**Guide Dogs**

**Email:** **information@guidedogs.org.uk**

**Guideline: 0800 781 1444**

Dear Veterinary Surgeon

Thank you for agreeing to look after our guide dog puppy’s veterinary care.

The Puppy Raiser who brings the puppy to your practice is a volunteer who is supervised and supported on a regular basis. The puppy will remain with the Puppy Raiser for up to 14 months, during which time the puppy remains the property of Guide Dogs. It will then return to one of our Guide Dogs sites to begin training.

This information letter is designed to inform you about Guide Dogs’ puppy care practices which we hope you will find useful. Our veterinary care protocols have been prepared with advice from specialists including Professor Gary England, Chief Veterinary Consultant for Guide Dogs, and our Chief Veterinary Officer.

## Dog Health and Wellbeing Specialist

Dog Health & Wellbeing Specialists (DHWS) are responsible for supporting the health care of the guide dog puppies and for managing costs in relation to veterinary care. The DHWS are available to assist and support you with any guide dog puppy related issues.

We ask that you contact us prior to the implementation of any non-routine procedures (for example those that require a general anaesthetic, radiographs, laboratory investigations or surgery) other than in an emergency situation.

This will allow us the opportunity to discuss various factors with you, for example; special care or housing requirements, referral options, veterinary expenses/costs, and potential implications for future guide dog work. Please do not hesitate to contact us at Guide Dogs on **0800 781 1444.**

## Health Records

Guide Dogs maintains detailed health records for all of our dogs which is essential in enabling us to monitor the individual dog as well as the overall dog population for disease trends which inform our Breeding Programme.

Your assistance in completing this puppy’s health records is much appreciated. We would ask you to make a note on the puppy’s individual health record card each time it is presented to you. When submitting your invoice, please attach a printed clinical history, this allows us to update our central records and process your invoice swiftly.

## Familiarisation with Veterinary Clinics

Our puppies are being raised to be partnered with a person living with sight loss and we are committed to the overall wellbeing of our dogs. It is therefore important that our puppies develop a positive association with visits to a veterinary practice, receiving health checks and treatments.

It may be that our Puppy Raiser will wish to introduce our puppy to your clinic prior to seeing a vet for a medical problem. This may involve several visits to your waiting area, often for weight to be recorded.

We also encourage Puppy Raisers to attend sessions at the practice with veterinary nurses so that they become familiar with veterinary personnel.

## Vaccination

### Early Vaccine

Guide Dogs bred puppies are given an early vaccination at seven or eight weeks of age. This is normally Nobivac DP+

### Primary Vaccination

Following the early vaccination, we then require Nobivac DHLPPi + L4 at 12 weeks and 16 weeks of age (or equivalent).

Giving a final parvovirus vaccine at 16 weeks is important as a very small number of dogs do not develop antibodies until that age, due to occasional very high levels of maternally derived immunity.

Guide Dogs operates a reclaim system for all vaccinations. Puppy Raisers will present a reclaim card at the time of vaccination which will enable you to receive a free replacement vaccine/monetary credit from the manufacturer.

The table below contains 8 rows and 3 columns.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Early Vaccine** | **Age** | **7-8 weeks** |
| This does not form part of the primary course | Vaccine administered | Nobivac DP+ |
| **Primary Course** | Age | 12 weeks |
| 1st Vaccine | DHP/Pi & L4 |
| Age | 16 weeks |
| 2nd Vaccine  | DHP/Pi & L4 |

### Kennel Cough Vaccination

In order to reduce the risk of canine infectious respiratory disease when the puppy commences training, we ask that our puppies are vaccinated against Kennel Cough from seven months of age.

## Routine Endoparasite/Ectoparasite Control

At 2 and 5 weeks of age guide dog puppies are treated with Drontal Puppy Suspension, along with their dam. Each puppy is supplied with sufficient Nexgard Spectra to enable the Puppy Raiser to treat them once a month until they enter training.

Each puppy will also be supplied with sufficient Droncit to enable the Puppy Raiser to treat them at 6 and 12 months of age.

These products are supplied by the Guide Dogs Veterinary Surgeons who have examined the puppies at The National Centre.

