

## Pet care instructions

### Caring for your new puppy

Here's a step-by-step guide on how to bring a new puppy into your household, and make him feel welcome and comfortable.

Bringing a new puppy into the house is an exciting time for you and your family, but your puppy may be a little confused by all the changes in his life.

You need to provide him with a suitable bed. A crate is suggested as a doggie bed. This will make it so much easier on you, just be sure to get a large crate so he can grow and you won't need to buy another one later on. You may want to cover half of the crate with a blanket to give him a secure feeling of a home. This makes an adequate bed while your puppy is growing up. Don't spend too much at this stage on an expensive bed that he is likely to chew. The inside of the bed should be lined with an old blanket so that he can snuggle into something soft and warm.

The bed should be somewhere that is relatively quiet so that he can sleep undisturbed whenever he is tired. Many people find that a quiet corner of the kitchen or family room is ideal. You may want to partition off an area around his bed for a few days to create a little "den" where he can feel secure and be out of harm's way.

He should have his own food and water bowls. They should be of a design that allows him to eat and drink comfortably but without submerging his nose or ears. Have a supply of food ready for his arrival. Find out from the breeder what he is used to eating. It is best to maintain the same diet for a few days.

All puppies like to chew. This is normal behavior, and it helps with the teething process. Give your puppy some toys of his own to chew to deter him from selecting other contents of your home. Toys don't need to be elaborate, but make sure they are nontoxic, large enough that they cannot be swallowed, and relatively indestructible. Objects that are swallowed may become stuck in the throat, stomach or intestines and can be a serious threat to your puppy's life.

Although you will not be able to take your new puppy for walks until he has completed his course of vaccinations, you will need a suitable collar and leash for him. The collar should be soft and well-fitting. For the first few days he need only wear it for short periods when you are there to supervise. It must not be too tight, since this is uncomfortable for the puppy, but neither should it be too loose, as it may catch on a protruding object. You may want to consider a collar with a quick-release feature. Check his collar daily and loosen it as his neck increases in size. Don't buy a choke chain for a young puppy. If used incorrectly, it could cause irreparable damage to his neck.

You also need to buy a brush. Ask the breeder to show you how to groom your puppy properly and to recommend some suitable grooming equipment.

Finally, make sure that you have the name and address of your veterinarian. If you don't have a veterinarian, your breeder or friends will be able to recommend a local hospital or clinic.

While he is small, keep out of reach everything in your home that might be dangerous to your puppy. He may tug or chew anything he finds, including plants and electrical cords.

Check your yard to see that the fencing is secure and that there are no small holes through which your puppy could disappear. Make sure that your gate shuts securely and that your puppy won't be able to squeeze through or under it. Pools and ponds should be covered.

### When your puppy arrives

It is best to acquire your new puppy at a time when you can offer him your company and undivided attention for a few days as he settles in. If you bring him home in the morning, he will have had time to settle in, feed, play and tire himself out before bedtime.

When your puppy first arrives, let him sniff around and make himself familiar with his surroundings; then introduce him to his bed.

Introducing the puppy into the household must be done with care. This is a difficult and confusing time for your puppy. Your home is a profusion of strange sights, sounds and smells that he may find exciting but a little overwhelming. He will be missing his mother, brothers and sisters and will look to you and your family to replace the company, comfort and security that he has left behind.

Choose a name for him as soon as possible. Be consistent and use it repeatedly as you talk to him - he will soon learn to respond. Young children in the family should be taught that puppies are not toys. You will find that your puppy plays vigorously for short spells and then may retire to his bed for an hour or so. Sleep is as important for your puppy as it is for a baby, so don't disturb him when he is resting.

Don't deprive established pets of your attention or they may become jealous of the new arrival. Introductions should be made gradually, on neutral territory and under constant supervision. Never leave a new puppy alone with an older cat or dog. Feed them separately until they have become friends.

For the first few nights your puppy will probably be restless and whimper when he is left alone. Wrapping a water bottle and a ticking clock in a blanket and placing it in his bed can be very reassuring for a new pup. But these items shouldn't be made of rubber or plastic, or the puppy may chew them.

Above all, be kind, gentle and patient with your puppy during his introduction to your home. Don't scold or speak harshly to him in the first few days, even if he is destructive or makes a mess - in his confused state he may only learn to fear you. This initiation period should be an enjoyable time in which you and your puppy can get to know each other and he learns to trust you, thus forming the basis for a happy life together.

