

About Your New Dog



**Oklahoma City
Animal Welfare**



Bringing Your New Pet Home

Dear New Adopting Family,

Thank you so much for opening your heart and your home to a wonderful pet from Oklahoma City Animal Welfare (OKCAW). We hope that this will be the beginning of a long and happy life together. We have the following suggestions to help ensure things start off smoothly with your new pet. If you have any further questions, please visit us at www.okc.gov/animalwelfare.

Although you will be very excited to bring your new pet home and introduce them to the family right away, it is strongly recommended that you keep your new dog away from other pets in the household for the first two weeks. This is important to allow them to slowly get to know each other and develop a friendly relationship. It is also very important to minimize the chances of your current pets catching a cold or an infection from your new pet, even if everyone appears healthy.

Every dog that comes to the OKCAW shelter is given one or more vaccines to help protect them from several different common illnesses, including the 4-in-1 DA₂PP and rabies vaccine (if old enough). Vaccines work by stimulating a protective response by the animal's immune system, but it may take 5 to 7 days until an animal is adequately protected. Vaccines are critical in minimizing the risk of disease, but they are not a guarantee and do not provide 100% protection. Some animals arrive at our shelter already sick, or have been exposed to disease but are not yet showing signs that they are ill. In these cases, the vaccine will not be able to cure or prevent the illness. Underage animals are not adequately protected until a series of vaccines are given.

Please make an appointment with a veterinarian to have your new pet examined within the first 10 days following adoption. You may use the complimentary list of the participating veterinary facilities or, at your own expense, make an appointment with a different veterinarian of your choosing. It is very important to schedule this initial exam even if your pet appears to be healthy so that you can discuss a wellness plan that is specifically designed for your pet, including which follow up vaccinations he or she may need and any preventative medicines (such as heartworm pills) that are recommended. If your dog is showing signs of illness, get him to a veterinarian as soon as possible.

Your new pet was also dewormed, given a heartworm test, and flea/tick treatment. Your adoption contract will indicate what treatment has been done.

You will notice that your pet have a tattoo on the inside of his/her leg (if already sterilized at the time they came into the shelter, they will not have a tattoo). This number is a permanent identification and is connected to a number in our system. If he returns to our care, we hope to be able to contact you to reclaim your pet. This is only applicable if you keep the information in our system updated so please let us know if you move or obtain a new phone number. We also recommend that you get your pet microchipped and always have a collar and tag with your contact information on your pets neck. It is required by OKC law that your pet have a current rabies vaccination and that he/she wears the rabies tag affixed to his collar at all times.

Ask for assistance if you have questions or concerns about your new pet. In addition to consulting with your veterinarian, please contact New Leash on Life if you have questions about your new pet's behavior, introducing them to your family, or any other concerns. In many cases, they will be able to provide you with helpful information or even other resources, such as training classes, to help address your concerns and keep your new pet happy and healthy at home with you. New Leash on Life volunteers may be reached by calling 405-604-0519.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma City Animal Welfare

Common Infectious Diseases in Dogs

OKCAW animals arrive at our shelter as strays or owner surrenders. We do not always know their medical or behavioral history and, as indicated in the contract you signed, we cannot guarantee their health or temperament. Below is a list of common or serious diseases that may be found in shelter dogs with unknown medical histories. If you see any of the symptoms below, please contact a veterinarian.

Distemper

Symptoms: coughing, sneezing, nasal or ocular discharge, fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, abortion, skin rash, hard paw pads.

Transmission: primarily through contact with infected animals or with respiratory secretions (including airborne). Can also be spread by ocular secretions, vomit or diarrhea, or urine.

Treatment: many cases require aggressive supportive care, including IV fluids and antibiotics. Cases in younger animals, particularly those with neurologic signs, have a guarded to poor prognosis.

Kennel Cough

Symptoms: hacking, cough, nasal and/or ocular discharge, fever.

Transmission: airborne, contact with infected dogs or respiratory secretions.

Treatment: antibiotics, supportive care and/or cough suppressants. Most cases are relatively mild and will resolve with time, nursing care and medications. Although uncommon, severe cases may occur with dogs developing pneumonia. Kennel cough, which is an upper respiratory infection, is common in dogs that have spent time with dogs in close quarters (such as a boarding facility or an animal shelter). Like the common cold in people, most cases of kennel cough are mild and will resolve with treatment in a short period of time. There are many different viruses and bacteria that can cause the syndrome referred to as "kennel cough" and it is important to have your pet seen by a veterinarian if you notice any coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, or red or runny eyes.

Parvovirus

Symptoms: lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, fever. Testing is important to distinguish from parasites.

Transmission: contact with feces.

Treatment: supportive care, antibiotics, fluid and nutritional therapy. Cases require aggressive hospitalization and supportive care, including anti-nausea medications, IV fluids and antibiotics, and can be fatal despite treatment.

