



INTRACOASTAL WEST
VETERINARY HOSPITAL

PUPPY WELCOME PACKET

Congratulations on your new puppy!

This is an exciting time, filled with fun and lots of new experiences for both you and your puppy! This packet is full of amazing information and references to help you spend more time with your puppy and less time searching for answers. If you have questions we haven't answered here or on our website, ICWVH.com, please do not hesitate to give us a call or send us an email!

Positive Puppy Experiences

We hope you and your pup have enjoyed your first experience today at Intracoastal West Vet Hospital. If your pup is less than 16 weeks old, you can plan on returning every 3 weeks for booster vaccines while your puppy's immune system develops.

We can't wait to watch them grow, and for you to grow as a family!

-Drs. Green and Marsigliano
and ICWVH Staff



- Vaccines **P.2**
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COMPASSIONATE VETERINARY CARE

Doctors Green and Marsigliano, and our support staff, including veterinary technicians Rob, Darlene, and Luna, welcome you to the Intracoastal West Veterinary Hospital family!

We are here to support you and your pet by providing excellent veterinary medical and surgical services. We highlight the importance of preventive care to help you keep your canine and feline family members healthy and we are here for you when they get sick. Annual or semi-annual physical exams along with annual screening bloodwork can help us detect diseases before they become a problem.

We strive to keep every visit as low-stress as possible for both you and your pet. We frequently use treats, toys, and other distractions to keep your pet happy while we examine them or perform treatment procedures. We love seeing your pets, and we want them to love coming here, too! If your pet has a favorite treat or toy, feel free to bring it with you for their visits!

Here are some of the services we offer:

- Preventive Medicine
- Illness and Emergency Medicine
- In-house Diagnostics:
 - X-Rays, in-house blood and urine analyzers, cytology, abdominal ultrasound, echocardiography
- CO2 Laser Surgery
 - Spay/neuter, dental cleanings and extractions, soft tissue surgery (mass removals, etc.)
- 24/7 Access to Medical Records
- Online Pharmacy (including auto-ship)
- Curbside and Drop-off appointments

EMERGENCY/AFTER-HOURS REFERRALS:

Southside of Jacksonville:

Blue Pearl Veterinary Emergency Center
3444 Southside Blvd #101
(904) 646-1287

Jacksonville Beaches:

First Coast Veterinary Emergency
301 Jacksonville Dr
(904) 853-6310

Mandarin:

Capital Veterinary Specialists
3001 Hartley Rd
(904) 647-7481

Typical Puppy Vaccine Series:

7-9 weeks:

Physical exam, DAPP, Bordetella, Fecal exam, deworming, start monthly heartworm and flea prevention

10-12 weeks:

Physical exam, DAPP, Lepto, deworming, continue parasite prevention

13-15 weeks:

Physical exam, DAPP, Lepto, Rabies, deworming, parasite prevention, discuss spay/neuter

16-18 weeks:

Spay/neuter surgery, DAPP, continue parasite prevention for the rest of your pet's life

*Your pet's vaccine series may differ depending on the age it was started and your pet's individual lifestyle. Let's chat and

To minimize risk of contracting potentially fatal diseases like parvo, we recommend **avoiding public areas** like dog parks, public parks, and pet stores with your pup **until they have completed their full vaccine series**



Protecting Your Precious Puppy

Puppies are similar to human infants in that their immune systems are not fully developed and they need a series of vaccines to be fully protected

We will vaccinate your puppy approximately every 3 weeks until they are at least 16 weeks old (4 months). Most adult dogs are then vaccinated annually to maintain a strong immune response. Here are some of the diseases we routinely vaccinate against here in Jacksonville:

DAPP (Distemper/Adenovirus-2/Parainfluenza/Parvovirus): These viruses can affect the upper respiratory, nervous, and gastro-intestinal systems. These viruses can cause coughing, sneezing, seizures, vomiting, diarrhea, and death. **Parvo** is an especially threat-ening virus as it can live in the environment for up to 2 years! The DAPP vaccine is very safe and effective at preventing these diseases, but must be given every 3 weeks until your puppy is at least 16-20 weeks old before they are fully protected.