If the puppy requires additional medication, we are able to supply this. The Puppy Raiser will request that you complete a prescription to enable our Central Pharmacy to dispense the medication.

In any household with other dogs and cats, it is requested that these animals will be treated for both endo and ectoparasites using an appropriate veterinary regime. Guide Dogs does not provide medication for any other animals in the household.

The table below contains 2 rows and 2 columns.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Nexgard Spectra treatment date;** | Dose to be given at 8 weeks.Thereafter, please give at monthly intervals |
| **Tape Worming** **dates;** | Given appropriate for weight at 6mths and 12mths. |

## Neutering Guidelines

Unless identified as prospective breeding stock, this guide dog puppy will require neutering.

### Timing of Spay

The timing of the spay operation will have been identified by Guide Dogs personnel.

Bitches are normally neutered between 11 and 26 weeks after the end of their season. The bitch should also be over 12 months of age. However, in certain circumstances (for example if the first spay window had been missed), neutering may be requested between the third and fourth week after the end of her season. If this is required, we will contact the practice to ensure you are comfortable with this and explain the reason for requesting the spay at this time. You may wish to examine the bitch prior to the date of the spay operation.

Should the bitch not have a season by 12 months of age, we will liaise with you regarding arrangements for a clinical examination of the bitch and to discuss options for neutering at an appropriate time.

Bitches will normally have a midline ovariohysterectomy. However, if laparoscopic spays are performed at your practice, then please don’t hesitate to contact us and we can discuss the possibility of the bitch being neutered using this method.

### Timing of Castration

The timing of the castration operation will have been identified by Guide Dogs personnel, taking into account both physical and temperamental factors.

To ensure there are minimal influences upon the physical development of the dog, castration should not take place until the dog is at least 12 months old and, for German Shepherds, Curly Coated Retrievers, Poodles, and their crosses, over 14 months of age.

### Clinical Practice

* We request that all our dogs are pre-medicated appropriately prior to induction of anaesthesia.
* Induction should be achieved with Propofol, followed by intubation and maintenance with a suitable inhalation anaesthetic.
* Peri-operative analgesia with an NSAID injection should be given.
* Post operative analgesia is normally supplied for 3 – 5 days.
* Since these patients are young and healthy, we do not require pre-operative blood tests. However, if there are any factors which move the puppy into a higher risk category, please contact us before proceeding.
* Antibiotic use is at the discretion of the surgeon.
* We do not permit the use of neuroleptanalgesia.
* The linea alba should be closed with a synthetic absorbable suture such as PDS or Maxon.
* On occasions, a Buccal Mucosal Bleeding Time (BMBT) test may be requested. Guide Dogs operates this protocol prior to the neutering of our German Shepherd and German Shepherd crossbreed dogs and prior to the neutering of stock from outside or part outside of our usual breeding scheme. More detailed information on this procedure will be made available to you if a BMBT test is required for this puppy. A BMBT test can be requested from us if you don’t have them in house.
* If there are any factors that move this puppy into a higher risk category, including an abnormal BMBT, please contact us before proceeding.

Guide Dogs does not have a standard fee for this procedure as there are considerable regional variations within the UK. However, we would kindly ask that you consider granting us a discount on your normal fees to support our charity.

## Payment of Invoices

All costs in relation to the puppy are covered by Guide Dogs, including veterinary care. With the exception of emergency situations, we would ask that any discussions regarding veterinary costs or treatment options are undertaken directly with the local DHWS, rather than the Puppy Raiser.

Invoices should be forwarded to Guide Dogs, along with a copy of the clinical history to facilitate prompt payment. Wherever possible, please email invoices and accompanying clinical history to: XXX

Or post to: Canine Health Administration Team

National Centre, Bishops Tachbrook, Leamington Spa, CV33 9WF

Tel: 0118 983 8299

Should you require further information regarding any aspect of caring for our guide dog puppies, please do not hesitate to contact us via our Information Line on 0800 781 1444.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your goodwill and dedication in caring for our guide dog stock and supporting the work of Guide Dogs.

Yours faithfully

Guide Dogs