



Puppy Basics

It's exciting bringing a new puppy into your life. You probably can't wait to show your friends the cutie you picked out. And, of course, you want to play with him right away. But remember, your puppy suddenly is in an environment he doesn't know. Give him some time to adjust to his new home. Here are some hints to make him feel as comfortable as possible:

- Teach children not to be rough with the puppy; no pulling ears, whiskers or tail
- Act calmly, not rowdy, around puppy
- Provide a warm, soft bed (or box or crate) in a cozy, out of the way place
- Give puppy a soft, indestructible toy or two
- Never let your puppy put his teeth on a human, even at play
- Never play tug of war

Yes, you'll be excited to take your new pet on walks in public areas and to play with other dogs, but wait until his immunities are built up to life-threatening diseases. There are numerous vaccines that your puppy should receive between six and sixteen to twenty weeks of age to make him safe to go out into the world and socialize with people and other animals. Some vaccinations require booster shots to maintain effective levels of protection. Be sure to ask your vet about these. Your veterinarian may administer these at separate times a few weeks apart, each time in one injection.

Puppy Checkup & Vaccination Schedule

6 weeks: Doctor visit

- DHP/PV (distemper/hepatitis/parvo) - 1st of 4 boosters
- Bordetella (kennel cough) – if pet will be boarded at a kennel
- Fecal sample – check stools for worms and intestinal parasites
- Physical exam – skin, ears, mouth, chest, abdomen, inguinal area (to check for hernias), open fontanelles, teeth, hips, knees, eyes
- Discuss diet, housebreaking, puppy training class, grooming, heartworm disease, potentially harmful exposure to parvo, spaying or neutering, vaccine reaction symptoms, emergency clinic, vaccine schedule, flea & tick control
- First monthly heartworm tablet

9 weeks: Technician visit

- DHP/PV booster #2
- Learn how to trim nails and brush teeth
- Heartworm tablet

12 weeks: Technician visit

- DHP/PV booster #3
- Rabies vaccination (required by law)
- Fecal check (if needed)
- Heartworm tablet

16 weeks: Doctor visit (if needed)

- DHP/PV booster - 4th and final until yearly physical exam
- Rabies vaccination (if not given at last visit)

Important Canine Diseases

- Canine Parvovirus – young puppies are particularly susceptible to this insidious condition that attacks the lining of the intestinal tract and damages the heart. It is costly to treat and is often fatal.
- Canine Hepatitis – affects the liver and can cause loss of vision
- Canine Distemper – attacks almost all body tissues and affects the function of the brain and spinal cord

- Rabies – a virus contracted by exposure to a rabid animal, it attacks the nervous system and is *always* fatal

Protecting Against Worms & Fleas

Your puppy was at risk for getting worms from his mother before he was even born. Worms are intestinal parasites and pose a risk that should not be ignored. Protecting your puppy requires constant, lifelong attention. Treating your pet is easy, fast and painless.

- Heartworms – are one of the most deadly of all canine parasites. Heartworm disease spreads when mosquitoes bite an infected animal and then pass the larvae into the bloodstream of another dog. These microfilariae then mature into adults and live in the dog's heart. Symptoms may include vomiting, coughing, difficulty breathing, lethargy, weight loss, collapse or convulsions, even sudden death.
 - All dogs are at risk – even indoor pets.
 - Prevention of heartworm disease is achieved by annual heartworm tests and regular heartworm tablets or biannual injections.
- Roundworms – may develop prior to birth or from nursing, skin penetration, or later in life by ingesting roundworm eggs or larvae. They attach to the intestinal lining and leave bleeding internal wounds. Roundworms are a zoonotic parasite that can spread to humans, especially children. Symptoms include weakness, weight loss, haggard appearance, and dull unkempt fur.
- Hookworms – can come from their mothers while nursing or by eating infected animals. They are a zoonotic parasite that can be spread to humans. Symptoms included vomiting, diarrhea, and stunted growth.
- Whipworms – develop when a dog swallows whipworm eggs passed from an infected dog. Symptoms may include diarrhea, anemia, and dehydration.
- Fleas – flea eggs that have fallen off a pet develop into larvae which hide in carpet, furniture, leaves or other dark places. Adult fleas can then easily attach themselves to the pet when the pet comes in contact with those locations. Symptoms include itching, skin irritation, extreme discomfort, and tell-tale flea “dirt” in the pet's fur. Effective flea control products not only kill adult fleas but will prevent flea larvae from reproducing or hatching.

