

Downers Grove Animal Hospital & Bird Clinic, P.C.

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www.DGAnimalHospital.com

Post-Natal Care for Puppies

Very little care is required of the owner for the puppies during the first few weeks after birth. Natural instinct causes the mother to provide for most needs of the offspring. The best advice is to leave the new family alone as much as possible and simply watch for anything you feel might be abnormal. Don't hesitate to call us for advice.

- Ensure that the puppies are nursed within the first six (6) hours following birth. This provides the antibodies that the pups need to fight disease for the first 6-8 weeks of life. These antibodies are only absorbed during the first few hours after birth.
- Weigh the pups daily. Puppies and kittens should gain weight daily at a rate of 2-7grams per day for each kilogram of anticipated adult weight and should double their birth weight by 10 days of age.
- Room temperature should be maintained at a minimum of 72 degrees F. Remember that it may be up to 10 degrees colder on the floor (since heat rises) than at eye level. Avoid drafts and keep the pups warm. Dampness and chilling can be **FATAL** to young pups and kittens.
- A properly nourished pup sleeps most of the time, stays quiet, and has a full stomach. Notify us if the puppies cry frequently. Extended crying may be a sign of problems, such as no milk available in the breasts or mastitis (infected milk). If the pups must be hand-fed use a commercial puppy formula (i.e. Esbilac™). Human pediatric formulations are NOT satisfactory.
- Tail Docking and Dewclaw Removal is not recommended for most breeds, but can be done at 3-5 days of age at our hospital.
- Eyes usually open at 10-14 days of age. Swollen eyes or discharges should be reported to us when observed.
- Weaning begins around 4-6 weeks of age. This is a good time to begin offering canned or moistened food to the pups. Puppies should be allowed to nurse the female until at least six weeks of age. Smaller breeds often do better if allowed to nurse for eight weeks, even though you begin the solid food feeding at four weeks of age.
- Socialization is extremely important. The primary period of socialization is from 3-13 weeks. Puppies should remain with their mother and siblings until 6-8 weeks to develop healthy social relationships with other puppies. Puppies need to also be socialized to people. The peak period for this sensitivity is believed to be at about 6-8 weeks. This is why it is best to allow prospective owners to obtain their puppies at 7-8 weeks of age.
- Pups should be treated for internal parasites at 3-4 weeks of age.
- Start immunizations at 6-8 weeks of age.
- Pups may be bathed whenever necessary, but **DRY THOROUGHLY!**
- Discuss Flea Control with us before using any product on young pups. Most flea control products are not safe for young puppies.