling points of the inguinal region (back leg pits), the abdomen, axilla region (front leg pits), tongue and ears. It is strongly discourage to immerse the animal in cold water as it can cause more distress on an already stressed animal and can cause shock. Once the pet has begun to cool down, small amounts of cool water can be offered frequently for them to drink.

Once the canine is stable consider seeking medical attention for the dog(s).

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### *Hypothermia (over exposure to cold)*

Even though sled dogs, with double fur coats, can survive the outdoors in bitterly cold temperatures as their coats act as an insulating blanket. However having shelter and warm bedding helps and should be provided.

Hypothermia is rare in healthy pets, it usually occurs when a pet is lost or outside after an injury for a long period of time. Signs of hypothermia include but are not limited to, slow pulse, shallow breathing, disorientation, collapse, and unconsciousness. Shivering is not a usual sign of hypothermia in pets.

If the pet is wet first dry thoroughly and wrap in warm/dry towels or blankets with warm (not hot) water bottles around the body. Don't rub too vigorously as white skin may be numb or frostbitten or frozen - these areas should be thawed slowly. Then seek medical attention for the pet when stable.

### *Large Kennels*

Managing larger kennels can be quite a financial expense, maintaining all the routine health checks and preventative medicine can be costly. However, there are ways to cut some of the cost: first and foremost see if your Veterinarian will work with you, they want and need your business as much and it will help you - some of the pharmaceutical companies will also work with owners who want to be compliant.

Most common heartworm and intestinal parasite preventatives are: Sentinel, Interceptor, Revolution, and Heartgard. All heartworm preventatives should only be given if there is a negative heartworm test prior to starting. Online purchases of these products voids the guarantee that comes with purchases thru veterinary clinic, i.e. if given correctly

the pharmaceutical company with reimburse or cover the cost for treatment of heartworms or intestinal parasites.

Most common topical flea and tick preventative is Frontline Plus.

### *Endoparasites (parasites living within your pet)*

**Heartworm Disease:** Infection that is caused by a bite from and infected mosquito. This disease can potentially be fatal if left untreated. Heartworm disease is spread by infected mosquitoes.

- *Appearance:* Adult heartworms are not seen as they are contained in the canines heart, baby heartworms or microfilaria are in the blood stream and can be visualized under a microscope.
- *Symptoms:* Heartworm infection can cause coughing, weight loss, heart and lung damage, and even death.
- *Diagnosis:* Heartworm disease can be diagnosed by a blood test when the canine is 5-6months of age or older.
- *Treatment:* Heartworm treatment is very hard on the canine as the worms are killed off the canine's body has to break down the worm to get rid of it. Treatment is a series of intramuscular injections and possibly antibiotics along with keeping the canine quiet and rested.

\*talk with your veterinarian for their treatment protocols and recommendations for monthly heartworm preventative.

Year round heartworm preventative is strongly recommended as it is easier on the pet and cheaper then treatment. Most, if not all, heartworm preventative have a monthly intestinal dewormer included in the tablet.

### *Intestinal Parasites*

**Roundworm:** most common intestinal parasite of puppies and kittens because it is contracted thru the mothers milk, but can be seen in adult animals also.

- *Appearance:* long white "spaghetti like" worm.
- *Symptoms:* Common symptoms include diarrhea, vomiting, stunted growth, bloated belly or a dingy coat.
- *Diagnosis:* fecal flotation test and microscopic examination to look for eggs of worm, also visual of adult worms in stools.
- *Treatment:* Deworming series and monthly preventive. Keep stools picked up to prevent re-infestation.

\*\*Roundworms are zoonotic which means humans can contract roundworms by a fecal oral contamination. Wash hands before inserting them in your mouth or children's hands before eating/finger sucking. Transmission to humans may cause damage to the liver, heart or lungs and has even proven to be fatal if they infect the heart or brain. Most commonly they cause impaired sight or vision loss.

**Hookworms:** Hookworms are commonly found in dogs and live in the intestines and feed off of the tissues there, resulting in blood loss and inflammation. Severe infections may lead to anemia, debilitation and even death, especially in puppies.

- *Appearance:* Hookworms are not visible by the naked eye; eggs of the worm are usually seen under the microscope.