Puppy Basics

Puppies require very little compared to the love and companionship we get from them. Below are the basic items you should always provide.



Identification Tag

Immediately have an ID tag made for your puppy in case he wanders from home. Include his name, your name, address and phone number. Veterinarians and pet stores usually have resource for obtaining ID tags. When your puppy is spayed or neutered, consider a microchip identification.

Food & Water Bowls

Stainless steel is easiest to keep clean and doesn't break. And puppies can have allergic reactions to plastic bowls.

Collar

You should be able to fit two fingers under the collar when on your pet. *Check the fit often as your pet grows!*

Leash & Harness

For potty walks or for spending time in an unfenced location, outfit puppy in an appropriate leash and harness. Retractable leashes allow you to control how far puppy wanders from you without him tugging or pulling. By hooking the leash to a harness, your puppy won't be choked if he tries to outreach the leash lead.

Grooming Brush or Mitt

Brushing your puppy regularly keeps his coat looking nice and feels good to your pet. And just as important, this is time for you and your puppy to bond.

Toys

Playing with toys helps puppy's balance and motor skills. Chew toys can help him shed his baby teeth. Choose indestructible toys and stay away from toys and toy parts that can be swallowed.

Safety

You'll soon see that a curious puppy will explore anything and everything he can reach. And he doesn't know which things are puppy-safe. "Puppy-proof" your house by doing these important things:

- Keep electrical cords out of chewing reach
- Keep household and garden chemicals locked away
- Keep cans/bags secure from puppy
- Check around vehicles before moving them
- Keep chocolate away from puppy because it is highly toxic and can kill

Traveling with Puppy in a Car:

- Put puppy in a special doggy seat belt or crate (seat belts are best)
- Put puppy in the back so the driver is not distracted
- Never secure puppy to something in the car with his leash to prevent choking should the car stop suddenly
- Never leave your pet alone in the car for more than a few minutes
- Never leave your pet alone in a closed-up car on a hot day for *any* amount of time. Car heat can kill puppies even at lower temperatures.

Feeding Your Puppy

At first, it's important to feed your puppy the same thing he was eating before you brought him home. As he gets used to his new environment you can gradually introduce the food you chose. Many commercial foods are acceptable but be sure to choose a well-balanced one. Consult your veterinarian for how much and how often to feed your puppy. It will depend on his energy level.

Choose a convenient place to feed your puppy and use this spot consistently. Be sure to clean your puppy's dishes before every use and always give him fresh water at each feeding.

Store-bought puppy treats are fine to give him, but they are actually full of fat. Be aware of how many treats your puppy eats and try to adjust the amount of food in his regular meals accordingly. Giving table scraps is never a good idea. They throw off the balance in nutrition in your puppy's diet and can upset his stomach. And if you don't feed your puppy from the table or your plate, he won't learn to beg for food.

Loving Puppy

One of the healthiest things you can do for your puppy is give him lots of love and attention. Dogs are extremely loyal by nature and are happy when they please you. Their ancestors, wolves, ran in packs, so you can understand that puppy can get lonely if you don't spend enough time with him. Studies show that emotionally, dogs benefit from being petted by humans as much as humans do from petting dogs. So, play, talk, pet, and love. You'll both be happier and healthier.



Bathing

You'll only need to bathe puppy if he's dirty or smelly; bathing too often can cause dry skin. It helps to brush puppy's coat before the bath. Use the proper dog shampoo, lukewarm water, and gently scrub from head to tail, taking care not to get soap or water in eyes or ears. Rinse thoroughly and stand back. Puppy will shake, shake, shake! Dry with a towel or hairdryer (not too hot!) as quickly as possible so puppy doesn't get cold. Bathing is an opportunity to check for fleas, ticks and skin problems.

