

A close-up photograph of a woman with blonde, curly hair smiling warmly while holding a fluffy, light brown puppy. The puppy is looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light color.

THEPETVET we care 

Your independent family vet. Always.

Puppy guide

Caring for your new puppy

thepetvet.co.uk



Congratulations on your new puppy!

Your puppy's health is very important to us, so we've created this information guide to help you keep your new addition happy and healthy from the day you bring them home. Our team of Vets and Nurses have plenty of knowledge and experience and will be happy to offer you advice.

Settling in:

Bringing your puppy home is a very exciting time, but there are a few things to think about. Please remember that your puppy may only be a few weeks old, so the change in environment could be unsettling. Make sure you've given your new pet the time and space they need to adjust to their new surroundings, which may take a few days.

To begin with, be quiet around them as sudden sounds could cause your puppy to panic. If you have small children it is best to ask them to be gentle, and not to pull or tug at your puppy.

What your puppy will need:



Food



Toys



Bed



Puppy Pen



Collar & lead



Brush & comb



Water & food bowls

Bedtime

Every puppy needs a bed, but as it's likely to be chewed, don't invest in an expensive bed until they have passed this stage of their development.

They will be just as happy with a small cardboard box with a cosy old sweater or piece of blanket.

If you have children, teach them to respect your puppy's bed as a place where they can rest undisturbed.

House rules

Your puppy must know what is and isn't acceptable behaviour.

Teach them what they should do rather than simply telling them off when they get it wrong. If you tell them off, they won't understand why. It's better to make a big fuss of them when they get it right.

Simple house rules:

- No begging at the table or food sharing.
- No barking or leaping at people.
- Only special dog chews are for chewing.

Be consistent. The whole family must follow the rules, or your puppy will get confused.



Socialisation

A well-socialised puppy will be better able to cope with all of the situations they are likely to encounter in later life, rather than growing up shy or fearful.

During the early weeks and months, introduce your puppy to a variety of sights, sounds, people and experiences. Let them meet adults and children, the postman, delivery drivers and any visitors, allowing your puppy to approach in their own time. Never force the issue if your puppy is not confident.

Don't take your puppy out on pavements, parks or gardens, which may have been soiled by other animals, until they have completed their initial course of vaccinations.

We would encourage you to bring your puppy to The Pet Vet at least once a month so our Nurses can weigh them and make a fuss of them. This reinforces a positive feeling about coming to the surgery - and we also enjoy the cuddles!

Meeting other pets

When your puppy has settled in, introduce them to other pets in the house, but never leave them alone until you're sure they've accepted each other.

Don't leave your puppy alone with small pets such as rabbits, gerbils and hamsters, as they may see them as 'prey' to chase.



Feeding your puppy

Wait until your puppy has settled in before making any change to their diet, to reduce the risk of stomach upsets.

After a few days, you can introduce a new food. It must be a complete puppy food. Gradually introduce your chosen puppy food into their existing diet, increasing the proportion over a week or so.

Initially they will need 3-4 small meals per day. This can then be reduced to fewer meals a day as they get older. By the time they are about 10-12 months old - unless they are a giant breed, which have special requirements - they should be able to move on to an adult diet.

Ensure that your puppy has unlimited access to fresh, clean water. Remember to wash and rinse your puppy's water and food bowls daily.

Our Vets and Nurses are happy to discuss your puppy's nutritional needs.

Chewing

If you catch your puppy chewing something they shouldn't, distract them with a toy or call them. Always praise them when they obey.

Although puppies love chewing bones, this is not a good idea as it can lead to cut mouths and broken teeth. Fragments of bone can also be swallowed and may cause damage inside them. Give them a toy chew instead.

House training

To start toilet training, take your puppy to a particular spot in the garden as soon as they wake up, after every play time and last thing at night.

Wait with them until they have done what's required and then praise them with lots of fuss and attention.

If accidents occur, don't shout at them. If you see the signs that your puppy wants to relieve themselves (eg sniffing the floor in a circle) take them to their 'outside spot' immediately.

