

# Walker Veterinary Hospital

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## BREEDING FOR PET OWNERS

### 8. Finding Homes for the Puppies and Vaccinations

#### ***When will I be able to place the puppies in homes?***

Most puppies can be placed in their new homes at around eight to ten weeks of age. Puppies should remain with the litter this long to ensure proper weaning and social development. Puppies that are taken from the litter and mother earlier than this are known to have an increased amount of behavioral problems.



#### ***What about vaccinations? Should I keep the pups until this has been completed?***

Puppies receive some immunity to the major canine diseases from their mother before and shortly after birth through the first milk or *colostrum*. This is particularly true if the mother's vaccinations are up to date. These maternal antibodies protect puppies against diseases to which the mother is immune. It is important to ensure that any inoculations are administered prior to mating your dog.

Maternal antibodies only protect the puppies for a few weeks. After this time the puppy becomes susceptible to disease. The duration that maternal antibodies last in each puppy is variable and depends on several factors. Vaccine technology has made tremendous progress over the last few years and a puppy can now be safely vaccinated at approximately six weeks of age. Most puppies will receive two to three vaccinations against the common canine diseases as they grow. Your veterinary hospital will give you the appropriate vaccine recommendations based on your pet's breed, risk and lifestyle.

#### ***What about the mother? Do I have to do anything to dry up her milk supply?***

Starting at approximately three weeks after birth, as you start the weaning process, the puppies will gradually feed less and less from the mother's milk. She will be happy to leave the nest for longer and longer periods and, depending on her breed or type, will probably enjoy increased periods of exercise and physical activity. At the same time, her milk supply should be diminishing naturally and the frequency and quantity of food you are feeding her should also be decreased. It is rare that medical intervention is required to reduce a mother's milk supply.



If you have any further questions or need advice,  
please contact your veterinary clinic.

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*ten by Ernest Ward, DVM.  
under license. December 23, 2008*