

Diet

Most veterinarians agree that young puppies should be fed three times a day until they are about six months old, and 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 can recommend the proper food to use for the various stages of your pet's life. Feed 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. Your pet will usually want to relieve itself after eating. By taking your puppy outside after mealtime, you are accomplishing an important step in housebreaking.

Avoid feeding your dog table scraps, particularly chicken or turkey bones and chop bones. Between meals, treats can be fed sparingly and used as rewards for relieving itself outside, reinforcing housetraining. Be careful not to provide too many treats, because this can become a health problem.

Water is an absolute necessity and 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.

Exercise

Some breeds require more exercise than others. However, young puppies get tired easily and should not have strenuous exercise. Start off with short walks and play periods. If your puppy gets tired, stop the activity. As your puppy matures, walks and play periods can be extended.

When playing in the yard with your puppy, you need to keep them safe. In addition to a collar and flea protection, the yard should have the proper fencing or tie out so your puppy doesn't run away. If the puppy is permitted to stay outside during temperate days, a doghouse should be provided as shelter against the heat or rain. Make certain clean drinking water is available at all times.

This information is designed as a basic guide. There are several books and online resources available which provide in-depth information on puppies and their care.

Enjoy Your New Pet!

Do right by your pet.

Do right by our environment.

Don't release unwanted pets.

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Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
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Caring for Your Puppy



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Care of Your Puppy

There are over 150 breeds of dogs registered with the American Kennel Club in addition to breeds registered with other dog registration agencies; and millions of mixed breed puppies that are not registered. Fortunately, care of a puppy 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
- a leash
- an identification tag
- crate with bedding
- teething toys

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 your veterinarian.

Bringing Your Puppy Home

Place the bed in a quiet area that is draft free, out of the way of foot traffic and not subject to temperature extremes. Your puppy will require a lot of sleep and naps. If you have children, limit playtime with the puppy, as it will get tired quickly.

Grooming

Most puppies enjoy a bath and brushing. 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 temperature of water 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 a hand held hair dryer. Brushing when almost dry helps fluff up the hair coat.

Legal Requirements

Check with your local government concerning the legal obligations you will need to meet regarding your new puppy, including:

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

Visiting the Vet

As soon as possible, take your puppy to a veterinarian. In addition to a general health check-up, your puppy will need vaccinations and a worming analysis.

Spaying or neutering your puppy prevents overpopulation in an already overcrowded world. If you do not wish to breed your pet, spaying or neutering is a good idea. Check with your local dog-licensing bureau because it may be required in your area.

Housebreaking

There are three keys to success when housetraining your puppy:

- take your puppy outside immediately after naps and meals;
- lavish praise when your puppy is successful; and
- patience.

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

Your puppy's muscles grow as they grow, and frequent urination is natural—which is why you need to take your puppy to an approved area immediately following naps and meals.

Your puppy only wants to please you, so praising your pet when he is successful ingrains good behavior. If the puppy makes a “mistake” in the house, do not resort to hitting. Puppies have short memory spans, so they will not understand what the punishment is for. If you see your puppy relieving himself in the house, take him outside immediately. If he is caught making a mess, a firm “no” while clapping your hands loudly should be his only punishment.

Setting a feeding and walking schedule will help your puppy adjust, and make housebreaking successful. If your puppy does relieve himself in the house, it should be cleaned and deodorized as soon as possible to prevent reoccurrence. And remember, patience, patience, patience!