



## THE LABRADOR RESCUE TRUST

### ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR A HEALTHY DOG

**VACCINATION** – Dogs are vaccinated against a range of potentially fatal infectious diseases including Canine Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenzavirus and Leptospirosis. It is The Trust’s policy that all dogs must be vaccinated annually.

**WORMING** – Over 90% of puppies are born infected with roundworms, they enter the puppy via the placenta, almost regardless of how carefully the mother has been wormed in her adult life. The main worm that causes concern in young dogs and especially where there are children present is the roundworm, *Toxocara Canis* which can be seen in the faeces resembling cooked spaghetti. It is vital that all dogs should be wormed frequently (adult dogs with worms often have no symptoms) but the worms that dogs carry can cause severe illness in humans, sometimes even blindness. We recommend that adult dogs be wormed 4 times a year with a wormer that is known to kill all species of worm.

**FLEAS** – Flea infestation is one of the most common health problems in family pets in the UK. Almost every dog and cat will become infested with fleas at some time in their life and Flea Allergic Dermatitis is the most common allergic skin disease in dogs, leading to intense irritation and self-trauma. This problem can be prevented very effectively and can alleviate a lot of potential discomfort for you and your dog by the use of a variety of products available from your veterinary surgeon.

**FEEDING** – Labradors are renowned as being “greedy” and most will eat as much as they can, but obesity is all too frequently seen in this breed. There is no need and no excuse for a Labrador to be overweight. Have you ever seen a fat Guide Dog For The Blind? Their diet is strictly adhered to and they are exercised with free running every day. The old myth that neutering causes weight gain is merely that, a myth, with correct feeding and sufficient exercise neutered dogs can be kept in shape. Being a large breed, feeding twice a day is recommended (but not twice as much!) – 24 hours is a long time to wait for your next meal and also it’s a lot to eat in one go. There are so many foods on the market these days, but from our experience with rescue dogs both behavioural and allergy problems can be prevented by avoiding dog foods designed to look appealing to the handler – the dog won’t really care what it looks like – and foods containing colourants, additives and “E” numbers should be avoided if possible. Like children suffering from hyperactivity from “junk food” – it is our experience that dogs can react in a similar way. Only properly prepared dog food should be fed (not the scraps from the table, leftovers from breakfast etc). It is also recommended that you keep to the same food/diet that the dog is used to, providing that it is known and suits the dog. It is not good to continually change the dog’s diet.



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**EXERCISE & SOCIALISATION** – Exercise will be an important part of your life with your new Labrador – they are energetic dogs and need daily exercise come rain or shine. Ideally they need free running exercise at least once every day and although you will not be able to let your dog run free until you are satisfied that he/she has learned to recall this is what you should be aiming for. Training classes are a marvellous way to allow your dog to both learn correct behaviour and also to develop social skills with other dogs. Dogs that are not well-socialised can become aggressive through fear and this is a common problem. It can be good fun and rewarding to handlers too.

**INSURANCE** – Unfortunately, there is no NHS for dogs and every year approximately one in three dogs needs to be treated by a vet for an accident or illness. Veterinary care is not cheap and bills can easily mount up to hundreds of pounds. Therefore The Trust cannot stress too much how important it is for you to take out insurance cover for your peace of mind and to guarantee that your dog can be treated in the event of accident or illness. It is worthwhile to check the level of cover as some of the cheaper insurance policies available will limit cover to either a fixed limit or for a maximum of 12 months – so in the event of an ongoing medical condition, cover will cease once this limit is reached.

**NEUTERING** – We are pleased to confirm that The Trust will be using the proceeds from an unexpected legacy to pay for the neutering of all dogs re-homed by The Trust from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2008. Neutering will be carried out at selected vets across the South West and new homes will receive a voucher detailing the dog's name, TLRT number and the name of the closest vet. Your helper, area co-ordinator or vet will advise you on a suitable time for the neutering to take place depending on the dog's age and general health. The Trust is unable to pay for operations carried out by vets who are not in our neutering scheme except in exceptional circumstances when it is in the best interest of the dog. Some dogs of course will have been neutered already but many will not.

It is the policy of The Labrador Rescue Trust that all dogs and bitches should be neutered, as this not only rules out any risk of unwanted puppies but also avoids health problems in later life that can be experienced by both dogs and bitches that are not neutered. The Trust strongly urges you to make arrangements to have your dog castrated/spayed if he/she has not already been done. Under no circumstances, may your 'rescue' dog be used for breeding.



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**MICROCHIPPING** - The Trust is striving to microchip all of our dogs, but if your new dog has not been chipped, we strongly urge you to contact your local helper to make the necessary arrangements, as this is the only failsafe option, should your dog be lost or escape.

These Information Sheets are intended to serve as a guideline to new homes and foster homes. They are the result of many years of experience from our helpers and we hope that they provide a useful insight. Please note that these are only guidelines and The Labrador Rescue Trust, its helpers and officers make clear that it is the responsibility of each home/foster home to recognise the needs of their dog and to react to those needs. The Trust, its helpers and officers cannot be held responsible for the behaviour of any individual dog.

THE LABRADOR RESCUE TRUST COMPANY

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