

# STEPPING STONES FOR CANINE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

## 1) DAILY DIET

The following is not a treatment plan, but considerations for the well being of your pets.

A food plan should be designed to meet your dog's stages of development from puppy hood through adult. The ingredients should be fresh and as natural & unprocessed as possible, free of byproducts, artificial preservatives or colors, hormones, antibiotics, and refined sugars. Add fresh, grated vegetables and fruits, enzymes and other healthy extras (low fat yogurt) to enhance your dog's nutrition for a robust immune system, skin and coat.

Journey to [www.whole-dog-journal.com](http://www.whole-dog-journal.com) for the top ten dogs foods, and consider no grain or whole grain.

One stop shopping for your dog's well-being is not always the best choice. Kibble dog foods called "natural" are getting better, but they are still processed.

One dog food over the life of a dog is ludicrous and unhealthy. Rotation Diets are an option and do so gradually. What nutrition your dog may not get in food, they may in another.

Nothing takes the place of whole foods that have live enzymes found in raw veggies and fresh, lean meats, poultry and fish. Whether you choose to feed raw or cook is an individual choice. Some dogs may not do well on a raw diet, particularly if they are immune compromised.

Research the web for naturally prepared diets, and then adjust accordingly to meet your dog's nutritional needs.

## 2) NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

For optimum health, your dog will benefit from nutritional supplements (vitamins, minerals, enzymes and antioxidants) in moderate amounts and for various stages of their lives.

Talk to your Veterinarian or a specialist in canine nutrition on ways to supplement your dog's diet without unbalancing it! When adding supplements, synergy is important. Too much supplementing can be harmful. For dogs recovering from injuries, over-stressed or over-worked dogs, supplements can be beneficial. Adding some organic, fresh kelp, alfalfa and a daily, multiple vitamin (human grade is fine

in weight appropriate dose) gives a boost to your dog's daily diet especially if you are feeding processed kibble.

## 3) HEALTHY SKIN & COAT

Chronic skin conditions are prevalent among our dogs. Many dogs are caught up in an endless cycle of allergy medications, steroids, antibiotics and chemical shampoos. The immune system continues to weaken in spite of ongoing treatment. Why? If this happens to you and your dog, heed the message. Something is not working. Fortunately, you can go straight to the heart of skin and coat health in just a few weeks with good nutrition and adding some beneficial Omega 3's and 6's like flax seed oil, extra virgin olive oil, salmon oil, cod liver oil in appropriate doses for your dog. Consult with a nutritionist and/or holistic expert who can confidently assess and help you put together a plan that will work!

## 4) CULTIVATE VACCINE WISDOM

We encourage you to approach pharmaceutical drugs such as antibiotics and steroids with discretion. Educate yourself by with the

latest vaccine protocols. Mine is beginning vaccinations as minimally as possible up to the 4-month Rabies vaccine, a law in N.H. I create a plan for each pet at appropriate stages of their lives and well-being. They may get another vaccine at 4 years, then 7 years if they are healthy enough to tolerate it. After 7, we are finished, because titers have more than proven that protective antibody numbers are sufficient.

Collaborate with your veterinarian, but do not be snookered into over-vaccinating; vaccinate wisely! There is a time and place for agents like antibiotics and cortisone during a health crisis, but their long-term efficacy is increasingly questionable. Likewise, there is an appropriate way to immunize without overloading a dog with vaccines. It can be damaging to the entire immune system. Titers are available to check for antibodies. Inquire with practical understanding. Be honest about your concerns and specific needs. If something doesn't sound right, request clarification or simply choose to say "no". Be wary of "quick-fix" medications and ask for the

best possible alternatives. Bring an index card with your questions and concerns so you don't forget. Don't be intimidated or rushed. You have the right to discuss the best health plan for your dog. Do not let anyone, with the exception of perhaps heart worm / Lyme / ehrlichea testing to take your dog out of your sight. Recording of vaccinations and dosages happens on computer. Read the read-out to ensure that your pet is getting only what you requested.

**5) WIPE OUT FLEAS, TICKS & OTHER INVADERS!**

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Create an arsenal against fleas and internal parasites with preventive maintenance. Fleas and ticks must be controlled in all environments (house, yard and dog). Nutrition containing garlic (small doses) and brewers yeast repel fleas and ticks internally. Front Line Plus (and many others) is questionable if overused. The caviat here is you're your pet really need it? If you have in door cat, what is REAL risk of anyone bringing it into the house?

Moderation is the key. Flea collars are silly on medium, large and giant dogs. They will only protect the neck

and head and can be toxic for children and puppies.

Citrus and natural products are available. You can put citrus flea powder into your vacuum cleaners to kill the impending larvae, fleas, ants and ticks in-house. You can sprinkle it inside dog beds. Safe, natural spray-ons for dogs that can also repel insects are available.

It is virtually impossible to eradicate fleas and ticks outside, but you can spray bedding and kennel areas or replace those that have been infested.

The best defense is a healthy dog, regular grooming and a maintenance bath with a natural flea shampoo. Use a conditioner afterward. Most shampoos left on your dog long enough will get rid of fleas temporarily.

Bring a stool sample to your Vet every year to check for internal parasites.

