

Health

Dougal had his 1st vaccination whilst with the breeder at 8 weeks. At 10 weeks he came for his first veterinary check with us. He was found to be in very good health and developing well with plenty of personality. He had his 2nd vaccination and wasn't fazed at all by the needle.

A full course vaccination includes: Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvo, and Parainfluenza. Vaccines are incredibly important to protect your pet from potentially fatal diseases and viruses. A puppy should have its 1st vaccination at 8 weeks old and a 2nd injection at 10-12 weeks old this is when the maternal antibodies run out. After the initial vaccination course a booster injection should be given annually throughout your pet's life to maintain a good level of immunity. A kennel Cough vaccination can also be given at any stage in your pet's life, and is a liquid squirted into the nostrils.

Dougal has been treated against worms in the form of a tablet. Worming is vital for puppies as the mother often passes worms onto the puppy. If left un-wormed puppies will often suffer from diarrhoea, have a bloated abdomen and have a ravenous appetite. Worms can cause intussusceptions (the bowel prolapsing into itself) and anaemia. We would advocate worming your puppy every 2 weeks until they are 8 weeks old, then every 1 month until 6 months old and every 3-4 months thereafter.

At his vaccination Dougal was provided with a spot on flea treatment. Even if your pet does not have fleas it is important to use flea treatment regularly as a preventative measure every 8 weeks. If your pet catches fleas, it can be a lengthy process to break the life cycle in your home, even if they are no longer on your pet.

Socialisation

Dougal's parents have provided him with as many opportunities to socialise as possible. He frequently goes for day trips out and arrives to his destination by train or bus. He has a nosey out the window, surveys the other travellers then settles down for a nap on his dad's knee. He has been out for picnics to the park and walked through many villages and town centres. On walks he has been introduced to other dogs and has interacted well with them, understanding the other dogs body language so he can read when it is time to play and when he should walk on. He is an incredibly confident puppy.

Socialising your puppy is vital, as they are constantly learning through experiences. Ensuring each new experience is positive will encourage your puppy to be confident and happy. Things that humans consider normal every day things can be very disconcerting to a puppy e.g a bicycle can be a terrifying object as they are fast moving, unpredictable and often a lot closer than a car. Try and see the world through your puppy's eyes. Puppy socialisation/training classes are invaluable to provide your puppy with a controlled environment where they can learn and grow.

Socialising should not stop at 6months it should ideally continue until the puppy is fully mature at about 2years old, as phobias and problem behaviour can develop during adolescence through hormones.

Normal puppy behaviour

Dougal is going through a typical puppy stage where he wants to discover the world through the use of his mouth. Table legs have been re-carved courtesy of Dougal. He has also found that shoe laces and shoe chewing is a great boredom breaker even if someone is wearing the shoes at the time. He occasionally mouths visitors whilst being stroked. This is normal puppy behaviour, but should be discouraged as much as possible.

Deciduous teeth start to come through at about 3 weeks old. A puppy should be provided with plenty of toys and chews with different textures. Teething keys, kongs and nylabone toys are ideal as they satisfy the craving to mouth whilst being durable. A puppy will continue to learn through their mouth until about 5 months old.

He is toilet trained now and at 15 weeks is progressing very well into a lovely puppy.

Vet trips

Whenever they are passing Dougal is brought into the vets just to say hello. He comes in to be fussed and stroked, so he can get used to the environment and the staff. This is a really positive thing to do, as your pet doesn't just associate the vets with being examined and medicated.