Lepto (Leptospirosis): This is a bacteria spread in wildlife urine that can cause kidney and liver failure. Squirrels, raccoons, deer, etc. can spread this to pets, who get it by drinking from contaminated puddles or licking their paws after touching contaminated grass,

people as well. To protect you and your family, we recommend protecting all dogs from this disease annually. Puppies and dogs generally need two doses, 3-4 weeks apart, followed by

Prevention is key! These diseases can cost 10-100x more to treat than to prevent.

annual vaccination.

Rabies: This is a severe neurological disease that is almost always fatal to pets and people. In Jacksonville, we have had several cases of rabies exposure to pets in recent years, so it is very important for your pet to be protected. Vaccination against Rabies is required by law everywhere in Florida after 16 weeks of age for dogs and cats, and if you are a resident

Bordetella (Kennel Cough):

This vaccine protects against a bacteria that can cause kennel cough. We vaccinate puppies once with this vaccine, and then repeat every 6-12 months depending on your pup's lifestyle. If your puppy frequently goes to the groomer, dog park, etc., we recommend vaccinating every 6 months, and most of these facilities will require

Vaccine Reactions are rare and typically occur within 2-4 hours of receiving a vaccine.

Most puppies don't even know they got a vaccine and are still running around the rest of the day, while others may feel **sluggish** with decreased appetite, and possibly even **sore**, similar to when you get a flu shot. Let us know if your puppy is acting sore so we can make them feel better. Please let us know if your pet experiences any of the following after receiving a vaccine:

Vomiting, diarrhea, facial swelling, hives, difficulty breathing, pale gums, and collapse. These are much **rarer** but more **serious** vaccine reactions that can require immediate intervention. Give us or an emergency veterinarian a call immediately if your pet experiences these problems. (See page 1 for ER contact info)





Parasites in me?
Oh no! Help me!
Keep me on routine
parasite prevention!

Protect Your Pet (and Family) from Parasites

Heartworms - Heartworms are transmitted through mosquitoes and here in Florida especially, all dogs need to be on heartworm prevention **ALL** year round, regardless of how much time they spend outside. Heartworms can be fatal so it is important to give heartworm prevention consistently every 30 days. There are several different options for heartworm prevention, and some even help control intestinal parasites. The dose for these medications is based on your pup's weight, so we will be adjusting this medication as

each visit. After your pup is a year old, we will perform an annual blood test to keep them healthy and free of heart worms, but the most important part of keeping them heartworm-negative is consistent prevention!

Intestinal worms - Puppies are often born with intestinal worms, can catch them while nursing on their mother, or can pick them up from the ground outside. These worms can be transmitted to humans, especially if owners don't promptly pick up and dispose of their

pet's waste. The worms can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and even anemia, but some dogs will have no symptoms. We recommend prophylactic deworming every 2-3 weeks through the duration of your puppy's vaccine series. We can also test for their presence with a fecal test and provide appropriate deworming medication based on those results.

