



CARING FOR YOUR PUPPY

There are almost 200 breeds of dogs registered with the American Kennel Club, as well as a wide range of hybrid and mixed-breed dogs. Fortunately, care of most puppies, regardless of the breed, is essentially the same.

WHAT DO I NEED?

Prior to bringing your new puppy home, purchase the following items to care for your new pet:

- Dishes for food and water
- a bed
- a collar or harness and a leash
- an identification tag with your contact information
- crate with bedding
- teething toys

BRINGING YOUR PUPPY HOME

Make a plan to transport your puppy to your home that minimizes stress and discomfort. Once home, place the crate and/or bed in a quiet, draft-free area that is out of the way of foot traffic and not subject to temperature extremes. If you have children at home, limit playtime with the puppy at first, as it will tire quickly and require frequent naps.

VISITING THE VET

As soon as possible, take your puppy to a veterinarian. In addition to a general health check-up, your puppy will likely need vaccinations and a worming analysis. Bring any records provided with the puppy to your first visit.

GENERAL TIPS

Consistency is key in puppy training; puppies are smart and observant. If you make exceptions, your puppy will catch on quickly and develop bad habits which will then need to be broken. Positive reinforcement is also very important. Speak to your puppy firmly, but calmly and kindly. They will quickly pick up on what is right and what is not.

Puppies eat and sleep a lot at this age. Don't let them play very rough for long periods of time or jump off anything taller than them, it can be harmful as their bones and joints are still developing. If a puppy wants to sleep, let them.

DIET

Most veterinarians agree that young puppies should be fed three times a day until they are about six months old, then twice a day until they are fully-grown. Adult dogs need to be fed only once a day. Feed a high-quality food.

Your pet store or veterinarian can recommend the proper food to use for the various stages of your pet's life. Serve puppies what they can consume in five to ten minutes. Remove uneaten food and clean the dish after each meal. Try to feed your puppy at the same time each day so he adjusts to a schedule.

Avoid feeding your dog table scraps, including bones. Between meals, treats can be fed sparingly and used as rewards to reinforce house training. Don't give too many treats, as this can lead to weight and health issues.

Fresh water must be available at all times. Keep the water bowl in the feeding area, as the puppy will usually drink after eating. The bowl should be washed and refilled often because food particles tend to fall into the water.

GROOMING

Most puppies enjoy a bath and brushing, and frequent grooming can prevent some health issues from developing. Purchase the shampoo and brush your pet store or veterinarian recommends for the breed of the pup you have chosen. The bath water should be warm. Check water temperature with your elbow. If comfortable for you, it will be comfortable for your puppy. Rinse and re-rinse your pet before drying with a large towel and/or a handheld hair dryer on low temperature setting. Brushing when almost dry helps fluff the hair coat.

FLEAS AND TICKS

There are many flea and tick products available that will prevent infestation and will kill these parasites. Follow the recommendations of your pet store or veterinarian.

SPAYING AND NEUTERING

Spaying or neutering your puppy helps to prevent accidental litters and some health issues associated with intact dogs. If you do not wish to breed your pet, spaying or neutering is a good idea, but this is a medical procedure and should be discussed with your vet. Check with your local dog-licensing bureau as it may also be required in your area.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Check your local government for the legal obligations you will need to meet regarding your new puppy, such as:

- Dog licensing
- Proof of rabies vaccination
- Microchipping
- Mandatory spay/neuter laws
- Waste removal and leash laws

HOUSEBREAKING

Your puppy's muscles are growing; frequent urination is natural. There are three keys to housetraining success:

- Take your puppy outside promptly after naps and meals;
- Lavish praise when your puppy is successful; and
- Be consistent (and patient!).

Using a crate with bedding will encourage your puppy to wait until he gets to an approved area to relieve himself.

Praising your pet when he is successful reinforces good behavior. If the puppy makes a "mistake" in the house, take him outside immediately, then clean and deodorize the spot right away to prevent reoccurrence.