Basic training

You should begin your puppy's training as soon as you bring them home.

When training your puppy at home, keep commands simple and make sure that everyone in the family uses the same commands.

Keep training sessions for young puppies short and fun, and always praise them when they obey.

Grooming

Establish a grooming routine as soon as you bring your puppy home. Not only will it give you the opportunity to remove dead hair from their coat, grooming also reinforces the bond between you.

Grooming sessions also give you the chance to check for fleas and ticks, and to examine your puppy's coat, paws, eyes, ears and mouth for anything that might require a trip to the vet.

Bath time

Dogs love getting dirty and rolling in things they shouldn't, so inevitably there will be times when your puppy will need a bath. However, don't bath them unnecessarily, as it can strip away the oils which help to keep their skin and coat in tip-top condition.

Exercise and play

Young puppies generally get all the exercise they need by racing around the garden and playing, but once your puppy is fully vaccinated you can take them for short walks away from home. This will help to familiarise them with different environments.

The age at which 'real' exercise should begin varies from breed to breed, as does the amount. Our Vets and Nurses will be happy to advise you on this.

Make exercise fun by taking along a ball or a frisbee, so that you can play games. Extendable leads are very useful for recall training.



Dental care

Your puppy needs your help to keep their teeth in good condition.

Puppies' baby teeth (deciduous teeth) appear at around 4-6 weeks of age, and are replaced by the adult teeth by 6-7 months. If any deciduous teeth don't fall out naturally, we may need to extract them to prevent the adult teeth from coming through crooked.

If your dog is having difficulty eating, appears to be chewing on one side of their mouth, or paws at their mouth, they could have a dental problem, so make an appointment with your Vet as soon as possible.

Toothbrushing

You should start a toothbrushing routine as soon as you bring your puppy home, so that they get used to you touching their mouth.

Always use a special dog toothpaste and toothbrush, or a toothbrush which fits over your finger.

Our Vets and Nurses will be happy to advise you on how to clean your puppy's teeth.

Pet Health Plan

Prevention is always better than cure to help give your puppy a long, healthy and happy life. Get them on the right track by registering your puppy with our Pet Health Plan and you can **start saving up to 65%** on their preventive healthcare.

What's included?



Annual booster including
Vet health check



12 months flea & worm
treatment



Microchipping
or £10 credit if already
microchipped



6 x Nurse checks
with nail clips



6 x Nurse checks
with anal gland
expression



1 x Nurse consultation
with full health check



10% OFF all surgical
procedures, treatments,
medication and products

Scan the QR code to find out
more and retrieve your quote.



Vaccinations

Vaccination protects your puppy from a number of serious and highly infectious diseases such as parvo virus, distemper, leptospirosis and hepatitis. It works by priming their immune system so that if they come into contact with the disease later, their body is better able to fight back.

A puppy should have their first vaccination at 7-8 weeks of age followed by a second vaccination at 10 weeks of age. Until your puppy has completed their vaccinations, they should not be introduced to unvaccinated dogs or exposed to any high risk areas eg public parks.

After this, they will need an annual booster vaccination and health check to ensure they stay adequately protected throughout their life.

Fleas and other external parasites

Parasites that infect pets can also affect people and sometimes cause serious illness.

Fleas spend part of their lifecycle on the skin of animals, feeding on their blood. They cause irritation and allergies and, if left untreated, can cause serious conditions - including infections, fur loss and anaemia.



Fleas are also an important part of the tapeworm lifecycle, which can in turn cause serious illness to your pet. Tapeworm egg capsules are shed into the environment from the faeces of a tapeworm-infected dog. Flea larvae ingest the tapeworm eggs. As adult fleas develop from the larvae, they find a furry host to feed on their blood. Your dog scratches and bites their fur to relieve the itching and in doing so, eats the fleas. The tapeworms inside the eaten fleas develop into adults and attach themselves to your pet's small intestine.