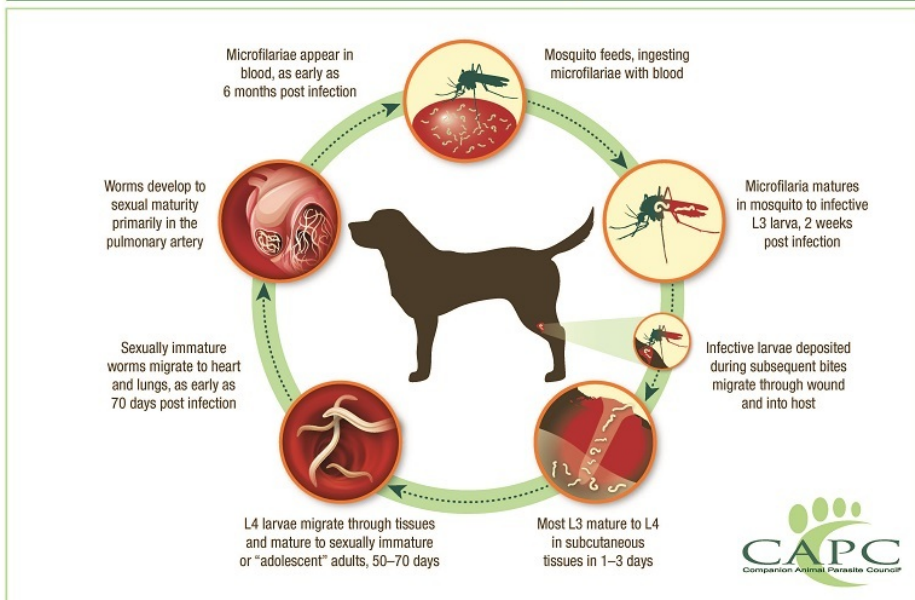
Fleas – Fleas (and the itching they cause) are another common issue for dogs here in Florida. Like heartworm prevention, your puppy should be on flea prevention year round. If you try over the counter flea preventives, you may be frustrated at their ineffectiveness. We recommend prescription flea preventives that are tough on fleas but gentle on your pet. Some flea preventatives also protect against ticks or mites. We will develop a custom flea prevention plan for your puppy.

Pick up that
poop promptly
To keep pets,
family, and
neighbors safe

Worms transmitted in stool can become active and infectious if the poop has been sitting for at least 1-2 days. By picking up the poop immediately, you can help reduce the spread of these parasites in our community.

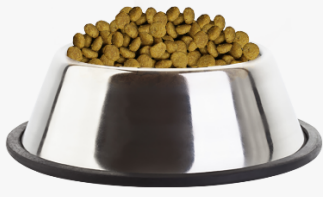
Remember, humans as well as animals can contract these intestinal worms, so wash your hands after picking up after your dog and don't let children run around barefoot outside.

Heartworm Lifecycle



Hungry, Hungry Puppy!

What, When, and How to Feed Your Puppy



Don't fall prey to companies that try to convince you that your puppy is a wolf.

Your puppy has special nutritional needs compared to wolves, and has evolved extra enzymes that allow them to digest food more efficiently than wolves. Plus your dog is expected to live 2-3 times longer than a wolf! If you want them to live a shorter life, then feed them like a wolf.

Your dog also needs (and can only utilize) a certain amount of protein. So those diets that heavily market their high protein content – you're paying more for nutrients that will only feed your dog's gut flora, causing expensive, stinky farts.

If you are feeding a well-balanced diet, you do not need to supplement with vitamins or other additions unless directed to by your veterinarian. Giving your puppy a vitamin or supplement may even unbalance their diet which could cause medical problems down the road. If you have questions or want to give a particular supplement, let us know.

Feed a diet based in science and backed by decades of research by board certified veterinary nutritionists. Learn more at WSAVA.com (World Small Animal Veterinary Association)

Your growing puppy has unique nutritional requirements compared to an adult or senior dog. The brands we trust are **Royal Canin**, **Purina**, **Hill's**, and **Iams**. These companies employ board certified veterinary nutritionists, have decades of research to back their products, and have strong quality control measures at every level of production and distribution. Where other companies focus on marketing and do not have science to back the safety and digestibility of their diets, these four companies do.

We recommend feeding a puppy formulation, which has a higher nutritional content (and calories) than adult food. Most puppies can start transitioning to adult food around 10-12 months old, but ask us if you have questions.

If you have a large-breed puppy, they will need a **large-breed specific** puppy food that is specially formulated to support their growing bones and help prevent orthopedic diseases. Let us know if you need help picking a diet that's right for your puppy.

