

## **BAR W COTONS New Puppy FAQs**

People seem to always have questions during the process of gaining their new love. This is a compilation of common questions and my opinion based on 20 years loving Cotons and a life long knowledge of animals as well as 8 years experience as a vet. tech. I'm pretty old school and common sense in my approach and it has always served me well. These are the most common questions/topics. In my go home packets there is more information concerning training.

### **Spay / Neuter**

A common question is when to spay/neuter. I suggest waiting as long as possible and at least until they are sexually mature. Generally in males that's around 1 yr old and in females I've seen them not have their first heat until 18 months but it's more common around 1 year as well, however I have seen some come in heat around 8 months. Waiting until after that first heat cycle is optimum. Mammals need their hormones to ensure proper bone, tendon and ligament development. Raising cattle for beef production for a lifetime we castrate bulls as early as a few days after birth so that they don't mature and bulk up. This makes for more tender cuts of meat, especially steak. Years ago we never heard of dogs having knee problems and if we did it was in elderly dogs in their teens. I believe this is due to early sterilization but also the food they ate.

### **Food**

Years ago we didn't have all these designer foods. There was pretty much Purina which has been in business since the 1930's or local milled food plus table scraps. I've fed Purina products not just with my dogs but my horses as well all my life. Their products are constantly tested. More info is on the puppy page. I recommend Purina puppy chow with calcium for the first year. Just like hormones calcium is very important for proper development.

### **General Health**

My oldest Coton lived to be 15yrs with no issues except age related. She had the beginnings of cataracts and a mild heart murmur, again age related. My oldest now is 13 and he acts like he's 3. To my knowledge my dogs have never had any problems with patellas or hips. My adults are OFA certified for hearts and patellas. Not letting them jump from high places also helps (like the backs of couches and high beds). My oldest, Patsy was notorious for doing that but she never developed any issues.

## **Dental Health**

Another question is dental health. Brushing is good and there are several products for that available. If you begin the habit of brushing daily when they are a puppy it becomes an easy part of their daily routine. But again, I go back to food. Dry kibble is best. Wet food can build up on their teeth and then that causes Gingivitis. Dry food rarely builds up. Sometimes usually after they are quite a bit older I may have to have their teeth cleaned but Bandit who's 13 still has healthy pearly whites. I attribute this to the original Purina Dog chow that I feed.

## **Eye Health and Staining**

Another question is concerning eye stains. Most of my babies won't have that problem as they will have the black eyeliner. This is why I like more color in my program. Black pigmentation reflects sunlight and promotes eyes with fewer tearing. With that being said, I've come to notice water and dyes in food can also contribute to tear stains. City water has a lot of chemicals which I believe is not healthy for them and I believe dyes in food or treats are also contributors. Also, keeping the hair trimmed in the corner of their eyes keeps the hair from getting in their eyes and irritating causing tearing.

## **Grooming**

As for bathing, since Cotons are hypo-allergenic I do not recommend more than once a month unless they get dirty. Frequent bathing dries their skin. If you choose to keep them in a long coat, brushing 2 to 3 times a week should keep them very nice.

Thank you for your life long commitment to a Bar W Coton baby!