Caring for Teeth

A healthy diet keeps teeth clean and gums healthy. However, tartar will inevitably build up so have puppy's teeth checked regularly by a veterinarian. Between visits you can brush puppy's teeth yourself with special pet toothpaste and a soft brush.

Like children, puppies will lose their baby teeth. Between three and six months old baby teeth will gradually fall out and are replaced with permanent teeth. A mixture of soft and hard food, puppy biscuits, or hard rubber chew toys will help loosen baby teeth naturally.

Clipping Nails

Clip puppy's nails about every six weeks using special dog clippers. Some owners prefer to have a veterinarian do the clipping because it's a delicate task to keep from clipping into the quick. However, just using a nail file will often help keep nails in check without the danger of cutting into the "quick" of the nail.

Training and Discipline

One of the most common reasons so many puppies and dogs end up in shelters or pounds is behavior problems. Now that you have a puppy, you also have a responsibility to train your puppy to behave. Teaching him to act appropriately in all situations will ensure safe and enjoyable times for you, your puppy and other people with which he comes in contact.

There are many philosophies on disciplining and training puppies and dogs. Read about several before making your decision, especially if you decide to take discipline or training classes. Some methods are based on punitive principles but the preferred methods these days are reward and praised based methods. The goal should be to communicate with your pet about the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior so that you can get along at home and when socializing. Repetition and consistency are the keys to achieving this.

Socializing Puppy

Like people, your puppy needs to learn how to act around others and in places outside his home. Help build his confidence by introducing him to the family right away. Watch him carefully so you can offer safety and reassurance if he seems frightened; but over time he will learn to be with other people and display appropriate behavior. Introduce puppy to birds and cats and squirrels (carefully). Go hiking or walking in your neighborhood or a park where there are lots of people. These things will help puppy feel comfortable in social settings and keep him from acting inappropriately because he is afraid (aggressive or out of control).



Disciplining Puppy

You should start disciplining your puppy right away. Use a firm “NO!” and lots of praise to differentiate between things you want him to do and things you don’t. Two things that puppies do by nature are bite when they play and chew. Bite and chew, bite and chew! When these occur, tell puppy “no” emphatically and give him something he is allowed to chew, like a toy. Reward the behavior you like by praising him for chewing the toy.



Potty Training Puppy

You should start potty training right away. You may want to seek out the help of a trainer to assist in potty training, but with consistency and repetition you can do it yourself. Start by committing to take puppy outside as soon as he wakes up, before and after every meal, after a round of play, and at least once during the night. Always take him to the same spot so he starts to associate “going potty” with this spot.

While inside, if you see puppy looking distracted, walking in circles, sniffing the ground, or squatting, get him – he’s about to go potty! Pick him up, take him to THE POTTY SPOT and tell him to “go potty” or “get busy,” using the same phrase every time. Always praise puppy each time he goes potty outside. Again, reward the behavior you like by praising puppy. A low calorie treat will also help your puppy know that he has been “good.”

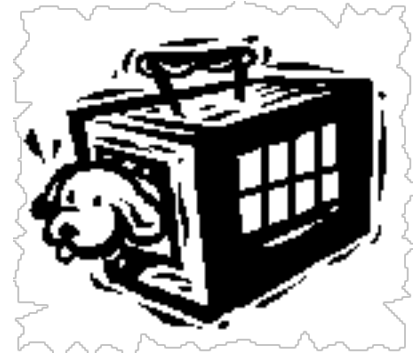
If puppy goes potty inside and you catch him in the act, tell him “no” emphatically, then take him outside to THE POTTY SPOT and tell him to “go potty.” You may have heard or been advised to rub puppy’s nose in the potty when he goes inside but this is bad advice. It is unsanitary and there are better praise-based methods for training your puppy. If you don’t catch him in the act of going inside, do not scold him. Too much time has passed for puppy to understand what he has done wrong. Just clean up the mess and wait for the next opportunity to teach.

As you can see, repetition and consistency are the keys to successful potty training. If you are persistent, within a few weeks, puppy will ask to go outside when he has to potty.

If you leave your puppy for long periods of time (while you’re at work, for example), confine him to an area of the house that you don’t mind cleaning up. It’s best to check on puppy every four hours or so and give him a chance to go potty outside.

