



PUPPY PRIMER

Congratulations on your new puppy!
Here's how to get her off to a great start.



{HEALTH}

SOCIALIZING

Although it's tempting to let your young puppy play with other dogs right away, resist until she's had her first few rounds of vaccines. Her immune system is still developing, and those vaccines don't have super powers. It actually takes a few weeks to build immunity following vaccination. Exposing her to other dogs could make her sick. Ask your veterinarian when the time is appropriate.

CHECK-UPS

Just like a baby, puppies need regular health maintenance their first year of life. Check with your vet, but normally your pup will be dewormed and get vaccines when she's 8, 12, and 16 weeks old. She can be spayed (and male puppies neutered) around 6 months. A heartworm preventive can be given once a month. And don't forget the flea and tick prevention!

FEEDING

It's tempting to give your puppy lots of treats (especially when you're training her), but try not to overdo it, especially if she's a large breed. Dogs can get overweight very quickly, and large breeds can develop joint problems if they're too heavy, especially at a young age.



{SAFETY}

PUPPY-PROOFING

Little puppies are as curious as babies—but they've got needle-sharp teeth. It's easy for them to chew electrical cords, swallow objects, and eat toxic plants, so look around the house very carefully and remove any temptations. Be sure to keep an eye on her when she's exploring.

FOODS TO AVOID

You probably know to keep your pup away from chocolate and more obvious toxins like rodenticides. But there are other substances that can hurt her, too, including macadamia nuts, raisins and grapes, sugar-free gum, cocoa mulch, and antifreeze.

THE LEASH

If your pup pulls when she's on a leash, consider a head collar or harness until she's trained. She can damage her trachea by pulling too hard against the collar.

TOYS

Pick her chew toys very carefully, especially if she's a large breed. Some of the very thin, rubber chew toys are easily destroyed, and she can choke on the pieces.



{TRAINING}

SCHOOL

Even if you've had dogs before, dog-training techniques change and improve over time. Take her to a puppy class; she'll start learning basic training, and you'll pick up tips on how to stop problem behavior before it starts. Puppy class is also great for socialization; your pup will get used to being around other dogs and people.

THE CRATE

Crate training is a great way to potty train, and she'll be safe when you leave the house. Invest in a crate large enough for your pup as an adult. If it's too big for now, make it smaller by placing a divider inside to take up room. She'll be less likely to do her "business" in a smaller space.

TOUCHING

Get her used to having her ears and paws handled by gently holding and touching them often. This will prep her for grooming or veterinary checks in the future. Touch the nail clipper to her nails (without cutting the first couple of times) to let her know it's okay.

EXPOSURE

Ease her into experiencing different sounds and smells—the vacuum, people with beards and hats, umbrellas, people on crutches. The more she's exposed to, the more she'll take everything in stride when she's older.

{RESOURCES}

WEBSITES

- * American Animal Hospital Association, www.healthypet.com (search on "Puppy")
- * ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, www.aspc.org/pet-care/dog-care
- * The Humane Society of the United States' Pets for Life Program, www.hsus.org/pets

BOOKS

- * *The Perfect Puppy: How to Raise a Well-Behaved Dog* by Gwen Bailey (offers advice about house-training and other important puppy issues)
- * *The Gentle Modern Method* by David Weston (a simple, straightforward, easy-to-read-and-understand text for teaching basic obedience cues)
- * *The Culture Clash: A Revolutionary New Way to Understanding the Relationship Between Humans and Domestic Dogs* by Jean Donaldson (how to communicate with your dog)