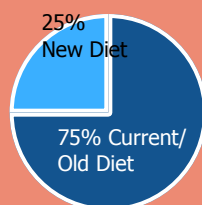
We will be assessing your puppy's weight and Body Condition Score (BCS) at every visit, and will let you know if you are feeding your puppy too much or too little. In general, we recommend following the back of the bag or can, which will tell you how much to feed based on your puppy's weight and age. This recommended amount is a generalization, and may overestimate or underestimate how much your puppy needs. The amount you feed will increase as your puppy grows.

We recommend feeding your puppy at least 3-4 times daily because they are not good at regulating their blood sugar when they are young and can get hypoglycemic in between meals. Small breed puppies are especially at risk of hypoglycemia, which can look like lethargy, weakness, tremors, and can progress in worst cases to seizures. Feeding small meals throughout the day can help reduce this risk.

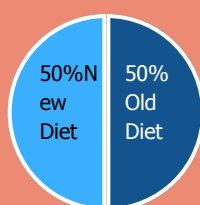
Transition to a New Food over 1-2 weeks:

To reduce stomach upset, including diarrhea, if you are switching to a new brand or formula of puppy food, you should slowly decrease the amount of food you are currently feeding and slowly increase the new food you are introducing.

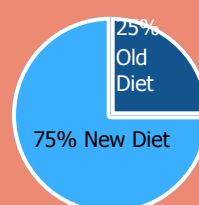
Days 1-3



Days 4-6



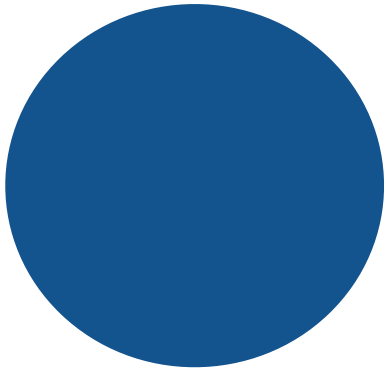
Days 7-9



Day 10 and on

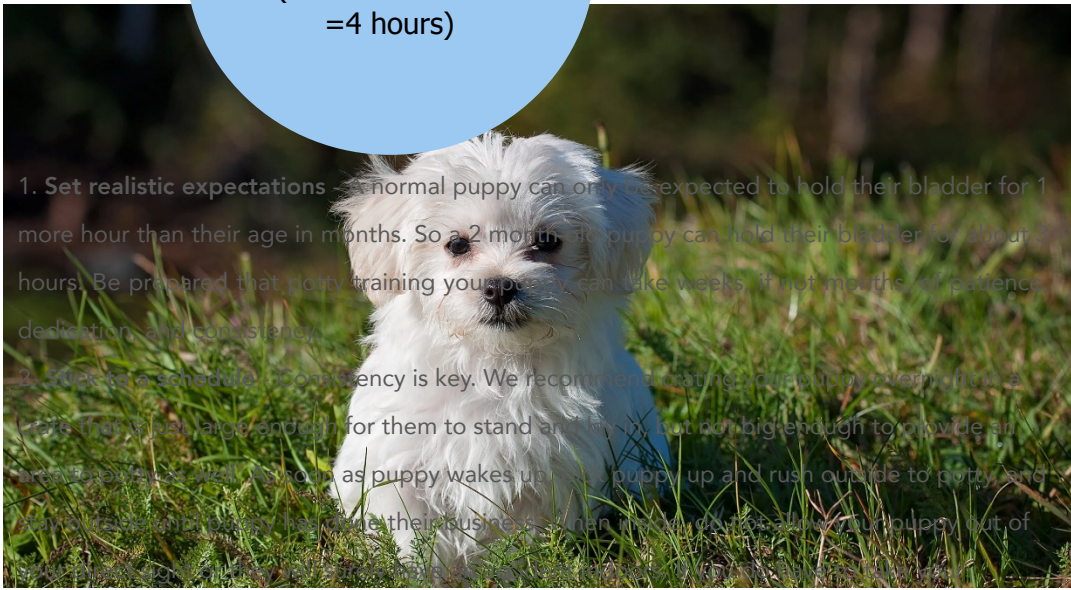


If, for instance, your puppy's stool gets loose like diarrhea on day 5, go back to 75% Old Diet and 25% New for 3-4 more days to give your pup's digestive system more time to get used to the new diet. Then move on to 50%/50%, etc.



