



## Puppy School part 2

Congratulations on completing your puppy's vaccine series!  
You've taken an important step in protecting their health.  
Here are some other important ways to help your puppy live a happy and healthy life.

### PARASITE PROTECTION

Your puppy should continue receiving heartworm and intestinal parasite protection every month. Because these parasites can't be seen, they can cause significant damage in your pet's body before symptoms develop.

There are chewable, topical, and injectable options to control internal parasites. Our VetWell Care Team can help you find the best long-term option for your pet!

A blood test for adult heartworms is recommended for dogs at least once every year, starting at 7 months of age. Testing may be needed more often if preventative medication is not given every month.

We also recommend year-round flea and tick protection for all dogs in the Rio Grande Valley. These parasites affect pets and their people, causing skin irritation and transmitting serious bacterial infections.

### DENTAL CARE

Has your puppy been chewing on everything lately? This is a common behavior when puppy teeth fall out and adult teeth come in, usually between 4-5 months of age. Have plenty of chew toys available in different textures, and prevent boredom through physical activity & training.

These new adult teeth are sparkly and clean. Start dental protection for your puppy now, before infection, inflammation, and pain develop.

At-home dental care needs to be done every day!

Brushing is best, but there are many other options if you can't brush your dog's teeth every day. Find the list of effective dental protection options at [VOHC.org](http://VOHC.org). Choose the products that work best for your family, and make protecting your dog's smile an easy part of your daily routine.





## SPAY & NEUTER SURGERY

These surgeries prevent pregnancy AND decrease the risks of certain infections and cancers in dogs. Dogs can also have significant behavioral benefits from these surgeries. This can help dogs live longer, happier lives.

Female dogs- “Spay” surgery

- Removes: uterus, ovaries
- Prevents: pregnancy, uterine infection
- Reduces risk: mammary (breast) cancer, aggression, anxiety

Male dogs- “Neuter” surgery

- Removes: testicles
- Prevents: pregnancy, testicular cancer
- Reduces risk: prostate enlargement, urine marking, roaming, aggression, anxiety

After spaying or neutering, dogs don't typically show changes in their relationship with people in the household, and it can be easier for them to make friends with other dogs. It is easier for pets to gain weight after surgery, so it is important to measure their feeding amounts and monitor their weight & body condition monthly.

In the RGV, there are more animals than loving pet homes. Animals that don't have caretakers can end up as strays or in shelters. Spaying & neutering decreases unwanted animals, so pets are more likely to find a family.

## SOCIALIZATION

This is an important time for your puppy to learn more about the wider world. Puppies should be exposed to new people, places, pets, and objects to learn about them & feel safe. Never force your puppy to approach or be approached by anything. Reward your puppy early & often with praise, toys, or treats for trying new things. Monitor your pet's body language throughout all socialization activities.

When to stop:

- Not able to focus on “Sit” or other regularly practiced commands
- Whining when leaning back
- Tucked body posture, hiding
- Barking or lunging at other pets or people

For each socialization stimulus:

- Reward for calmly observing
- Reward for approaching
- Reward for returning

Socialization suggestions:

- Different animals
- Different people (ages, genders, ethnicities, glasses, hats, masks)
- Objects that move
- Objects that make noise
- Getting in & riding in the car
- Sounds (thunder, fireworks, mower)
- Places (vet clinic, groomer, park)