

----- *feeding your pup*

Choose a dry food intended specifically for puppies, avoiding generic foods & those that sell for unusually low prices. It is best to choose a dry food formulated specifically for puppies. Dry foods are often better for a puppy's teeth & seem to have less health issues. They are also often less expensive per pound than wet puppy foods. You should have a veterinarian check over your pup as soon as your able, not just for general health, but also diet information. Veterinarians will give you great advice on the right diet for your dog. Some dogs need very strict diets to prevent long term health issues or prevent allergic reactions. It is impossible to distinguish good dog food from poor dog food simply by looking at the ingredient list. Many things that some owners might look for, such as high protein levels or extra vitamins, can be harmful. Overfeeding & over supplementation are factors contributing to hip dysplasia, for example. Your vet can look at your dog & outline for you the proper way to give your puppy a balanced, healthy diet designed for a healthy life. It is generally not a good idea to give your puppy people food. If overdone, they can become more picky about their normal diet, get upset stomachs, or can develop health issues due to unbalanced diets. Treats designed for puppies, such as dog biscuits are fine, but they should not become a significant part of your puppy's diet. Puppies should be fed three times a day. Beyond 10 to 12 weeks of age, feed twice per day. Even adult dogs should have their food split into morning & evening feedings. When fed only once per day, dogs can become overly hungry & more inclined to overeat at mealtime. Let your puppy eat as much as he or she wants in fifteen minutes & then pick up the food dish. Water - all day.

Seek veterinary attention if your pet changes behavior or becomes inactive; this may indicate the pet has an illness.

As a pet owner, you are responsible for proper pet practices. Be prepared to take an ill pet to a Veterinarian & know which Veterinarian in your area can treat your pet.

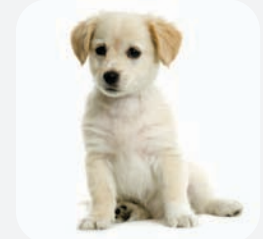


check-list ✓

Your pet Puppy Dog requires...

- Collar (adjustable with identification tags ASAP)
- Leash of appropriate length
- Water Bowl
- 'Dry' & 'Wet' Food Bowls of appropriate size
- Chew & Exercise Toys (non-eatable)
- Sleeping basket (optional)
- Travel Crate or Kennel (optional - full size)
- Puppy Dog Shampoo (use 'baby' as option)

Starter's care guide for Puppies



A few basic steps for caring, maintaining & socializing your first pet dog.

Learn all you can about the type of dog you are interested in to see if they are right for you & your lifestyle. Dogs are the world's most popular pet & have been so for hundreds of years. With a little knowledge & understanding, you will have a better experience & healthier, happier pet.

----- *choosing the right puppy*

Sometimes, your future companion finds you & comes into your life by chance. It does not normally happen like that. If you are actually 'shopping' for a dog, then researching dog breeds is highly advisable. Dogs have been "Man's Best Friend" for a very long time & the storehouse of information available to a potential dog owner is vast. Most modern day dogs have been well documented & you will find it beneficial to learn from others about what to expect from your choice in breeds. Many dog breeds were 'designed' for a purpose & have certain behaviors & preferences hard-wired into their nature. A pure bred retriever for instance, will 'naturally' or more readily want to play "fetch". A herding breed will likely want to be part of your dinner party or keep tabs on where the whole family is in the house, for example. A cross-bred will like both.

Take a moment & examine your own lifestyle & choose a dog that best fits into it. A dog breed that is incompatible with your lifestyle becomes an effort, something you should want to avoid as a pet owner. Never allow yourself, & don't put yourself in the position, of resenting your pet for being an inconvenience. Dogs bond with humans more than any other animal & will demand your love & attention (this may be something as simple as being with you in the same room). The more love & attention the dog receives, the happier it, & you, will be.

Consider what the dog's life will be like living with you in your home. How much time will you devote to the animal? How much exercise will you be giving it? What size home do you have? How much outside time will the dog get? Will the dog be in a social area with lots of people or in an intimate environment? Are there other animals in your house? Is this a sit on the sofa & watch TV dog or will the dog travel with you regularly on your daily activities? What you are looking for in a dog? Pure breed or mix? Big or small? Factors you need to remember include grooming & exercise needs, temperament & social behavior, or potential future health issues.

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----- interacting with your pup



A strong bond benefits both you & your dog. Begin your training with allowing the puppy to nap or relax on or very near you & be held. Stand up, put your arms straight out, at your sides, at a 45 degree angle. The triangle formed from your forehead to the tips of your fingers is the "love zone". Bring the pup into this 'zone' early & frequently, but under calm circumstances (give the pup a good play & when it tires, then have a calm petting session). If the pup is full of energy & wants to play, that is not the time to try to hold the dog. Give the puppy some attention with playtime. This will become a trained behavior & the pup will relax & become calmer when being held & the pup will soon welcome your embraces as a soothing experience. Nurture your bond with petting or grooming, playtime, exercise or as part of your daily activities. Take time out of your life to do things with, & for, the dogs benefit & amusement & it will love you for it.