Fleas and Ticks

Fleas and ticks are a problem that should be taken seriously. These tiny parasites feed off your pets, transmit many diseases and irritate the skin. Carefully check your dog once a week for fleas or ticks. If there are fleas on your dog, there may be fleas and flea eggs in your house. Consult your veterinarian. There are several new methods of flea and tick control. You may need to use flea or tick bombs or premise control sprays, and will need to treat all animals in your house. Make sure that any sprays, powders or shampoos you use are safe for all dogs and that all products are compatible if used together.

Heartworm

Heartworm is an infectious disease of dogs spread by the bite of a mosquito. Adult heartworms are long, large worms that live in the blood vessels going to the lungs. Heartworm infections will result in progressive health problems, including coughing, exercise intolerance and fatigue and can ultimately progress to heart failure and death if not treated. Treatment is expensive and can result in significant complications. However, heartworm infection can easily be prevented with regularly monthly administration of preventive pills.

Coccidiosis

Coccidia is a parasite that can cause disease most commonly in puppies and kittens less than 6 months of age and in adult animals whose immune system is suppressed. This can cause diarrhea with blood and mucus and may also cause vomiting, loss of appetite and dehydration. Coccidiosis can be treated effectively. Coccidia in cats and dogs cannot infect humans.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungal infection that can affect hair, skin and nails of cats and dogs. It is the most common contagious skin infection in cats. Ringworms can be transmitted through direct contact with fungal spores. It can be transmitted to other animals and humans.

Your dog was screened for heartworm disease with a simple blood test. The result and any treatment is indicated on your adoption contract.

Please remember to utilize your free 10-day wellness exam so you can address any of your new pet's medical concerns.

Vaccination(s) Your New Pet Received While at OKCAW's Animal Shelter

Dogs are given a 4-in-1 DA₂PP vaccination, commonly known as the "distemper shot." This includes distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza and parvovirus. Dogs also receive an intranasal vaccination against Bordetella, a common bacterial cause of kennel cough.

OKC law requires that all animals 4 months of age and older receive a yearly rabies vaccination.

Since OKCAW does not have vaccination histories on many of the animals that come into the shelter, we recommend that all adult animals receive a booster DA₂PP vaccination every 2 to 4 weeks after the vaccine(s) were administered at the shelter. The date of the vaccination is listed on the medical history you received with your adoption contract.

OKCAW recommends that puppies less than 16 weeks of age receive a booster DA₂PP vaccination every 2 to 4 weeks, until they are at least 16 weeks of age.

All booster shots are the financial responsibility of the new pet owner and should be arranged through your regular veterinarian. Speak to your veterinarian about a yearly vaccination schedule.

Spaying/Neutering Your Dog

Your new pet has been spayed or neutered prior to adoption. Females should be spayed before they become sexually mature, before reaching 4 to 6 months of age. Spaying a female (removing the ovaries and uterus) helps prevent breast cancer, which can be fatal 50% of the time. It also helps prevent pyometra (uterine infection), a very serious problem in older females that must be treated with surgery and intensive medical care. Spaying also prevents unwanted animals from being born.

Neutering a male (removing the testicles) may reduce marking, decrease the urge to escape outside to looking for a mate and reduce fighting between males.

OKCAW has a free spay/neuter program for any pet whose owner resides in Oklahoma City. If you have a friend or family member with a pet that needs sterilization or another pet in your home that is unsterilized, please call 405-297-3100 to take advantage of the program.

Spay/Neuter Release Instructions

All animals are spayed or neutered prior to being adopted. The instructions below may or may not apply, depending on when your animal was sterilized. Your adoption contract will indicate a date of sterilization.

1. Your pet has had general anesthesia today or recently and may be unsteady on his or her feet this evening. Restrict access to stairs and high furniture to avoid any accidental falls or injuries.
2. Please provide your pet with fresh, clean water. You can offer them a small meal in the evening, and then begin feeding normally in the morning. Anesthesia can make pets nauseous, so do not offer a large meal. If your pet vomits, do not offer them more food until the following morning.
3. Watch your pet for any vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, or decreased energy level. Some pets may vomit the evening of surgery but this should not continue. If you notice any of these signs or other signs of illness, please make an appointment to have your pet seen by a veterinarian. You may use the exam certificate provided to you at the time of adoption for a free office call at a participating veterinary clinic within 10 days of adoption.
4. Do not allow your pet to lick or scratch the incision site. If your pet is bothering his or her incision, you may need to get an Elizabethan collar for them. For female dogs, the incision will be on the ventral abdomen (belly). For male dogs, the incision will be in between their hind legs near the belly.
5. Check the incision daily; it should be clean, dry and not have any areas that appear to be open or gaping. If you notice any discharge, heat, swelling or redness, you should have your pet seen by a veterinarian. You may use the exam certificate provided to you at the time of adoption for a free office call at a participating veterinary clinic.
6. Unless otherwise noted, the stitches are absorbable and do not need to be removed.
7. Do not bathe or groom your pet for 10 days from the spay/neuter date, or allow him or her to go swimming.
8. Your pet's exercise should be restricted for 7-10 days from the spay/neuter date to allow him or her to heal. Running, jumping and rough play should not be permitted during this time.
9. If your pet has been sent home with medication, be sure to follow all directions on the label. Give the medication for the entire time indicated by the instructions, even if your pet does not appear to be sick.