Tricks for Puppy Potty Training

A: 1 hour for every
month of age + 1
(3 months = 3+1
=4 hours)



1. **Set realistic expectations** - A normal puppy can only be expected to hold their bladder for 1 more hour than their age in months. So a 2 month old puppy can hold their bladder for about 3 hours. Be prepared that potty training your puppy can take weeks, if not months, of patience, dedication, and consistency.

2. **Stick to a schedule** - Consistency is key. We recommend crating your puppy overnight in a crate that is just large enough for them to stand and turn around, but not big enough to provide an area to potty in. As soon as puppy wakes up, pick puppy up and rush outside to potty, and reward them and praise them for doing their business. When they do not go allow your puppy out of

attention away, your puppy should be crated again. While they are out of their crate, watch for signs such as sniffing, and rush them outside. If you're unsure, better to err on the side of caution and go outside. Once your puppy does their business outside, feel free to reward them with pets, treats, and play time. This will help reinforce the behavior you want: pottying outside.

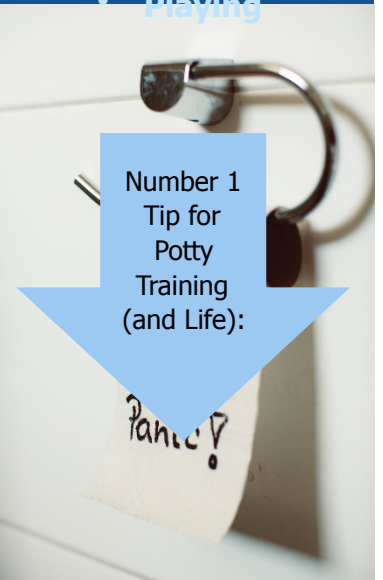
3. **If accidents happen** - If you happen upon evidence of an accident that has already occurred, punishing your puppy will not teach them what you want, and may only teach them to hide their accidents instead. Clean accidents with an enzymatic cleaner such as Nature's Miracle or Anti-Icky Poo, and try to be more vigilant next time. If you catch your puppy in the act inside, distract them with a noise and rush over to take them outside.

Pro-Tip:

To prevent your puppy from making mischief (and accidents) when you're home but unable to provide direct supervision, clip them to a leash that is tied to your waist. This will keep them from getting too far away and help you stay better in tune to their signals that they have to go potty than if they were on the other side of the room.

Take puppy out immediately after:

- Eating
- Playing



Number 1
Tip for
Potty
Training
(and Life):

Panic!

Recommended Resources

Books:

[Perfect Puppy in 7 Days](#)
by Dr. Sophia Yin

[Puppy Start Right](#)
by Dr. Kenneth Martin and
Debbie Martin

Websites/Blogs:

[DunbarAcademy.com](#)
("Free Course Collection")

[DrSophiaYin.com](#)

[Positively.com](#)

Youtube Channels:

Zak George: "The Dog Training Revolution" and "The Dog Training Experience"

Facebook Group:

"Dog Training Advice and Support"

If you have specific questions and haven't found good answers online, reach out to us. We have included in this packet a flyer for a local trainer we know and trust, but we can offer additional recommendations if needed. We have handouts and Dr. M can discuss specific behavior modification protocols, counter-conditioning, desensitization, etc. during a behavioral consultation appointment.