Preventing fleas is much easier for you and your pet than treating an infestation, so we recommend treating all the pets in your home every month throughout their lives.

We recommend a combined flea and worm treatment from a veterinary surgery, which is not licensed for general sale. This will be more effective than products you can buy elsewhere, and contains active ingredients that cover a wider spectrum (for example lungworm).

The cotton wool test

Top tip: Fleas are hard to spot, so while you're grooming your puppy, look out for dark flecks on their skin and coat. If these turn red when combed onto a damp piece of cotton wool, then this is flea faeces, and a sign you're dealing with a live infestation.

Your puppy might also be scratching, chewing or licking their fur more than usual, or have red or inflamed skin.

Other external parasites

Puppies can also be affected by:

- Lice
- Fur mites
- Mange mites
- Ear mites
- Ticks

Worms and worming

Any dog can pick up worms, and puppies may even be born with them or pick them up from their mother's milk.

A heavy infestation of worms can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, weight loss, constipation and a dull coat. Worms pose a risk to humans, especially young children, the elderly and those with a weakened immune system. Risks to people include Toxocarosis which can result in blindness.

You should ensure that your puppy is continually protected from worms so we recommend a using treatment prescribed by your Vet every month.

The main types of worms are:



Roundworms - they look like tiny strands of fine spaghetti and are the most common type of worm. They may be seen in the faeces of infected animals.



Tapeworms - these are made up of segments which form long chains up to half a metre long. The segments look like grains of rice. Tapeworm segments may be spotted around your puppy's bottom.



Lungworms - these can be picked up if your puppy catches and eats small prey such as slugs, snails or licks their trails. Signs include coughing, difficulty breathing, loss of appetite, vomiting or diarrhoea, weight loss, lethargy and bleeding longer than normal from a minor injury.

Remember that your puppy can have worms even if you cannot see any sign of them in their faeces. Regular preventive treatment is essential. Our Vets and Nurses will be happy to advise you on the safest worming programme to follow.



Neutering

If you don't plan to breed from your dog, having him or her neutered is the responsible thing to do.

As well as preventing unwanted litters, neutering reduces the risk of a number of health problems, and can prevent hormonal problems and certain cancers later on in your pet's life. It also removes your dog's sexual urges and can resolve or prevent some hormone-related behavioural problems.

On average, neutering can increase life expectancy by 1 whole year. Puppies can generally be neutered from 6 months of age.

Microchipping

Your puppy needs to have a means of identification in case they become lost – and microchipping is a legal requirement.

You must have your puppy microchipped by the age of 8 weeks, or you could face a fine of up to £500. Microchipping is a great method of permanently identifying your pet, and our Vets and Nurses can carry this out for you quickly and easily.

A tiny microchip, the size of a grain of rice, is injected under the skin at the back of the neck in a simple procedure. Each chip has a unique number which is stored on a central computer database. If your dog is found, their chip can be quickly read with a hand held scanner and the number checked against the database to identify you as their owner.

Pet insurance



Good quality pet insurance means that you don't have to worry about vet bills should your pet suffer an accident or illness.

We are a member of the Vetsure Pet Insurance accredited network.

We work with Vetsure because:

- We handle your claims directly with them so that you can concentrate on your pet's recovery.
- Vetsure provide lifetime policies. This is the most complete type of pet insurance available. You can choose the cover level that's right for you.
- They offer cover against an unlimited number of conditions.
- You only pay your chosen level of excess once per unrelated condition.

We're pleased to be able to offer 5 weeks free with Vetsure Pet Insurance so that you can give them a try. Just scan the QR code below to activate your policy online.

Alternatively, you can give the friendly Vetsure team a call on 0800 050 2022 to discuss the policy options and activate 5 weeks free insurance.



THEPETVET 
we care

Your independent family vet. Always.

Discover our
surgery locations



**We offer a 24-hour service
for the care of your pet**

For full details, please refer to our
terms and conditions on our website.

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