



CLUTHA VETS

WORKING DOG PUPPY HANDBOOK



Welcome to your new puppy

Your new pup has the potential to become one of your best workers. There are a few basic things that you can do in the first 12 months of your pup's life to give them the best chance of growing into a strong, healthy, athletic dog capable of working for many years.

Our vets and nurses at Clutha Vets Balclutha and Milton have a lot of experience with working dogs and have a good appreciation of how different they are from pet dogs. Some have working dogs of their own and train and breed them.

We would be happy to help you with any aspect of your pup's health care and this booklet contains some basic information including:

- Clinic locations and telephone numbers
- Vaccination
- Worming
- Feeding
- Kennels
- Skin parasites
- Microchipping
- Desexing
- Exercise
- Insurance



Our Clinic contact details and hours:

BALCLUTHA – 03 418 1280

2 Wilson Rd, Balclutha

Monday – Friday 8.00am – 5.30pm

Tuesday evening to 7.00pm

Saturday morning 9.30am – 12.30pm

or

MILTON – 03 417 8032

106 Union St, Milton

Monday – Friday 8.00am – 5.00pm

24hr / 7 day a week Emergency service – 03 418 1280



Vaccination

The diseases we protect dogs against are:

- **Parvovirus** – a potentially fatal viral disease that causes severe vomiting and bloody diarrhoea which rapidly (within a few hours) leads to severe dehydration and often death. It is passed on through infected faeces and is easily spread on footwear, clothes, dishes and other equipment. Symptoms appear from 4 to 14 days after infection. Infected dogs shed virus from 3 days after infection (before symptoms appear) until at least 2 weeks after they have fully recovered. Virus can remain active in the environment for over a year. We frequently see cases of parvovirus in dogs and pups that are unvaccinated or that have not completed a full course of vaccinations. Vaccination is very effective.
- **Distemper** – a fatal viral disease that causes vomiting, diarrhoea, runny eyes and nose, coughing, convulsions and death. Thankfully no longer common due to a very effective vaccine
- **Hepatitis** – a viral disease that attacks the liver and causes fever, vomiting, diarrhea, pale gums, bleeding problems and seizures. Severe infections are fatal. It is uncommon and mostly seen in young dogs. Vaccination is very effective.
- **Kennel Cough (Infectious Cough)** – a very common, very infectious cough that affects the trachea (windpipe) but can in severe cases cause pneumonia and rarely death. It is spread via droplets in the air and is very easily passed between dogs in the same air space whether kenneled near each other, working together or at dog trials. The main symptom is a harsh persistent cough with sometimes fever and lack of energy. The vaccine protects against the main bacterial and viral causes of kennel cough.
- **Leptospirosis** – a bacterial infection that causes disease in some regions of New Zealand, mainly the far North and some parts of the northern South Island. It is spread mainly via urine and causes fever, vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice and liver and kidney damage. We do not routinely vaccinate against it but if your dogs are going to an area where it is present we can arrange vaccination.



Age of vaccination

- First injection given at 6 weeks of age
- Second injection given 4 weeks later at 10 weeks of age
- Final vaccination given at 14 weeks of age
- Exact timing of vaccination may vary according to age at first vaccine and level of risk
- Pups should be at least 14 weeks of age at the final puppy vaccine
- Pups at high risk of infection can be vaccinated from 4 weeks of age and every 2 weeks until at least 14 weeks of age
- Kennel cough vaccination from 6 weeks of age (single dose given up the nostril)
- First adult booster for all vaccines given 12 months later
- Kennel Cough needs a yearly booster
- Parvovirus, Distemper and Hepatitis need a booster vaccination every 3 years



Worming

- Worm pups from 2 weeks of age for roundworms
- Worm every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age
- Worm every month from 12 weeks of age until 6 months of age
- From 6 months of age worm every 3 months for roundworms and tapeworms
- On farms with sheep measle controls in place worm monthly for tapeworms
- Roundworms cause ill thrift and can in severe cases can cause parts of the intestine to slide like a telescope into each other. This is rapidly fatal unless treated surgically to remove the affected intestine.
- Roundworm larvae can cause serious health problems in people including blindness.
- Clutha Vets run a worming programme – we send you the tablets when they are due. Please talk to us if you would like your dogs on this programme.

Feeding

Pups should be fully weaned onto a good quality complete puppy food by 6-7 weeks of age. Once weaned pups do not need milk – cows milk, lamb milk replacer, calf milk replacer or puppy milk replacer.

A good quality complete puppy food such as Hills Science Diet, Eukanuba or Royal Canin is exactly balanced to meet a growing pups needs. Heading dogs and other breeds that will be less than 25kg bodyweight when adult should be fed medium breed puppy food. Huntaways and other breeds that will be over 25kg bodyweight when adult should be fed large breed puppy food. Correct feeding for the first 12 months will help ensure strong bones and joints for life. Poor diet causes growth defects and lameness, increases the risk of injuries and results in a much shorter working life.

Use the feeding guide on the bag to estimate how much per day to feed. Use the pup's body condition to adjust this amount to meet your pup's needs. Ribs, spine and pelvis should be easily felt but not visible. Under or over feeding will cause bone growth and joint problems. From 6 weeks to 12 weeks of age split food into 4 equal meals per day. From 12 weeks to 20 weeks of age split food into 3 meals per day. After that two meals per day can be fed. Once daily feeding while

convenient is only suitable for adult dogs. Feed at least 2 hours before exercise and wait 1 hour after exercise before feeding to reduce the risk of bloat.

