Taking Care of Your Puppy's Health

Finding a Veterinarian

Just like you, your new puppy needs high-quality health care on a regular basis. Ask a number of friends and your local humane society to recommend a veterinarian, then choose one with these factors in mind:

- Education and experience. Find out how long the veterinarian has been practicing and if he or she is a graduate of a well-regarded veterinary college.
- Specialty. In urban areas, it may be possible to find veterinarians who deal exclusively with the special problems of dogs and cats.
- Location. This factor should not override the areas of education, experience and specialty, but should nevertheless be taken into consideration. A drive across town during a medical emergency can be frustrating and delay needed treatment.

Schedule a visit and interview

Once you've narrowed down your choices, visit the veterinarian's office. Inspect the facility and talk to the veterinarian about your new puppy. If you like what you see and hear, arrange a time to bring your puppy in for an initial examination. We recommend a visit to the veterinarian within the first three days after you bring your puppy home to make sure he's in good health. The veterinarian may want to check the following things:

- Stool. A fecal exam will reveal the presence of internal parasites.
- Body. A thorough physical exam includes inspecting your dog's coat and feeling his body for abnormalities, as well as checking the eyes, ears, mouth and heart and examining the anus for signs of intestinal parasites.

Once an exam is completed, your veterinarian can schedule immunizations and vaccinations and advise you on the importance of spaying and neutering.