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- *Symptoms:* Common symptoms include weight loss, anemia and diarrhea – sometimes bloody diarrhea.
- *Diagnosis:* fecal flotation test and microscopic examination to look for eggs
- *Treatment:* Deworming series and monthly preventive. Keep stools picked up to prevent re-infestation.

\*\*Hookworms are zoonotic which means humans can contract roundworms by a fecal oral contamination. Wash hands before inserting them in your mouth or children's hands before eating/finger sucking. Transmission to humans may cause unsightly rashes, eruptions and itching as they migrate just under the skin. They may also go deeper into the body and inflaming internal organs.

**Whipworm:** Whipworms are the hardest intestinal parasite and the eggs can survive actively in the soil for as long as seven years. Infections of whipworms can mimic more serious diseases (Hyperadrenocorticism) causing electrolyte imbalances, lethargy and weight loss. Whipworms are intermittent shedders and stools should be checked periodically.

- *Appearance:* Whipworms are not visible by the naked eye; eggs of the worm are usually seen under the microscope.
- *Symptoms:* Common symptoms include diarrhea – sometimes bloody or with mucous, anemia, dehydration, weight loss, and loss of appetite.
- *Diagnosis:* frequent fecal flotation test and microscopic examination to look for eggs
- *Treatment:* Deworming series of a 3-5 days treatment then again in 3 weeks and 3 months and monthly

preventive. Keep stools picked up to prevent re-infestation.

**Tapeworm:** Are an intestinal parasite contracted by ingesting an infected flea or louse either on the pet or one that was on a rodent that was eaten by the pet.

*Appearance:* When most tapeworms are seen they are segmented worms, they are seen as individual segments or chains. Tapeworms are usually seen around the anal area or bedding. Dried segments resemble grains of white rice.

- *Symptoms:* Some dogs experience anal itch as the worms are crawling out and around the anal area, weight loss, and increased hunger can be seen.
- *Diagnosis:* fecal flotation test and microscopic examination to look for eggs of worm, also visual of adult worms in stools.
- *Treatment:* Deworming is on demand – when you see the worms' dewormers are given.

\*\*Tapeworms can be zoonotic by the human ingesting an infected flea.

### *Ectoparasites (parasites living outside of your pet)*

**Ticks:** The common deer tick or black legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) and the western black legged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*) transmit Lyme disease. Both are smaller ticks in comparison to the other ticks. Common clinical signs of Lyme disease may not appear until several months after infection. These ticks also transmit a bacterial infection called Anaplasmosis.

- *Transmission:* occurs after 24-48 hours of tick attachment.
- *Clinical Sign:* include fever, anorexia, lethargy, joint pain/swelling, polyarthritis, and

leg shifting lameness, rapid progression of kidney failure, lymphadenopathy, and neurologic syndromes, or no symptoms at all.

- *Diagnosis:* Physical examination by a veterinarian, blood test(s) and possibly a urine check.
- *Treatment:* Antibiotics and prevention by your veterinarian.

The **Brown dog tick** (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) transmits a bacterium called Ehrlichia. Canine Ehrlichiosis is an infection that can last days, months or years. Chronic or untreated injections can lead to bone marrow dysfunction or kidney disease.

- *Transmission:* time is unknown.
- *Clinical signs:* can present acutely and include fever, anorexia, lethargy, uveitis, enlarged lymph nodes, bleeding disorders and neurological signs. Some more chronic signs include weight loss, bleeding disorders, polyarthritis, seizures and multisystemic signs.
- *Diagnosis:* Physical examination by a veterinarian, blood test(s) and possibly a urine check.
- *Treatment:* Antibiotics and preventative recommended by your veterinarian.

The **American Dog tick** (*Dermacentor variabilis*) and also known as the wood tick can transmit the rocky mountain spotted fever, Ehrlichia, tularemia and has been known to cause canine tick paralysis.

- *Transmission:* time varies
- *Diagnosis:* Physical examination by a veterinarian, blood test(s) and possibly a urine check.

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- *Treatment:* Antibiotics and preventative recommended by your veterinarian.

Another tick that is not currently in Michigan but is migrating more and more every year is the **Lone Star Tick** (*Amblyomma americanum*) and has made it to the lower most portions of Illinois.

Other Ectoparasites include fleas, lice and mites.

### ***M.U.S.H. Does Not Provide Medical Advice***

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