Do not feed bones to pups. Once all adult teeth are fully emerged at 6 months of age uncooked large bones such as shin and thigh bones can be fed. Do not feed ribs, vertebrae or other small, sharp bones which can damage the gut. Cooked bones can cause serious gut problems. Do not feed mouldy or spoiled food. Dry biscuits should be kept in a pest proof container in a cool dry place. Dog roll, meat and tinned food once opened must be refrigerated. If changing onto a new food do it gradually over at least a week to prevent gut upsets. Mix a small amount of the new food in with the old. Slowly increase the amount of the new food while decreasing the amount of the old food each day.

Kennels

Kennels should be waterproof, windproof and insulated. Position them in a sheltered place out of full sun on dry ground. Check kennels for sharp edges and bits of wire or nails sticking out that could cause injuries. Provide bedding that is easily cleaned or replaced. If your dog insists on dragging their bedding out of the kennel use a rubber mat instead. Cow cubicle mats cut down to size are ideal. Always have clean drinking water available. Use a heavy concrete bowl or one that hangs on the kennel door to prevent it being tipped over. Make sure your dog has opportunity to drink during the working day. They will become dehydrated and prone to heat exhaustion if they do not drink enough even on cool days.





Skin parasite control

Fleas are a common problem in working dogs. Routine flea control must be used during summer and may be needed all year round. There are many new and cost effective flea treatments available as collars, tablets or liquid to spot on the skin. Supermarket products, powders, shampoos and some flea collars may not be very effective and can be difficult to use. Please come and talk to us about which is the most suitable and cost effective treatment.

Lice, ear mites and skin mites can also cause skin problems for pups. We will check your pup for skin parasites when they come for their vaccines and advise on any treatment needed.

Only use flea treatments labelled for use on dogs and use exactly as directed. Do not use insecticides on kennels and bedding unless labeled safe for dogs. Some insecticides particularly old products and those for sheep can be fatal to dogs.



Microchipping

Working dogs do not have to be microchipped but do have to be registered with the council. However microchipping is a cheap and easy way of permanently identifying your pup. If your pup gets lost or stolen it is the best way to ensure you get him back again. Microchipping is very quick and can be done at the same time as any of the puppy vaccinations.

Desexing

You may plan on breeding from your pup if it becomes a good working dog. Dogs with conformation problems such as hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, over or undershot jaws, hernias, or retained testicles should not be bred from. Dogs with inherited health problems such as gastric dilatation and volvulus (bloat), vaginal hyperplasia (prolapse) and some eye conditions should not be bred from. If you intend to breed from your dog please come and get our free information leaflet on breeding.

Females:

Most bitches will have their first heat from 6 to 12 months of age. Usually they will have mild to marked vulval swelling and a bloody vulval discharge but some may show little sign. The heat will last about 3 weeks with the optimum time for mating being a few days in the middle of this period.

If you do not want to breed from your bitch get her desexed around 6 months of age before her first heat. Bitches desexed before their first heat have a greatly reduced risk of some types of mammary tumours (breast cancers) later in life. Mammary tumours are very common in dogs compared to other animals. Desexing later than the first heat is much less effective at preventing these tumours. Desexing also prevents life threatening uterine infections which again are common in older bitches. It prevents the nuisance of bitches coming on heat when needed to work and unwanted pregnancies. The modern drug used to abort early pregnancy is much safer but also much more expensive than those used previously which are now discontinued. It is a similar cost to desexing so would only be cost effective in bitches that you wanted to breed from. Desexing is also more cost effective than letting a bitch have an unwanted litter. The hidden costs in having a litter of pups include extra food, time off work and veterinary fees if there are complications. Desexing should reduce fighting between male dogs over bitches on heat.

Males:

Timing of desexing with male dogs is less critical. The benefits include prevention of testicular cancer and reduction in the risk of prostate problems which cause constipation and hernias. Desexing may reduce fighting between male dogs particularly over bitches on heat.

An added bonus of desexing for both males and females is reduced calorie requirement. This is why pet dogs may gain weight but it can mean reduced feeding costs for working dogs. Less food may be needed to maintain healthy body condition depending on work load.



Exercise

The most important thing to remember is that your dog's bones and joints are soft and easily damaged until they are over a year old. Exercise should be introduced slowly and gradually in a controlled way. Wait longer with large breeds such as Huntaways. From 6 months of age exercise can be gradually increased. Full work should not start until at least 12 months of age for heading dogs and 18 months of age for Huntaways and other large breeds.



Insurance

Veterinary medicine and surgery is advancing rapidly and many more diseases and conditions are now treatable. Sometimes these treatments come at a significant cost, particularly if referral to a specialist is recommended. Traumatic injuries are much more common in working dogs than pet dogs. Insurance can cover the purchase price of a dog or treatment costs depending on the policy. It is very important to read the conditions of each policy and chose those available and most suitable for working dogs.

Website

Have a look at our website www.cluthavets.co.nz , we have a section on Animal Health which is regularly updated with articles from our Companion Animal Vets.



Clutha Veterinary Association Inc.

Compiled by Dr Catherine Copland BVMS