General Training and Socialization During COVID

An ounce of prevention: Puppies' prime socialization window occurs when they are **3 weeks to 3 months old**. During this time, it is important to safely familiarize them with things they will experience (situations, people, animals) they will have to deal



Do it safely. Remember that your puppy is not fully protected until they have completed their vaccine series (at least 4 months old). Socialization should happen within controlled environments, such as your home or a friend's home, your fenced-in property, or easily disinfected places such as puppy class facilities. Dog parks, pet stores, the sidewalk in a busy neighborhood, and other public spaces are generally not safe for pets that are not fully vaccinated. You should confirm that the animals that you expose your puppy to should be healthy, vaccinated, and free of parasites.

For your own safety, make sure you are following local social distancing recommendations and taking appropriate measures to keep yourself safe. Allowing your dog to play with a friend or neighbor's dog outside in a fenced-in backyard while the humans socially distance is a good way to promote socialization while keeping you and other humans safe.

Keep sessions short and fun. Check in with your pup to make sure they are having a good experience. Remember to pair new experiences with things your puppy enjoys, like praise, treats, or playtime. Often, just a couple minutes a few times a day is a

Praise, don't punish. In general, positive reinforcement is the key to a happy, well adjusted puppy. Aversive things or punishments, such as pinching, poking, yelling, shocking, etc. do not teach animals how to properly behave, and have been proven to cause fear and anxiety, (even in tough police dogs!), which can manifest as aggression. Most importantly, punishments teach your puppy to fear you and dislike training (think about being punished in school as a kid). It is more effective to reward your puppy for good behaviors and ignore bad behaviors. Or better yet, manage your puppy and their environment to prevent them from getting into mischief in the first

Keep in mind: exposure alone is not socialization.
Never force a puppy into an interaction. Allow them to walk away
and try again later with a less scary version

Unfamiliar people

- Women
- Men (especially with beards or deep voices)
- Senior citizens
- Delivery people
- Bicyclists
- Joggers

Noises

(Use Youtube to simulate these at lower volumes to start)

- Trucks
- Vacuum cleaner
- Doorbell
- Thunder
- Fireworks
- Sirens

Handling

- Touching: mouth, ears, tail, paws
- Bathing
- Brushing
- Wearing collar
- Wearing harness
- Holding/hugging
- Restraining

Other

- Car rides
- Vet office
- Groomer
- Wobbly surfaces (such as a board on top of a book)
- Stairs
- Slippery surfaces

Other Animals

- Other healthy, vaccinated, dewormed dogs and puppies
- Cats, birds, or other pets your pup may live with

Puppy Hygiene at Home



Dental Care:

Now is the time to start brushing your puppy's teeth! Yes, their baby teeth will fall out over the next few months, but if you get them used to having their teeth brushed daily, you can prevent the struggle when they are an adult and save hundreds of dollars by reducing the frequency of dental cleanings under anesthesia. You can even just work on getting them used to you opening their mouth, lifting their lips, or gently touching their teeth and gums with your finger.

Brush their teeth daily to remove plaque that turns into tartar every 24 hours!

To clean their teeth, wrap a piece of gauze around your finger and wipe the teeth. You can put dog toothpaste directly on the gauze or offer it as a treat afterwards.

Dental chews and chew toys are a great complement, not replacement to brushing. Avoid offering hard chew toys like antlers or bones that can break your pup's teeth. If you can't scratch the toy and leave a mark with your fingernail, then it is too hard for your dog's teeth. Always make sure to supervise your pup's chew time so they don't accidentally swallow pieces that can get stuck in their intestines.

Trimming Nails:

Puppyhood is also the ideal time to get your dog used to having their nails trimmed. You can play with your puppy's feet, touching each toe individually, making sure it is a positive experience for them. We are happy to show you how to cut your pup's nails, and we can perform nail trims in the clinic, but desensitizing your puppy at home while they are young will make it much less stressful when they are older.

