

# PUPPY CARE

*Australian Labradoodle Association of America*  
*www.ilainc.com*

## Fleas, Ticks

Fleas and ticks are a nuisance, but only a small issue if taken care of right away. If you let them get to an infestation level, they can kill your dog. Fleas and ticks also spread disease, cause allergic reactions, and help spread blood and intestinal parasites. There are many ways to treat for fleas and ticks, and most chemical products are safe if used properly. There are individual products to treat each issue, or products that prevent and kill both fleas and ticks, and one product that treats for both as well as heartworm.

Here are a few of the most well known and studied products.

- **Advantage** treats fleas only. Monthly topical.
- **Frontline Plus** treats fleas and ticks. Monthly topical.
- **Revolution** treats fleas and ticks and heartworm. Monthly topical.
- **Sentinel** treats fleas only. Monthly oral.

For those who prefer holistic care, frequent bathing and manual removal of fleas and ticks can help prevent infestation of your home and yard. Use a flea comb and tick remover after each bath.

## Heartworm

Heartworm can be deadly if not caught in the early stages of development. Prevention is critical. Heartworm lives in a dog's bloodstream and attacks the heart muscle. According to the Heartworm Society, this parasite lives on every continent except Antarctica.

The most common treatment of heartworm involves giving your dog a medication every 4-6 weeks. The medications come in chewable tablets or topical application.

- Chewables made by **Heartgard**, **Interceptor**, and **Proheart**
- Topical applications made by **Revolution** and **Advantage**.

Currently, only Revolution treats for all three issues: fleas, ticks and heartworm.

One of the best ways to aid in flea, tick and heartworm prevention is to discourage flea, tick and mosquito population in your yard. Keep lawns trimmed short, eliminate standing water, and introduce plants that repel these pests.

## Dog Diet & Health

The diet you choose to feed your dog is a very important decision. Canine health is dependent on the appropriate balance of nutrients and calories sufficient for prime growth, activity level, and cellular repair. Diet not only plays a major role in short term health, but long term health issues. Choosing a food or diet can be a difficult decision. There are many viewpoints regarding feeding a dry kibble diet, raw food diets, or combining a bit of the two.

Whatever diet you decide on, it is important that it is a complete and balanced diet. We suggest choosing a food with high quality animal proteins, no by-products, no unidentified fat or protein sources, only whole grains and vegetables, no artificial colors, flavors or preservatives, no added sweeteners, and products with organic ingredients. When considering dog foods, don't forget those treat you buy your four legged friend! It is just as important to find healthy treats to give to your dog that are not filled with preservatives, fillers or by-products.

For your consideration, we have provided links to information regarding dog diet and health.

- Whole Dog Journal provides an annual review of the best of the best dry kibble foods. <http://www.whole-dog-journal.com/>
- Dog Food Analysis provides reviews of dry kibble foods. [http://www.dogfoodanalysis.com/dog\\_food\\_reviews/](http://www.dogfoodanalysis.com/dog_food_reviews/)
- Margaret Muns, DVM, has written an article about PRACTICAL CANINE NUTRITION for those who want a serious primer in nutritional analysis of dog food. <http://www.bestfriends.org/members/health/dognutr.htm>
- Shirley's Wellness Cafe provides a lot of information and links to raw feeding. <http://www.shirleys-wellness-cafe.com/animals.htm>

### **Cleaning Ears & Plucking Ear Hair**

Ear cleaning is not the most fun job in the world, but it should be part of your normal grooming routine. Your dog's ear health depends on you. Infections come on quickly, and keeping your dog's ears dry and clean is necessary. If you notice your dog scratching at his ears, or redness in the ear, or an unpleasant odor, your dog may be developing an ear infection. Cleaning alone will not clear up an infection. Visit your vet if you notice any of these symptoms. For general ear cleaning, here are a few links to helpful techniques.

- Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine article titled “**Examining and Cleaning Ears**”. Fantastic Pictures! [http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/clientED/dog\\_ears.aspx](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/clientED/dog_ears.aspx)
- Dog Grooming Basics 101 Article titled “**Ear Cleaning Basics**” [http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/clientED/dog\\_ears.aspx](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/clientED/dog_ears.aspx)
- For a natural ear cleaner and treatment, *It's For The Animals* has wonderful information and a recipe you can make for holistic care of the ears. For information on this holistic preventative and treatment, please visit <http://www.itsfortheanimals.com/BLUE.HTM>

Bacteria thrive in moist places like the ear canal. Removing excess hair may be necessary to allow proper air flow. Keep the hair trimmed short just underneath the ear flap, and if the ear canal itself has an abundance of hair, clipping it short or plucking some of the hair out may be helpful. Refrain from excessive plucking as too much irritation to the skin can allow for entry points for bacteria as well. Your vet or groomer can show you how to pluck ear hair efficiently.

### **Trimming Your Dog's Claws**

It can be a daunting task, but is absolutely necessary. You must trim your dog's claws on a regular basis, usually once or twice a month. Don't forget the dew claws on the inner side of the front paws! They are easily forgotten but must be trimmed like every other nail. If you do not trim them, it is much more likely for them to snag on something and be torn. A torn dewclaw is a very painful thing for your dog to experience and can many times result in a trip to the vet.

Each dog will need to be trimmed at different intervals depending on their lifestyle and activity level. A lot of people are very nervous about trimming claws. If you are not comfortable, have a groomer or vet show you how. To assist you in proper nail trimming, below are some links with information and pictures.

- **Clipping Your Dog's Claws** article written by Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Fantastic Pictures! [http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/ClientED/dog\\_nails.aspx](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/ClientED/dog_nails.aspx)
- **How To Trim Nails** <http://www.thepetcenter.com/gen/nailtrim.htm>

### **Eye Care**

There are things you can do to prevent eye infections in your dog. Regular cleaning and care is simple.

- Keep the hair trimmed away from your dog's eyes using blunt tipped scissors. Hair that rubs against your dog's eyes can place bacteria into the eye which can lead to infection.
- Keep eyes clean by using an eye wash or pads designed to wipe away debris and gunk from the eye.
- Check eyes regularly and if anything looks abnormal, call your vet for an appointment.

### **Teeth Cleaning & Care**

Good dental care is mandatory for your dog. Preventing oral disease is simple with regular dental care. Regular brushing of your dog's teeth is very important. For more information about veterinary and home care for your dog, please read the following information.

- **Brushing Your Pet's Teeth** [http://www.healthypet.com/library\\_view.aspx?ID=135&sid=1](http://www.healthypet.com/library_view.aspx?ID=135&sid=1)
- **Dental Care: What to Include in a Complete Program** Holly Nash, DVM MS article <http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=2+2089&aid=517>

### **Exercising Your Dog**

Dogs need exercise for their physical health and mental well being. Every dog will have different energy outlet needs. In general, you can expect your dog to require an hour every day of physical activity. Some good options are running and playing in a good game of fetch, or a long walk, jogging or biking along with you. Not only is this good for your dog's health, it is good for the dog-human bond as well. If your dog has any pre-existing health issues, discuss with your vet what they recommend for your exercise plan with your dog. It's also important to talk with your vet about the appropriate exercise for the age of your dog and for joint development. Some exercises can actually harm the developing joints. Here are some things to remember when exercising your dog.

If your dog is still growing, do not take him for long jogs, and definitely do not take him running with you. Developing joints may be harmed by repetitive motion on hard surfaces.

Avoid exercising in extreme heat, and if you would take water along for you, remember your dog would need water too.

If your dog seems tired, discontinue what you are doing and allow him to rest.