

Just as with human babies, puppies and kittens need to see their veterinarian on a more frequent schedule than do adult pets.

The attention you pay to your new pet's well-being will also pay off later with a healthier adult and senior citizen pet.



## Key facts about your new family member:

- Puppies and kittens have weaker immune systems than adults and, as a result, are more susceptible to infection from diseases and parasites.
- They're in a high growth stage and need diets specially formulated for their nutritional needs.
- These youngsters need to be examined more often than adult pets to make sure they're developing properly.

## Q & A

### Why do puppies and kittens need so many shots?

Their immature immune system cannot fight off diseases as well as when they are older. While they do receive some initial protection against disease through their mother's milk in the form of maternal antibodies, these same antibodies can also interfere with the development of the more permanent immunity afforded by their vaccines.

It's very important to make sure that these little ones receive the right vaccinations, in the right sequence, and at the right time, in order to give them the maximum possible protection.

### How can I tell if my pet has a parasite?

Potential signs of intestinal parasites include vomiting, diarrhea, distended abdomen, lethargy, and scratching. Sometimes no signs are evident. Routine microscopic exams of fecal samples will help detect these infections.

Signs of fleas can be found near the ears, neck, tail, and tummy region (look for flea dirt or live fleas).

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## Puppy and Kitten Wellness

How to give them the best start possible



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# Puppy and Kitten Wellness

These little family members have lots of special health needs!

## Step #1: Run—don't walk—to your veterinarian!

One of your very first stops after adopting your puppy or kitten should be at a veterinary hospital for an initial complete physical examination.

We need to make sure that your new family member is healthy and does not bring fleas, ticks, intestinal parasites, or any other health problems that could be transmitted to other animals or humans into your household.

## Protecting puppies and kittens from parasites

Puppies and kittens are vulnerable to parasite infestations that can seriously threaten their health. Thankfully, however, with today's safe and effective deworming, heartworm preventive, and flea and tick control products, parasites need never bother your youngster.

Here are several ways to help keep you, your family, and your new pet safe from parasites:

### Intestinal worms

Believe it or not, most puppies and kittens are infected with worms transmitted by their mothers. That's why most veterinarians recommend that puppies and kittens be routinely treated with deworming medications.

### Fleas

The blood loss caused by a severe flea infestation in a tiny puppy or kitten can be fatal. Treatment and prevention products can be used in puppies and kittens as young as 6 weeks of age.

### Heartworm disease

Heartworm infection is a serious problem in both dogs and cats. Thankfully, with medications that can be administered to pets as young as 6 weeks, heartworm disease is 100% preventable.

## Feeding your growing youngster

Puppies and kittens need a diet formulated for growth. By maturity, most youngsters will have increased their birth weight by 40 to 50 times.

A high quality growth diet will help develop strong muscles, bones, and teeth in your little friend. Growth diets have higher levels of protein and other nutrients to provide the nutritional "building blocks" needed for this lifestage.

Make sure you map out a complete nutritional plan for your pet with your VCA veterinarian.



## Why it's so important to spay or neuter your pet:

If you love pets, the kindest thing you can do for puppies and kittens everywhere is to have your own spayed or neutered. Tragically, millions of unwanted pets are euthanized each year.

Generally performed at about 6 months of age, spaying or neutering your pet also cuts the risk of your pet contracting cancer and other serious diseases. It will keep your pet healthier and reduce unwanted behaviors, such as roaming, spraying (cats), inappropriate elimination, or mounting.

## Your new pet's vaccination needs

Vaccinations are one of your most important tools in keeping a young pet healthy. Some of the most important include:

### Dogs

- Rabies
- Canine Distemper
- Canine Parvovirus
- Leptospirosis
- Canine Bordetella (kennel cough)
- Rabies

### Cats

- Feline Distemper
- Feline Rhinotracheitis/  
Feline Calicivirus
- Feline Leukemia Virus
- Rabies

Your veterinarian will advise you if any additional vaccines are necessary based on where you live and what kind of lifestyle your new pet will have.

## VCA Pet Tips:

- 1 Puppies and kittens are inquisitive and adventurous. Make sure you have a safe area prepared for him or her to sleep, eat, and play in.
- 2 Get puppies and kittens accustomed to home dental cleanings early to reduce the risk of dental problems and to make home cleanings easier.