

## Raising A Puppy

By Harry Brown, D.V.M.

Raising a puppy from a favorite pet sounds like a pleasant and even romantic way to obtain a perfect pet for yourself, but reality proves that it is not always the easiest way and what you want. First of all, the female should be in good health, wormed, vaccinated, and be a good specimen (physically and mentally) of what you really want to produce. One should be realistic when you are thinking of more like the mother, and recognize the undershot jaw, weak back, or narrow hips even if the personality is perfect. The same goes, of course, for the prospective father, and certainly faults do seem to come out when least wanted or expected. However, if all goes well and there is no trouble whelping, one must then keep a close eye on the puppies themselves, and have the tails docked if necessary, at 3 days, and hind dew claws removed (since they seem to cause nothing but trouble for the mature dog). Leaving this surgery until much later makes it a real trauma, much like removing a finger on a human!

Usually the mother takes complete care of the puppies until about three weeks, when the puppies' teeth make constant attendance a pain. Often then, the mother's milk should be supplemented by once-a-day milk and pabulum feeding so that growth and mineral needs are met for the rapidly growing

puppies. By this time, also it is a good idea to have your veterinarian examine a stool sample of the puppies to determine if they may have a hookworm infestation which may threaten their lives even at this early age. Hookworms may be transmitted even by the mother's milk or from dirt on her feet, so a delicate puppy with no resistance may have hookworms even though raised on wire or papers. Keep a constant check on the puppies' gums to make sure they stay a healthy pink, since white gums indicate enough hookworms to drain considerable blood from the system.

At six weeks, most puppies are fully weaned, and therefore have no more protection from antibodies in the mother's milk. At this time it is wise to start the puppy on protective distemper, hepatitis and leptospirosis vaccines from the veterinarian and have him fully wormed so that he can start life on his own with all the advantages we can give him. As he cannot develop his immunity fully, these vaccines must be repeated at about 3 months so that he is fully protected; and checking a stool sample fairly often is necessary too, since puppies are notoriously careless about the company they keep and the dirty places they frequent!

If you plan to get a puppy, or raise one, good luck, but do give the puppy a chance by giving it the best care you can with preventive medicine.

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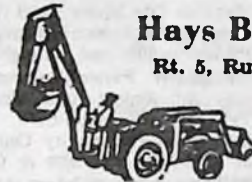
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