

What to Expect for your Dog at Dog Daycare

Welcome to **Unleashed**, Evanston's premiere dog daycare and training center. Dog daycare provides a number of mental and physical benefits for dogs, giving them a fun and safe outlet for their sometimes boundless energy that can often lead to unwanted behaviors at home and helping them to improve their canine social skills. Here are some things you should know before bringing your dog to daycare.

Behavioral Evaluation

Every dog at **Unleashed** must first go through a behavioral evaluation and a free trial day. This is not only to make sure that your dog plays nicely with others, but it also gives them a chance to be introduced to the group gradually. Don't worry if your dog is a little nervous at first, even for the first few visits. This is pretty normal and most dogs end up loving their playtime at **Unleashed**. Running, playing, and rough-housing with a big group of doggie friends is like heaven for many dogs. However, daycare is a very stimulating environment and can be overwhelming for some. Our job is to make sure that all the dogs here are safe and happy, and we will always be honest with you about how your dog enjoys daycare. Please don't feel bad if it turns out that daycare isn't right for your dog. Just like people, dogs have distinct personalities, likes and dislikes, and daycare is a socially challenging environment that isn't right for every dog.

Vaccinations and Other Health Issues

Just like kids in schools, dogs in daycares are susceptible to contagious bugs that sometimes go around. To minimize these health risks, we require every dog here to be current on their vaccinations for rabies, DHLPP, and bordatella and have a clean fecal test yearly (please ask to test for giardia specifically as standard fecal tests are not reliable at locating this parasite). New clients must provide proof of vaccinations and a negative fecal test before coming in for an evaluation. The vaccinations for rabies, distemper and parvo are excellent at protecting dogs against these diseases. However, even with the available vaccinations, dogs that regularly socialize with other dogs will occasionally come up with mild illnesses like kennel cough or giardia.

Kennel cough is a general term for an upper respiratory infection, and is the most common bug that can spread at dog daycare. It can be caused by a bacteria called bordatella or an influenza virus and is the doggie version of a cold or flu. Symptoms can include a wheezing cough, a runny nose, lethargy, and/or a loss of appetite... usually when they first wake up in the morning. Your dog can catch kennel cough at daycare, at the dog park, walking around the neighborhood or even at the vet. It is a highly contagious, airborne illness and healthy dogs that show no symptoms can sometimes spread it. The vaccination reduces your dog's chance of catching it and reduces the severity of the illness if they do, but even vaccinated pups can sometimes come down with a doggie cold. Please keep out of daycare if they have any symptoms of a respiratory infection. Giving your dog time to rest and recover is the best treatment.

Giardia and coccidia are intestinal parasites that can cause digestive problems (i.e. diarrhea or vomiting). Dogs can pick them up from contact with the feces of wild animals (deer, raccoons, rabbits, etc.) or from contact with contaminated standing water and can spread it at daycare from inspecting each others rear ends or from direct contact with (OK, eating!) other dogs' poop. Giardia and coccidia are mild illnesses, and although 2-3

rounds of treatments are sometimes needed, most dogs recover quickly with the right medicine from your vet.

Dogs that socialize with lots of other dogs are more likely to be exposed to contagious illnesses that may be going around. To keep your dogs' digestive track healthy and their immune system strong, we highly suggest feeding your dog an all natural diet free of preservatives, meat by-products, and fillers like corn and soy, and supplementing their diet with a multi-vitamin, digestive enzymes, and probiotics, or "good bacteria" that live in our guts. Adding just a couple tablespoons each day of Greek yogurt or kefir to your dogs' food is a great way to get them the probiotics they need. Unleashed carries nutritious premium kibbles, dehydrated raw food, raw bones, treats, multi-vitamins, and other supplements and herbal remedies. Just let us know if you have any questions about your dogs' nutrition, and if you'd like to try some samples of our foods.

Knicks, cuts, and scrapes

When engaging in rough and tumble play, dogs can be quite rambunctious... jaw sparring, play biting, wrestling and chasing. Scrapes, cuts, and other minor injuries like sore pads or strained muscles are common, especially for the more active dogs. Dogs occasionally get into squabbles with other dogs; these are usually very minor disagreements and seldom result in injury. Our team is trained to break up any serious fights, though these occur very rarely due to our diligence as doggie play referees and our behavioral evaluation process. Any dog that bites and causes injury to another dog or our staff will not be allowed to return to daycare.

At **Unleashed**, we think the benefits of dog daycare far exceed the downfalls, and we do everything we can to minimize the health and safety risks. We are diligent about cleaning dog waste and sanitizing our facility and yard daily, and we are quick to interrupt and redirect inappropriate social behavior and overly rough play. However, please be aware that ***your dog is at an increased risk of catching contagious canine illnesses and getting minor injuries when socializing with other dogs, and you are responsible for any veterinary costs incurred by your dog.*** We will call you immediately if your dog is sick or injured, and if your dog is sick, PLEASE KEEP THEM HOME! It's not fair to expose the other dogs to these illnesses.

Thank you for bringing your dog to **Unleashed**. We promise to do everything we can to make sure that your dog loves it here!