



# CANYON PET HOSPITAL

NORTHERN ARIZONA'S PREMIER VETERINARY HOSPITAL

## Puppy & Kitten Facts

Puppies:

**Q: How soon does my new puppy need to see a vet?**

**A:** As soon as possible. Many breeders and adoption agencies will have something like a 48-hour guarantee, so you want to get it done in that time. But even without that, you still should get the puppy in within a day or two. That way, if there's something wrong, we can catch it early and get it before it becomes a big problem.

It also gives us a chance to talk with owners about what it takes to raise a puppy. We need to talk about worms, feeding, vaccinations, the financial aspect of owning a pet, and everything else they can expect over the life of their dog.

The owner should bring in their list of questions, too. You need to ask your vet every question that comes to mind. You can't ask too many questions. Your veterinarian should be willing to block out time for that.

At Canyon Pet Hospital, we really want to educate people on the responsibility they are taking on and everything that goes along with it. Understand that this is a lifelong commitment. This cute puppy is going to grow up and that's going to require a lot of patience and a financial commitment.

**Q: What shots does my puppy need?**

**A:** Your puppy needs 3 sets of Distemper/Parvo puppy vaccines. The first set is usually given at approximately 7 - 8 weeks of age, and there is a 3 - 4 week period between each set.

The DAP puppy vaccine is a combination vaccine that protects against 3 separate diseases: Distemper, Parainfluenza, and Parvovirus.

**Q: What's the best way to potty train a puppy?**

**A:** The simplest and easiest way to housebreak your puppy is by using a crate (see Canyon's Crate Training and Puppy Training pages in Client Education). Crate-training works WITH your puppy's natural instincts and helps speed up the whole potty training process.

**Q: How do I choose the best dog food for my puppy?**

**A:** Up until about 16 weeks of age you should be feeding your puppy a good quality puppy kibble 3 times a day.

Choose a food that has the wording 'a complete and balanced diet' on the package. This shows it meets the standards set by the AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials).

You need to be sure the dog food you pick has a good source of high quality protein as its first ingredient. Chicken or Lamb are both good choices. Puppies grow very rapidly, and to support that growth they need a diet high in protein, fat, vitamins and minerals.

Protein values should be around 25% plus and fat around 15%. If you have a large breed or small breed puppy, look for a puppy food that is especially designed to meet their specific requirements.

**Q: How can I get rid of the stains and odor of dog urine?**

**A:** Even when potty training is going smoothly, there will be times when your puppy has an 'accident'. It's one of those puppy facts of life. To avoid having your carpets ruined you need to act quickly, and tackle those puddles in the right way.

To be effective, you need to blot up any liquid that is in your carpet. Then you need to rinse the area well with clean, cool water and blot that up too. Follow this with an application of an enzymatic-based cleaner/odor remover. Allow this to soak into the carpet for at least 10 minutes and then blot up the excess. Allow the area to dry thoroughly.

**Q: How do I know if my puppy has worms, and what do I do about it?**

**A:** large percentage of puppies have worms and if you're a new puppy parent, it's something you may well have to deal with. Some worms can be seen in your dog's feces, and in severe cases of roundworm infestation your pup may even have worms in his vomit.

Treatment for the first 4 types is fairly straightforward. You will need your veterinarian to diagnose and confirm the infestation, and the type of worm involved. They will then prescribe, or administer, the appropriate dewormer. Do not use over-the-counter medications as they can be ineffective at best, and harmful at worst.

**Q: How can I train my puppy?**

**A:** Taking the time to train your puppy correctly will lead to happier and healthier relationships for everyone involved. However, this question cannot be given its just due in this FAQ. What we suggest is going to your library and picking up a book on training your puppy using positive reinforcement. Also, there is an independently owned and operated trainer who conducts her classes at the hospital. Here information is below as well as suggested readings.

Reading Recommendation:

*"The Power of Positive Dog Training"* by Pat Miller

*"The Cautious Canine"* by Patricia B. McConnell Ph.D.

*"Don't Shoot the Dog!: The New Art of Teaching and Training"* by Karen Pryor

**Q: How do I introduce a new puppy to our resident dog?**

**A:** When choosing a new dog to integrate into your family, it's best to choose one of the opposite sex to the resident dog. Two same-sex dogs are less likely to get along as adults, especially if they're not neutered/spayed.