### Feeding your puppy

The breeder should give you a written diet sheet telling you what foods, how much and how often the puppy has been fed. You should keep to this diet for a few days before gradually weaning him onto the food with which you have decided to continue.

Your new puppy must receive the correct diet to give him the best possible start in life. Any mistakes at this stage of his life can have serious and long-lasting effects. His diet must provide all the nutrients he needs for healthy growth and development - not only in the correct amounts but also in the correct proportions to each other.

Don't feed your puppy uncooked meat or food that may have gone off. Commercially prepared pet food is the safest diet, delivering optimal nutritional balance for the best value.

Young puppies need relatively large amounts of food in order to meet the demands of their rapidly growing bodies and their hectic lifestyle, however, at this age they are still small and their stomachs cannot hold much food at one time. In order that they eat enough to fulfill their needs, they must be fed several small meals each day, and their diet must provide all the right nutrients in a comparatively small volume.

Fortunately, feeding your puppy need not be as complicated as it sounds. Diets that are specially formulated for growth take all the guesswork out of rearing healthy puppies and provide a balanced and highly digestible diet that he enjoys and thrives on.

The feeding regimen for your puppy depends greatly on his age and individual characteristics. Your puppy's condition is the best indicator of whether you are feeding the correct amount.

Generally a puppy should be allowed 15 to 20 minutes to eat at each mealtime. After 15 minutes remove any uneaten food and serve fresh food at the next meal.

Although milk is a useful source of nutrients for young dogs, it is not an essential part of the puppy's diet once he has been weaned. Many puppies and dogs cannot efficiently digest lactose, the sugar present in milk, and this causes digestive upsets if given to them.

While bones provide chewing exercise, calcium and phosphorous, they can also be dangerous if they splinter. Rather than bones, feed your puppy specially designed chewing treats from reputable pet stores.

Make sure that your puppy has his own feeding and water bowls and that they are kept clean. Fresh water should always be available.

### Training your puppy

Both you and your puppy will be much happier if he is well-trained. His natural instinct is to submit to the discipline imposed by his pack leader - this is your role. Through training he will learn to understand what is required of him and how to please you. Take a little time and trouble over this and you will find the companionship of an obedient dog more than repays your efforts.

### House training

House training rarely presents a problem with puppies that have been reared under proper conditions - puppies instinctively want to be clean and they are eager to please their owners. You should begin training as soon as you bring your puppy home. Any delay in establishing a proper routine can make training more difficult later on. Patience and perseverance are required.

A young puppy will want to urinate and defecate frequently because he has a small bladder and bowel. If you have an enclosed yard, take him out and place him on a suitable spot whenever he indicates that he wants to relieve himself. In addition, take him to the same spot first thing in the morning, last thing at night, after every meal, and whenever he has been inside for long periods. Make sure that you go with him and stay with him until he performs; then praise him lavishly.

Don't punish him when mishaps occur. This will only lead to confusion and fear. Never "rub his nose in it" if he makes a mess.

### Basic Training

You will need to teach your puppy a few basic commands. For training to be of any benefit, he must first respond to his name and understand the meaning of the word "no."

Once your puppy has completed his vaccinations, you will be able to take him for short walks. You must keep him under control at all times when he is in a public place, and for this a leash is essential. Introduce him to his collar and leash and let him get used to wearing them before you first take him out.

Once he is used to the leash, you can begin his basic training. All members of the household should be involved in the training program. Use short words for commands, with vowels that sound clearly different. The first four essentials are heel, sit, come and down. Be clear in your commands and, above all, be consistent.

Reward him with a show of affection and by stroking him when he does well. Remember, you don't necessarily need to provide a food reward while training. Don't punish him for not obeying a command - simply withhold the positive reinforcement. Otherwise, he will associate the command with punishment.

You may later want to join an obedience class for puppies or dogs in order to extend your puppy's training. A skilled instructor can also help you to overcome any problems that have arisen. Puppy kindergarten can start as soon as your puppy has been fully vaccinated. These classes are fun for you and your puppy, and they also allow him to socialize with other dogs.

### Exercise

All dogs need daily exercise. The amount your puppy needs depends not only upon his size but also upon his breed. While he is very young, he will get enough exercise naturally, but as he grows up, he must be taken for regular walks and runs. Don't take him out until he has completed his course of vaccinations.

Regular and varied walks are not just essential to keep your puppy fit, they also provide the opportunity for him to explore and to experience new stimuli, including meeting other dogs. This helps him to develop into a contented and well-adjusted individual and helps to prevent the development of problem behavior.