If your puppy has clear nails, you can see that they have a pink quick and a white tip, similar to human nails. Dogs with black nails also have the same parts, but they are pigmented. The nerve and blood supply is in the pink quick, so only cut the white tip. For black-nailed dogs, just trim close to the tip. You can also file their nails to help smooth out sharp edges left after trimming their nails.

You can avoid overwhelming your pup if you trim a couple nails in a single session. If you only did one or two nails per day, by the time you have done all the nails the first one will probably need to be trimmed again. This way, it's a daily routine that isn't overwhelming for your pup.

Bathing:

It is safe to bathe your puppy unless we have specifically told you not to (e.g. after surgery or if they have a bandage). Most dogs only need to be bathed when they are dirty/smelly or a couple times a year, but sometimes this can vary based on the individual pet, especially if they are prone to allergies.

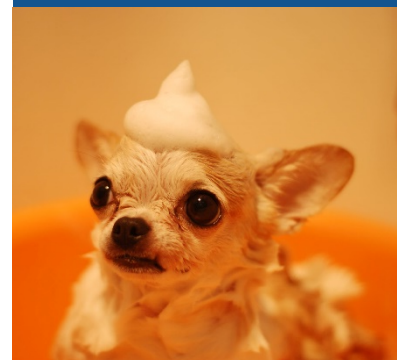
We recommend prescription veterinary shampoos that are specifically formulated for dogs, which will be gentle and safe on their skin. Even gentle baby shampoos like Johnson & Johnson or dog shampoos that are labeled as hypoallergenic and soothing (with Oatmeal) can still damage and dry out your puppy's skin, but the shampoos we carry here are safe for weekly or more frequent use if needed.

We also have ear cleaners that are safe for routine use or to help dry out their ears after bathing. Avoid using alcohol or hydrogen peroxide in your pup's ears because these can cause damage and make your pup more likely to develop ear infections.

Different dog breeds have different grooming requirements for maintenance. Some breeds, like schnauzers, shihtzus, poodles, maltese, etc. have fur that should be trimmed regularly. Other breeds may only need regular brushing to help prevent mats.

The most effective way to reduce shedding is to brush your dog regularly. The **Furminator** is a great comb that works well for most coat types at removing loose or dead fur.

Let us know if you notice a rash, dry flaky skin, stinky ears, or if your pet is scratching more than usual. These can be signs of parasites or infection.



Did you know Intracoastal West Veterinary Hospital is one of only a couple of general practice veterinary hospitals in Jacksonville that uses a CO2 surgical laser?

This specialized equipment allows Dr. Green or Dr. M to perform surgeries with less pain, bleeding, and other complications compared to surgeries performed with a scalpel. We use the surgical laser in every spay and neuter -- no need to specially request it.

Benefits of Spaying and Neutering

-Spaying or neutering your pup adds 2-4+ years to their lifespan! Spayed female dogs live an average of 23-26.3% longer than intact females, and neutered male dogs live 13.8-18% longer than intact males.

-Eliminate messy heat cycles and reduce unwanted behaviors like roaming that increase your dog's risk of being hit by a car

-Eliminate the risk of accidental pregnancy

-Eliminate the risk of certain diseases like pyometra (infected uterus) and testicular cancer, and decrease risk of other diseases like



What to Expect

Before your pet undergoes anesthesia, we will perform bloodwork that will let us know if your puppy has normal liver and kidney function (these organs help process the anesthesia medications), immune system (for healing response and to rule out current infections), red blood cells (carry oxygen), platelets (help clot blood), among other things that could indicate hidden diseases that might make anesthesia riskier.

Before surgery, they will receive pain medications and a medication to reduce nausea so they don't feel crummy after the procedure.

While your pet is under anesthesia, we will provide supportive IV fluids, supplement oxygen and intravenous fluids, and monitor their blood pressure, heart rate and rhythm, oxygenation, CO2 production, and temperature.