Do not become what your puppy perceives to be an equal. Dogs have no concept of friends or equals, only other pack members. Somebody has to be boss. Assertive puppies will grow up trying to be boss. A submissive puppy may never be sure what is expected & be nervous all the time. It is especially important for you to be master. Do not allow your dog to nip or bite at you in a friendly way. Don't encourage tug of war or play that involves chewing & biting. It is natural for puppies to chew, that's one of the ways they explore & learn. Destructive chewing is a way to work off excitement & relieve frustration. Provide a satisfactory alternative like a Nylabone chew toy. Do not stimulate your puppy by waving your arms & acting excited. Be easy-going. By showing lots of emotion of any sort (happy or mad, it doesn't matter) you build up emotional stress. Don't yell at the pup for barking when the doorbell rings, it thinks you're joining in. Calmly thank it for doing it's duty & don't make it a big deal. Most problem barkers are a result from over-vocal owners during puppyhood. If you, show a low key response, so will the pup & give up continual barking.

Be sure everyone who lives with the pet follows the same training procedure & verbal commands or terms. Consistent treatment from the whole family makes for a better adjusted pet. Most puppies or young dogs have a tendency to urinate in response to high stress situations, like when meeting a stranger, or even when their owners come home & greet them excitedly. This is a sign that your puppy is uncertain about what is expected. Calmly reassure, ignore the accident. Clean up it later. Never scold when this happens. Having to train yourself to take a calm approach to your pup's behavior, is one of the less obvious benefits of owning a dog. People become more socially composed & focused, your heart rate & blood pressure go down & you will become better able to adjust to stress, all from training your new dog. Training begins early. Each time your puppy wants to be petted, start by holding your hand about a foot above his nose & saying, "(your dog's name), sit." Move your hand back over his ears as you speak (this makes him look up, which is the first part of sitting). Keep repeating until he sits, then give it reward. You're on your way to training.

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----- house training



Housebreaking is one of the first things you will actually teach your puppy. You should begin house-training as soon as you bring your puppy home by beginning to simply pay attention. Part of the training will be on how you monitor the dog. Puppies are generally not able to control their bladders or bowels until about 12 weeks of age. You can begin training any time after five weeks of age. If your puppy is younger, then be patient & remember this takes time (same as you needed time when you were a baby). Starting early can help get your puppy get on a routine. Often a pup has had some basic house training by the time you receive it. As a general rule, you should take your puppy to the designated "spot" soon after eating or drinking. Be consistent & patient. Don't get angry! Watch the pup... has a drink, likely time to hit the papers or go outside soon. The dog will catch onto this quickly enough. As it grows, it will learn what to do. Accidents will happen, be ready & expect it (& don't blame if it was you that missed the schedule). Include a verbal signal several times also (like "paper time" "let's go outside" "go for walk" - whatever strikes you, but be consistent about the phrase as this helps with basic training). Reward the pup with praise for getting it right (even if it wasn't 'perfect'). Puppies have a strong natural instinct to avoid soiling their own area. If you are consistent & patient, this natural urge for cleanliness makes house training fairly easy. A little extra effort & patience in puppyhood will make the difference later on between a happy, cooperative pet & one that causes problems for you.

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----- starting out healthy

The best advice is to call your veterinarian before you pick up that new member of the family & ask to have the puppy examined as soon after you become the owner as possible & start off right. Build a relationship with your vet & have the dog checked over once a year, healthy or not. Most veterinarians do a great job giving advice to people who have not owned a dog before. Many will know about future issues your particular dog may face, or behavior or special dietary needs. Between 6 & 16 weeks of age, puppies lose the disease protection they received from their mothers & become able to form their own immunity to disease. Each veterinarian will have a preferred protocol for vaccinating puppies & for follow-up vaccinations throughout life. If the pup is healthy & unvaccinated, your veterinarian may suggest vaccinating right away. (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza, Coronavirus, Rabies) The doctor will also advise you on prevention of fleas. Start your pup on a flea pill system as soon as its ready, & remain on that system. Fleas are totally preventable with a harmless, safe & inexpensive monthly pill. The dog, & you, should not have to deal with fleas in your home. Avoid letting the pup walk up & down stairs until about 6 months old. You can start putting a collar on after about 10 - 12 weeks, just for them to get used to it around its neck, & leash walk your puppy when around 4 months old. Leash training should start early as this prompts teaching other commands like "sit" "come" & "stay". As the pup matures, you may want to join an obedience class, do "dog sports" like flyball, or participate in dog showing.