

New Puppy Quick Reference Guide

WHAT DOES MY NEW PUPPY REALLY NEED?

Not much! Every puppy needs high quality food, separate food and water bowls, a secure place to sleep, a well-made collar and leash, and a few toys.

Each of these items has a role in meeting your puppy's needs, keeping him safe, and helping him to adjust to your home.

Avoid buying dozens of toys and treats. Too many toys confuse a puppy about what he should and should not chew. Provide the same food the puppy is used to, and make any switches slowly. Different foods can cause an upset stomach. For play and teething, a puppy KONG is ideal.

To help make separation less traumatic, familiar scents are helpful, such as a soft blanket that smells like you or rubbed against littermates.

Most importantly, give your puppy lots of love and human company!

I KEEP HEARING THAT I SHOULD USE A CRATE FOR MY PUPPY. ISN'T THAT CRUEL?

Actually, crates are kind. Your puppy is naturally a den animal. Just like a den in wild, a crate is a peaceful, safe haven where your pup can feel secure. When given a chance, a puppy will seek out a den; it just feels good.

A crate allows you to relax or complete tasks that you can't while watching your puppy. It also helps in training by limiting your puppy's mistakes to times when you are present and prepared to teach.

Dogs naturally avoid soiling their dens, so a crate is also a great tool for potty training. Ensure the crate is only large enough for the puppy to stand up and turn around. Any larger and he may soil a corner where he does not sleep. Built-in dividers can help if needed.

A crate should never be used as punishment!

Keep the crate near you as much as possible so your puppy doesn't feel ostracized from the family.

WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD FOR POTTY TRAINING MY PUPPY?

Be proactive. Your puppy has not yet developed the awareness or physical capability to control his bodily functions like an adult dog. He needs opportunities to relieve himself often. As a guideline, puppies can hold their bladders for the number of hours equal to their age in months plus one. For example, a two-month-old puppy can last about three hours. Knowing that he should hold it, however, is another issue!

Confine your puppy to a specific room or small area while he is learning. Close doors, use baby gates, and a crate to keep an eye on him.

Be sure to take your puppy out at regular intervals as well as these six critical times:

1. After awakening
2. Before going to bed for the night
3. After eating or drinking
4. After/during excitement or exuberant play
5. If frightened or nervous
6. After the family arrives home

Remain in the potty area until your puppy eliminates. Lavish excited praise when he finishes. A common mistake is to return inside too soon, only to have an unexpected mess.

MY PUPPY IS GOING IN THE HOUSE. HOW SHOULD I CORRECT HIM?

Do not "correct" your puppy for soiling. You should not rub a puppy's face in his mess. The puppy may not associate the correction with the soiling. Some will become scared of being grabbed or they might learn to find a hiding spot to toilet.

The best method is to help your pup avoid mistakes. If you do catch your puppy in the act, quickly take him to the designated potty area and praise him when he continues to potty. If you find a mess after the fact, all you can do is clean it up.

HOW MUCH PLAYTIME SHOULD MY NEW PUPPY HAVE?

Puppies need lots of love and playtime and also lots of rest. Each puppy is different, so let your puppy tell you when he's tired. Do not take a young puppy jogging or force him to play. These activities can cause over-exertion or injury.