**6) GROOMING FOR HEALTH & SELF ESTEEM!**

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Who wants to pet a dirty, smelly dog (or human for that matter)? This affects socialization and overall well-being. Puppies should be gently desensitized from *head to toe and brushed at*



least weekly. Bathing dogs is a matter of choice and necessity. Every 3-months is sufficient with a good shampoo and conditioner. Toenails must be kept trimmed on a regular basis or it could affect proper growth and gait. Brushing and combing cleans the fur of mats and tangles. Along with good nutrition, it improves the overall look and feel of skin and coat. You can discover bites, bumps or other issues that may need attending too. It is also a great way to bond with your dog if done slowly and gently. It can be a relaxing moment for both of you.

## 7) ENVIRONMENT

Be aware! In summer months, dogs must have clean, fresh water available particularly if they are left outside. Provide shade and shelter from the elements year round. In winter, puppies and older dog's with arthritis need protection from the cold. Avoid canine contact with household and lawn chemicals and pesticides. Anti-freeze is lethal as is chocolate, rancid foods, raw garlic and onion.

Dogs do not have lactase, an enzyme. Therefore, they are lactose intolerant. Low or no fat yogurt, skim milk or

better still, goat's milk which is raw, in small amounts is good!

Don't leave any dogs on leash or in collars while in kennels or crates. They can choke to death. If you leave your dog's outdoors on cables or in kennels in the daytime, ensure that their water buckets are clipped to prevent getting knocked over, particularly on hot summer days. Better still, have someone come over to check-in, freshen the water and take them for a walk. Older adults usually enjoy this interaction.

Check for hornets and bees nest around your dog's outdoor living area. If they are stung, call your Vet who will probably recommend Benedryl in the appropriate dose. We do this automatically. It works!

## 8) BUILD YOUR DOG'S HEALTH TEAM WISELY

The professionals: veterinarians, groomers, pet sitters, boarding kennels, trainers and others who encounter your dog should be carefully selected based upon their compassion, competence, experience and your dog's reaction to them (or their environment).

We recommend yearly wellness checks with your veterinarian that includes a combo heartworm, lyme, ehrlichia test and a blood-work-up if something is not "quite right".

Attitude and tone should be pleasant, empathic and professional. How office personnel, vet techs and assistants are cross-trained when greeting clients/customers/patients at the front desk says a lot about the clinic / hospital. Health and hygiene are critical indicating factors when visiting the Veterinarian or any facility you intend to enter with your dog(s).

Boarding kennels should have absolutely no reservation about allowing you to view the kennel and specific area in which your dog will stay.

Trainers should be using positive, reward based behavior training especially with puppies. They should have knowledge about canine behavior, psychology 101, good customer service skills, family training skills and preferably be a Certified Pet Dog Trainer. You can locate the list at [www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com) and [www.ccpdt.org](http://www.ccpdt.org).

Prepare your notes in advance. Ask questions clearly and ask for clarification if you don't understand. Time can be of the essence and limited with businesses, but you should never feel rushed, talked down to or simply ignored. You are a customer requesting a service! It should be provided to you in a courteous, professional manner.

### 9) EXERCISE, AFFECTION AND EMOTIONAL BALANCE

Yours and your dog's sense of well-being can affect health. You can resolve a whole range of behavioral, medical and emotional issues with a moderate amount of exercise, good nutrition, play and humor. Balancing our lifestyle includes the dog's well-being.

Most dogs are born good-natured puppies eager to learn. If your dog is down in spirit or "acting out" behaviorally, always inquire within. What's going on in your life? What's going on with your dog's health? Whatever it is (changes, trauma, death, divorce, new baby, grandma moving in) will affect your dog as well. Dog's have very keen senses and they instinctually know when things are not "okay".

Daily walks, a good sniff or game of Frisbee will release endorphins (nature's painkiller) and revive your dog and you!

It is said that breathing is like training a puppy; you just keep coming back to it. Come back to your breath. 3-part belly breathes, filling your abdomen and lungs, then releasing, can help change your "in the moment" perspective and boost the immune system.

Your cells need oxygen to be healthy and calm. Good breathing and exercising will lift your spirits and help to keep your well-being in balance. Personal renewal and "a few moments" are essential especially in times of stress or making life-altering decisions. Our dogs need a positive outlet to release their energy as well.

### 10) CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE!

The power of optimistic thoughts (cognition) is as powerful as positive reward based training. Imagery and a grateful attitude will help to maintain wellness. Conflict and stress, that are an inevitable part of life, are not harmful. It is harmful if we are bombarded with clusters all at once without reprieve. What we do with

stress and conflict makes a difference.

Being with our dogs teaches us to live in the present moment. They know how to play and explore naturally.

Never get caught keeping your car better maintained, gassed, well oiled and tuned then you do yourself, your family and your dogs!

Awareness – Education – Relationship – Well-Being

*~ There is great relief in giving up the control of knowing that you can't change your dog's or anyone's behavior until you change your own*

*Let it go ~ The puppy pees on the carpet at 2:00. You were not there!*

*Let it go ~ The puppy wasn't ready to be out of confinement.*

*Let it go ~ Dredging up old stuff is an excuse to not move on ... for the dog, it simply doesn't connect ... they live and learn in the moment ...*

Joyful  
Woofs  
& wags