

WHAT DOES A PUPPY NEED TO BE STRONG?

This is a ***Healthy Happy Dogs*** message from Roper Gulf Regional Council Animal Management Program.

Introduction of interviewer and interviewee who will be having a conversation about looking after puppies.

When puppies are healthy they warm our hearts and fill our houses with love. So today we are going to talk about the ways to keep our puppies healthy and happy.

We will also be talking about common sicknesses that people see in their pups and how to prevent them.

Let's start with little new born puppies. Can you tell us a bit about what they need?

For the first 10 days of life little pups don't need us much at all.

In this stage it is the mother dog we really need to look after so she can care for her pups well. Stressed mums have a lot more problems with their pups. They might eat their pups, lie on them or even bury them alive; they might be too stressed to make enough milk for the pups.

The mother needs a place that is shady, clean, dry and quiet. It is great if you can create a safe place especially for the mum and pups. You can block off a corner of a room or the veranda with eskies or boxes. Make it so the mother dog can jump in and out and lie comfortably to feed her pups but the pups cant wriggle too far away if the mum leaves the camp for a break.

The mother needs to be able to get a drink of water easily any time she wants.

If the mother dog starts to get skinny you need to feed her more. It is amazing how much a mother dog will eat when she is feeding pups. Most dogs need about 3 times as much food as normal while she is feeding.

It is also important to not let children carry the pups around in this time. The mother will get stressed if her pups are handled too much. The mother dog will allow her pups to go to people when she thinks they are ready for it. Do not let the kids pick up the pups. A lot of children get bitten on the face when they are trying to get their little hands on a pup.

During this stage it is important to keep an eye on the mothers tummy too. If her breasts become hot, red and swollen she has an infection. Call a vet and get her on antibiotics.

And once the pups start walking around? What do they need then?

Pups can live just on their mum's milk until they are 4 weeks old. If the mum is struggling you can give the pups soft food from 2 weeks old but it is best to wait. You can start giving them small amounts of food from 4 week old. It is important not to give the pups too much food at once or they will get diarrhoea. Start them off with just ½ a teaspoon of puppy tinned tucker and build it up slowly.

By the time puppies they are 6 weeks old they should be eating food well. At this stage they need 4 meals every day. Special puppy food from the supermarket is the best food for this age. It says Puppy on the packet.

Don't let children take them around the community in this phase of life. It can make the pups too tired and sick and will stress the mum.

Is it important that the pups stay with their mum until they are at least 6 weeks old. Her milk protects them from a lot of sicknesses.

And what about the worming? Some of the worms a puppy gets can make children sick cant they.

How often should we give the puppies worm medicine?

Because a puppy's immune system is still growing, puppies get more worms than big dogs.

Hookworm and roundworm can kill puppies, but they can also make our kids sick.

Puppies should be wormed at 2, 4 and 6 weeks old. Then they need to be wormed every month until they are 4 months old.

After that they just need worming every 3 months, like an adult dog.

You can get the worm tablets from the shop or vets. The amount of worm medicine the dog needs depends on how much it weighs.

If the tablet is for a 10 kg dog your can break it into 4 pieces. Each piece is enough to worm most pups aged 2, 4 and 6 weeks. You can also get puppy syrup from the vets in town if the tablets are too hard to give. If you are not sure phone the vets and talk it through.

And what about vaccinations. Pups need vaccinations for parvo don't they?

Yes. Parvo virus is the bloody guna vomiting sickness that kills so many of our pups.

The mums milk saves them from parvo for the first 4-6 weeks of life. After 12-14 weeks there is none of the mothers milk protection left in the pups gut. This is when they really need that vaccination.

Pups need vaccinations at 6 and 12 weeks old. Speak to the Council office, the Roper Gulf Vets or the vets in town to get your vaccinations. Once your pup has parvo the vaccination won't fix it, so don't wait till its too late.

And I have seen some real mangy looking little pups sometimes. What makes pups hair fall out?

Lots of things can make a puppy loose it hair.

In the old days it used to be scabies, but luckily we don't see so much of that any more.

Probably the most common thing is ringworm these days. That's what makes the circle patches of fur fall out. Ringworm isn't a worm at all. It is actually a fungus, a bit like mould. It can spread from pup to pup but also to people. So it is important to treat it quickly.

If you have pups that are loosing hair call the vets and get some special shampoo sent out.

So there is a lot we just talked about. Can we just go over what pups needs again.

Yes, sure. They need

- ✓ a family that is gentle to them and keeps them safe at home
- ✓ a mother who is well fed
- ✓ worming every 2 weeks
- ✓ 4 feeds a day beginning food at 4 weeks old
- ✓ vaccination for parvo virus at 6 weeks old
- ✓ their owners to talk to a vet if the pups are getting sick in any way