While there is no way to completely eliminate anesthetic risks, by performing pre-operative bloodwork and monitoring their vital parameters closely, we can greatly minimize the risk and keep your pet safe during the procedure and through recovery.

Your pet will go home with pain medication for a few days following their procedure. They should also wear an elizabethan collar (cone) to prevent them from licking at their incision

Spay and Neuter

It's time to talk about the birds and the bees, and how to prevent puppies having puppies.

We can provide this surgery for your pup in a way that reduces pain, anesthetic risk, incision size, and allows for fast healing. These are typically out-patient procedures – drop your pup off in the morning, and pick them up in the afternoon. Most pups are feeling back to their normal selves by dinnertime.

Common Myths about Spay/Neuter

Despite what some people may think, going through one heat cycle or having one litter of puppies has zero benefit for a female dog. In fact, every heat cycle a female dog has increases her risk of developing mammary cancer when she is older. If she is spayed before her first heat cycle, her risk of mammary cancer is almost zero.

Another concern some owners may have is that their spayed or neutered pet will get fat. While a lowered hormone level will slightly decrease how many calories your pet burns each day, the maturation or aging process has the biggest effect on weight gain. This is easily fixed or prevented – give your pet less food and exercise them more.

Finally, some people worry that spaying or neutering their furred best friend will change



Congratulations for making it this far in this packet!
This page contains the secret to keeping your pet's exceptional veterinary care affordable.



Pet Insurance

Peace of Mind: Pet insurance is like car insurance for your pet – you hope you never have to use it, but if you do have to, you'll be glad you got it. It helps cover the cost of medical expenses should your pet become ill or have an accident by reimbursing you for their care. Some plans also cover preventive care to keep your pet healthy, such as annual vaccines, dental cleanings, and even heartworm and flea prevention.

Now is the time! It is a good idea to enroll your pet in a pet insurance plan while they are young and have no pre-existing conditions so you can get the lowest rate, and so your pet can be covered for any accidents or diseases that may occur in the future.

We don't endorse any company over another, but Embrace, Petplan, and Trupanion are some of the pet insurance companies that have worked well for us and our clients in the past.

Carecredit and Scratchpay

At Intracoastal West Vet Hospital, we offer different payment options to help keep your pet's care affordable so we can provide the best veterinary care and you can focus on keeping them healthy. These options include Carecredit, a credit card used for medical expenses including veterinary care that can offer **no-interest** for charges paid off within **6 months**, and Scratchpay, a third-party payment plan service that helps **break up payments** over 2 months or even up to 1 or 2 years for larger amounts. Both Carecredit and Scratchpay are quick and easy to apply for, and help spread out costs, which can be helpful for unexpected accidents or illnesses.



For more information to help you with your pet insurance decisions, visit www.Pet-Insurance-University.com (A Vet's Guide to Pet Insurance). Dr. Wilkerson breaks down some of the bigger pet insurance providers and offers definitions for some commonly confusing terms to help you decide on the best policy for you and your pet.

Questions to consider when selecting a pet insurance provider:

- What kind of illnesses are covered? Are certain illnesses that are common for my pet's breed excluded?
- Are pre-existing conditions covered? What conditions are considered pre-existing? Is there a bilateral conditions policy? (A bilateral condition is one that can happen to either side of the body. Some companies restrict coverage on the second side after the first side is affected.)
- Is there a waiting period before the policy goes into effect?
- What is the deductible and can I select a higher deductible for a lower premium? Is the deductible per incident or per year?
- Does the premium change as my pet ages or if a claim is made?
- Do you offer any discounts? (e.g., multiple pets, if the pet is microchipped, spayed/neutered)
- Is there a maximum payout per claim, per year, per household or per policy?
- How do I submit a claim? Do I have to pay the veterinarian and then submit a claim? What is the timeframe for reimbursement?
- What kinds of medical treatment/interventions are covered by this plan?