Crate Training

Many people believe that their dogs view crates as cages and, as a result, will not consider crating their beloved buddy. Veterinarians say that crates actually satisfy a dog's denning instinct.



Not only can a crate prevent a puppy from potential injury running free in the house, it also helps to housebreak the puppy. Crates, whether made of plastic or metal, should be tall and wide enough for the dog to stand up and turn round comfortably. They can contain water, one or two toys and a terry towel for warmth. Newspapers should not be used in the crate because the dog may confuse the area with one that is acceptable for urination.

Training begins in the morning as it is important to integrate the training schedule into one that is followed in the household. Once the dog is taken out of the crate and has been given food and water, it should be placed outside to urinate or defecate. It is important for the dog to associate being taken out of the crate with being put outside. This will help housebreak your pet and soon it will associate a sense of freedom when taken out of the crate. At first, puppies six to eight weeks old will need to be taken out every three or four hours to initiate the housebreaking pattern. Older dogs can be left in for longer periods of time and will then need to be placed outside and receive plenty of exercise.

The crate should be wiped out daily with a mild disinfectant or soap and water. If the dog has urinated or defecated in the crate, it will need to be cleaned more frequently.

Placement of the crate is also important. The dog should not feel isolated. An area that the pet can hear and see people is recommended. When the owner can visually supervise the dog, it can be let out for short periods of time. While some dogs may adjust to the crate training more rapidly than others, be patient.

After the pet becomes accustomed to the crate and times of day it is expected to be in the crate, it will seek the area on his own without the prompting of the owner. Not only will the pet go in the crate during appropriate times of the day, but he may also

seek out the crate when he needs a sense of security. Feeling poorly and the onset of bad weather are two occasions when a dog may go to the crate on his own.

Once the dog has become familiar with crate training, the owner can allow the dog to roam freely in the house when away for short periods of time. The length of free time in the house can gradually increase as the dog's destructive behavior is curbed by the crate training.

Dogs of any age can benefit from crate training. While some owners consider crate training a lifetime commitment, others merely want to instill trust in the dog when the house will be unoccupied.

Dos and Don'ts for Crate Training:

DO:

- Introduce the crate gradually
- Praise the dog for being calm
- Give him a treat to go in
- Keep the crate clean
- Keep the crate near the family
- Give him something to chew

DON'T:

- Use the crate for punishment
- Put your dog in a crate with a *leash* or *collar* on
- Keep your puppy or dog in the crate all day

The trick is to take as much time as the dog needs and keep linking the crate to the good things in life: snacks, snoozes and security!

Preventing Illness

It won't take you long to start noticing traits and behavior characteristics of your puppy. This will serve you well. If puppy acts out of character at any time you should pay attention because you may be noticing symptoms of an illness.



Besides generally being “in touch” with your puppy, there are regimented measures you can take to prevent illness.

- Always administer the veterinarian-prescribed medicines to your pet as directed. Since there are some diseases that are almost always fatal, the best approach is prevention.
- Always take your pet to see his veterinarian at least once a year for a check-up and more often than that if your veterinarian recommends. Vaccinations and boosters are routinely handled at these check-ups and missing even one injection could put your pet at risk for disease.
- At home, get in the habit of regularly checking your puppy for fleas, ticks or skin conditions. Preventing fleas and internal parasites is easy. Ask your veterinarian.

Having Fun with your Puppy

Ways to have fun with your puppy are endless! Be creative. The more your puppy does and sees, the more confident, happy and socialized he will be.

- Periodically mark puppy's height (measuring at the shoulder blades) on a wall. Be sure to put the date beside each measure mark so you can see how quickly your puppy grows.
- Retrieving games are fun and help sharpen puppy's mental skills.
- If puppy seems interested, playing in water is a great way to spend time together. Make sure puppy can get in and out easily and always make sure you can see the ground or bottom through the water.
- They grow up so fast! Take photos of your puppy and start a scrapbook. Staged and candid shots will make you smile for years to come.
- Teach your puppy tricks by constantly showing him what to do when you say a certain command. Rewarding puppy every time he does the trick will have him sitting and shaking hands in no time!