General Dog Care

Before you bring your dog home, you will need: dog food, food dish, water bowl, interactive toys, brush, comb, collar or harness, ID tags, leash, dog crate and bedding.

Feeding

You should feed your dog a high-quality dog or puppy food appropriate for his or her life stage and breed; food should be offered 1 to 4 times a day as appropriate for your pet. Feeding your dog at the same regular times will help to establish a routine and will greatly facilitate housetraining, if your pet is not already so trained. Provide fresh, clean water at all times and be sure to wash and refill the water bowls daily.

Diarrhea is common in newly adopted pets. This can be the result of a variety of cause, including stress, diet change, parasites, or even viral or bacterial infections. It can also be helpful to gradually change your pet's food over to the new diet you choose to feed over 5 to 7 days by mixing in small but increasing amounts of the new food. If you do notice that your pet is having diarrhea, please make an appointment to have him or her seen by your veterinarian for exam and, if needed, for testing to determine the underlying cause(s).

Grooming

Grooming requirements vary substantially from breed to breed and depend on your dog's coat and lifestyle. Most dogs should be bathed when they become dirty or on a regular basis a few times a year. Dogs with medium to longer length fur will require regular brushing and grooming and certain breeds will need regular haircuts by a groomer. Frequent brushing in between bathing and grooming appointments help keep your dog's coat clean and untangled and can help to reduce shedding.

Housing

Dogs are social animals and need the company of others to be happy. Dogs should have a clean, dry comfortable place of their own in the house. Consider providing your dog with a crate. Crates are very helpful training tools and dogs consider crates to be a private, safe place of their own as they are naturally denning animals. However, crates should never be used for punishment. They must be of an appropriate size for your pet and should not be used to confine your pet for very long periods of time on a regular basis.

Training/Behavior Modification

When you first bring a new dog home, you are building a new relationship. Dogs need consistency and clear, regular rules to follow. A training program will help you and your dog learn how to communicate effectively with one another. It will also help you to teach your dog how to be a good citizen in your home. Consider joining a dog training class, and reading animal behavior and training books. All training should involve positive reinforcement techniques and avoid the use of punishment. You may also contact the New Leash on Life behavior help-line at 405-604-0519.

Identification

All dogs 4 months and older are required by law to have a current rabies tag and have a collar around their neck. It is very important that your pet also wear an identification tag with your current contact information. This identification, along with a microchip, can help to ensure your dog is returned to you if he or she ever becomes lost.

House-training

Any dog can be house-trained with time and consistency. All dogs need to be on a regular "outside" schedule. Use positive reinforcement to praise your dog when he goes outside. Only correct your dog if you catch him in the act. Never hit or scream at your dog if he goes in the house, as this will only teach him to be afraid of you. Use a dog crate and feed your dog on a regular set schedule to assist with your house-training program.

Exercise and Play

All dogs need regular exercise, although the amount, type and frequency will vary depending on your dog's breed, age and health. Regular exercise is critical for your pet's physical and emotional well-being. For most dogs, a short walk around the block or letting them out in the backyard is not enough. You should plan to spend 1 to 2 hours a day exercising your dog. This might include long leash walks or jogging with him, playing fetch, going to a dog park, or letting him swim. Many dogs enjoy playing with toys, people and other dogs. Provide your dog with interactive toys and many opportunities to engage in the type of play he or she enjoys. Avoid rough play games, however, as these may teach your dog negative behaviors or even result in injury.

Health

Your dog should see a veterinarian at least once a year for an examination and immediately if your dog is sick or injured. Your veterinarian will recommend which vaccines and other preventative medicines may be necessary for your dog.



**Oklahoma City Animal
Welfare Division
2811 SE 29th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73129
405.297.3100
www.okc.gov/animalwelfare**

Our programs include:

Animal Sheltering

Adoptions

Lost and Found

Community Programs include:

Pet Food Bank

Free Spay/Neuter for OKC Residents

Community Cat Program

Field Services:

Law Enforcement

Animal Cruelty

Animal Rescue

Ways to Give and Volunteer for OKC Animal Welfare: There are many ways to continue to help the homeless animals in OKC. If interested in learning more about how you can get involved, please visit www.okc.gov/animalwelfare for more information on our Donation and Volunteer programs.