Also, consider size and temperament, an older dog with a high prey drive may not be the best match for a puppy from a tiny, fast-moving breed such as the Yorkshire Terrier.

Make the initial introductions under supervision, and expect some hesitation on the part of either pooch. There may be a little low growling, or posturing, but most puppies instinctively submit to older, more mature dogs and once your resident dog has shown the interloper 'who's boss' things should settle down.

Always remember to show lots of affection to your older dog. It's sometimes difficult to tear yourself away from an adorable new puppy, but make a point of greeting, feeding and petting the older dog first, as it reinforces his status (in both his eyes, and the eyes of the new puppy) and helps to maintain a natural transition into the 'pecking order'.

**Kittens:**

**Q: When should I vaccinate my cat?**

**A:** You should make sure your cat is current on its vaccinations and have them administered every year. All kittens should be vaccinated and/or tested and vaccinated for such diseases as feline infectious enteritis (FIE) and feline leukemia by eight weeks of age. It is very important to keep your cat's shots current, otherwise, it could infect other cats or worse. Many feline diseases are very swift once they set in, FIE being a prime example. A yearly vaccination and physical by your veterinarian can keep your cat healthy.

**Q: What should I feed my kitten?**

**A:** When kittens are four to five weeks old, they begin eating solid foods. To help wean a kitten, serve semi liquid meals that the kitten can lap. Cereal or finely ground fish or chicken along with milk will help to introduce the kitten to more solid foods. Manufacturers have also developed foods specifically designed for young kittens. These foods can usually be given once the kitten is at least six weeks old. Commercial diets have been specifically designed to provide the necessary nutrients, vitamins and minerals that cats and kittens need.

**Q: How can I train my kitten to use a litter box?**

**A:** You can begin teaching a kitten to use a litter box at three to four weeks of age. The box should be placed in a quiet corner where the kitten will not be disturbed or distracted. Never place a litter box near the cat's food. The litter box should be filled with enough litter to allow the kitten to scratch a hole in it and then recover it. Allow your kitten time to get used to the feel and the smell of the litter box by placing the kitten in the box. The kitten may not understand how to use the box, so each time you see it soil elsewhere in the house, simply say "No!" and gently place the kitten in the litterbox. To encourage the kitten's use of the box, place the kitten inside the box after meals or any time it will most likely need to use the box. Adult cats can also be trained to use a litterbox, although it may take longer. However, the process is the same as that for training kittens. If either cat or kitten continues to avoid using the box, try moving it to another location or using a different litter.

**Q: How important are the first few months with my kitten?**

**A:** Very. In the first year of its life, your cat will pick up most, if not all, of its habits, good and bad. This is the best time to nip future behavioral problems in the proverbial bud. What may be cute at 5 months will not be so cute at 5 years. It is much easier to lay groundwork for expected behavior when the cat is young than to attempt to break the habits of an older animal. When a kitten is young it is the best time to let them get used to wearing a collar (though most flea collars are too strong for kittens to wear), being around people (though socialization should be gradual so as not to frighten your kitten), keeping them off the counters and not scratching up the furniture. You should also try to use the cat's name frequently when it is young so that it can learn it and further bond with yourself and your household, especially if it will be living out of doors.

**Q: I'm a vegetarian. Can I feed my cat a vegetarian diet?**

**A:** No. Cats must eat meat, which provides them with the protein they need to remain healthy. Cats need at least twice as much protein as dogs for basic health maintenance. Proteins are made of amino acids such as taurine, which is vital for the prevention of blindness and some heart diseases. Cats get their necessary taurine from meat. Furthermore, the fat in meat provides cats with linoleic acid, which cats cannot produce on their own. Linoleic acid assists in the production of red blood cells and helps with bodily functions such as blood clotting. Meat is also a cat's only source of vitamin A, which is also important for normal bodily functioning.

**Q: Why does my cat sometimes go outside of her litter box? How can I get her to use it again?**

**A:** There are many reasons why your cat might no longer use the litter box, including stress associated with the box, new litter, a new cat or a household move. Regardless of the reason,

punishment will not have an effect on your cat. She will not understand why she is being punished. A positive approach is much more effective.