All exercise should be supervised. Don't allow your puppy to stray and never let him out during the day to fend for himself.

### Grooming

Regular grooming is essential in order to keep your dog looking and feeling his best. It is best to get your puppy used to the grooming routine at an early age in order to avoid difficulties when he is older.

Dogs need bathing only when they are dirty or on the advice of your veterinarian. Make sure that you do this only in fine weather or you keep him indoors to avoid chills. Young puppies need extra special care. Never use a household detergent or disinfectant on your puppy. Use only products that have been designed for use on dogs. Whenever you bathe your puppy, his bedding should be aired and washed at the same time. This, of course, should also be done at regular intervals between baths.

While you are grooming him, you can take the opportunity to check the condition of his coat and skin to look for any abnormalities such as swellings, wounds or evidence of parasites.

You should also check that his eyes, ears, wrinkles and tail pocket are clean and clear and free from excessive discharge.

Although you are unlikely to have problems while he is still young, you should open your puppy's mouth regularly so that he becomes used to the procedure from an early age. This practice will prove useful in the future when you may need to brush his teeth or administer medication by mouth. You can familiarize yourself with the normal appearance of your puppy's mouth at the same time. The teeth should be clean and free from deposits, and the gums should be a healthy pink color. This is also a good time to teach your dog to let you brush his teeth. This can reduce plaque and bad breath.

As he ages, deposits may develop around the base of the teeth near the gums. These can be removed by your veterinarian.

Your puppy's nails might also require trimming on a regular basis. Dogs that are regularly exercised on hard surfaces are less likely to need any attention, as the nails wear down to about the correct length. Regularly handle your puppy's paws from an early age. That makes him better behaved later for groomers or veterinarians.

### Your puppy's health

Once they have been weaned, most puppies can expect to live long, happy lives. Some breeds have a longer average life span than others. Most dogs live between 8 and 15 years, and some individuals live well beyond that. Generally speaking, small and toy breeds tend to have a longer life expectancy than large and giant dogs. The main threats to their longevity are infectious diseases and accidents. No one can avoid either entirely, but the chances of being seriously affected by illness or accident can be reduced to a very low level by taking care and a few simple precautions. A full vaccination program, with annual booster injections, is the most important step in helping to prevent disease. Proper training and controlled exercise go a long way towards avoiding accidents.

### Your veterinarian

Your greatest ally in the prevention of health problems is your veterinarian. Make sure you register with a veterinary practice as soon as you get your puppy rather than wait until an emergency arises.

Within a few days, have your puppy checked by your veterinarian, who will also advise you on vaccinations, deworming, heartworm prevention, feeding and general health care.

When you visit the veterinarian with your puppy, you must carry him in your arms and do not allow him to walk on the floor until his vaccination course has been completed - remember that other animals in the waiting room may be sick. If your puppy is sick, the veterinarian needs to know all the details about his illness, so don't send him with a young child or a friend who cannot provide this information.

Do keep a careful watch on your puppy and if you note any sign of illness, have him treated promptly.

## Be a responsible dog owner

Like all worthwhile things in life, owning a dog involves responsibilities as well as pleasures. The pleasures are obvious, and the responsibilities, not just to the dog but also to other people and the environment, need to be considered.

A well-trained and disciplined dog is an asset to his owner, so make sure he receives at least some basic obedience training.

### Bulldog Medicine Chest

Vaseline - Use this on his nose, on his eye wrinkles, any place you need to soothe and waterproof but don't need to medicate.

Q-tips and cotton balls - Use for applying medication and cleaning ears.

Plastic Real Lemon - If he gets phlegm in his throat, and chokes on it, a couple squirts of juice from the plastic lemon will help clear it out.

Aspirin - For minor aches and pains. Most Bulldogs can tolerate aspirin but do not give any other human pain reliever such as Tylenol or Advil. Buffered aspirin such as Bufferin is better than plain aspirin and Ascriptin is better than Bufferin. Remember that the dosage for aspirin, like most pain relief medication, is based primarily on body weight. A Bulldog should never be given more than one tablet at a time or more frequently than every twelve hours.

Benadryl - Either capsule or liquid. Use this if the dog is stung by a bee or other insect, and for minor allergies.

Panalog Ointment - A good all purpose ointment for minor skin afflictions. Also good for cleaning wrinkles, tail pockets and ears. Do not put in his eyes.