

**Congratulations on your new puppy!** Puppies are lots of fun but can be quite hard work in the first few months. It is really important to put the time and energy into laying down the correct groundwork so that she grows up into a happy, healthy and well-adjusted dog.



### Health

- Your puppy will require vaccinations at 6 weeks (parvo) 8 weeks (1<sup>st</sup> cocktail) and 12 weeks (rabies and 2<sup>nd</sup> cocktail). Confirm what vaccinations your puppy has had before bringing them home and make an appointment for her to come and see the USPCA vet for any that have not yet been administered.
- Your puppy's health is very fragile as her immune systems is still developing. It is important to take any signs of illness seriously and act quickly. If she develops diarrhoea or vomiting, immediately call the clinic. You should also seek immediate veterinary advice if she doesn't eat for more than 24 hours.
- Establish and maintain a strict de-worming, flea care and tick management routine, particularly important for during the first year. Speak to the vet about the options available.
- Puppies reach sexual maturity at about 6 months old. Book an appointment at the clinic for your puppy to be spayed or neutered in advance to avoid challenging behaviour (territorial spraying, howling, running away, mounting, aggression), unwanted litters and the risk of certain cancers.
- On hot days support your puppy not to overheat. Ensure they have access to shade and fresh water. Keep games and walks until the cooler part of the days. You can also have fun freezing toys and food inside ice to keep them cool and occupied.



### Food

- Certain foods can make your puppy very unwell. NEVER give your puppy or dog cow's milk, as she will be unable to digest it properly which can result in diarrhoea. Other common foods to avoid include avocado, onion, garlic, chocolate and corn/maize still on the cob. See <https://www.caninejournal.com/foods-not-to-feed-dog/#cooked-bones>
- If you have the option to use pellets and sachets, only use the specified one for puppies. Adult dog food is unsuitable for puppies. Packaged food can be expensive, however try to use it until the puppy is at least 3 months old and longer if possible.
- If you want to cook for your puppy you can boil minced meat without salt or oil.
- Never give bones to your puppy as they can cause serious damage when splintered as a result of chewing. When they are fully grown you can give bones to chew on however they must not be cooked, as they will be more likely to splinter.
- Ensure fresh water is always available. When toilet training you may wish to remove it during the night to prevent accidents.
- Feed your puppy 3-4 times per day. When fully grown you can provide two larger meals, twice a day, an amount specified by the vet based on her weight and activity level.



## Socialisation, behaviour & training

- Introduce your puppy to wearing a collar. This can be for short periods of time to begin with, accompanied by lots of praise, play etc. Leash train early on, allowing the puppy to become familiar with being on a leash. Give lots of praise and treats to encourage her, and once walking encourage her not to pull on the leash. To begin with you can do this in the garden. Only take puppy outside the garden after she has received his full course of vaccinations and the vet says it is safe to do so. More details can be found here: <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/puppy-training/teach-puppy-walk-leash/>
- It is important to socialise your puppy to ensure she develops into a well-adjusted adult. See [www.puppyplan.com](http://www.puppyplan.com) for information on introducing your puppy to new people, sights, sounds and experiences.
- Puppies and dogs require lots of stimulation. Introduce simple toys, play catch and go for plenty of walks. Simple stimulation ideas include hiding food inside a toilet roll wrapped in newspaper, burying toys in the garden or freezing toys inside ice cubes. There are lots of ideas online, search 'dog enrichment'.
- Introduce boundaries straight away, don't wait until your puppy is older as this will be confusing for her. For example, if there is a room in your house where you don't want your puppy to go, enforce this from the start, though never with physical violence.
- Establish a bathroom routine right away, see [http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/housetraining\\_puppies.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/housetraining_puppies.html)
- Never hit or shout at your puppy, which can cause them to be afraid of you or the situation they are in. It is much more effective to reward positive behaviour with treats and praise. Always be patient!

## Bedtime

- Decide where you would like your puppy to sleep and provide blankets or a dog bed.
- Some puppies may experience separation anxiety from their mother and litter mates so may prefer to sleep with you on the bed or in the bedroom for the first few months. Once the puppy has become comfortable in their new home you can relocate the bed to another place in the house, if you wish.



## Keeping clean and fresh

- Brush your puppy once a week to remove debris and maintain a healthy coat.
- Wash your puppy once a fortnight in warm (not hot) water using dog safe shampoo. Dry thoroughly after washing to prevent her becoming unwell. Be careful not to over wash your puppy, as this could irritate their skin, and don't let water enter her ears canals, as this can cause infection. While young you may need to also wipe their faces and paws after meal times with a damp cloth.
- Adult dogs should be washed about once a month, using a dog-safe shampoo or if unavailable, human baby shampoo. If you wish to wash more frequently you should use soap-free shampoo to prevent skin issues. A good rule of thumb is to wash when they appear dirty or have an unpleasant odour.
- Dental care: your puppy will lose her baby teeth at 3-6 months per age to allow the adult teeth to come through. Establish a dental care routine early on so that the puppy becomes used to the process. Tooth brushing, when carried out regularly using a soft brush/ finger tooth brush and dog safe toothpaste, is the most effective method of maintaining healthy teeth and gums and fresh breath. Other options include dental chew sticks if available.

