

PUPPY HANDOUT

Welcome to Puppy Parenting!

This handout is designed to answer some of your questions and provide you with resources. It is a guide only and does not replace the sage advice of your trainer or veterinarian. Please feel free to contact us if you have any specific concerns and we will do our best to answer them.

FOOD

We recommend that you choose a dry food intended specifically for puppies, avoiding generic or low price foods often found in supermarkets or discount stores. We suggest brand name puppy food purchased from a pet store because it is impossible to distinguish good dog food from poor dog food simply by looking at the ingredient list on the label. Puppy food needs to be carefully balanced to ensure the proper rate of growth and adult dog food does not contain the same formula. Personally, we tend to shy away from foods that contain wheat or corn. We feed our dogs California Natural but there are many great foods on the market – go to your pet store and ask what they would recommend.

HOW OFTEN

Offer food to very young puppies three times a day. After ten or twelve weeks of age, feed twice a day. We recommend that adult dogs should have their food split into morning and evening feedings. Let your puppy eat as much as she wants in fifteen minutes and then pick up the food dish. Having food continually available encourages overeating. Also, because free-fed puppies never get truly hungry, they don't enjoy their food unless given special treats. This can lead to difficulties with training.

PEOPLE FOOD

Never give your dog people food. Some dogs will simply get diarrhea if given a constantly changing diet. Biscuits are OK, but since they are not really all that great nutritionally, don't let them become an important part of the diet. We don't feed canned food but it is okay to supplement with a little canned food if that's your desire.

VACCINATIONS & VETERINARY CARE

We will provide you with a voucher to have your pet spayed or neutered by Dr. Stacey of Elk Lake Veterinary hospital. Dr. Stacey and Elk Lake are wonderful supporters of rescue and provide us with a discount on the procedure. There are already too many unwanted animals in the world, and we do not want to add to the problem, so spay/neuter is mandatory and forms part of your contract! The costs of the spay surgery will be paid for by Dog Bless Rescue Partners.

Your puppy has been vaccinated appropriately for his/her age but may also require additional shots. Dr. Stacey may recommend additional vaccines, depending on your lifestyle and dog. It is our recommendation that you make an appointment with Dr. Stacey within the next month to arrange for any additional vaccines and vet care. Please take your voucher and medical records with you so you can talk to him about the most appropriate time to surgically alter your pet. These costs will be borne by you and you can expect that your pup will require regular vet visits throughout his or her life.

RABIES

Rabies shots are started at sixteen weeks of age, boosted a year later, and every one to three years after that, depending on your veterinarian's recommendation. Depending on the age of your dog she may or may not have received her rabies shot. Again this is something you need to arrange with your veterinarian.

WORMING

Your dog has received a full spectrum worming and, depending on age, may have received supplemental doses but puppies require regular worming as they are prone to picking up roundworms in particular. We **HIGHLY RECOMMEND** that your puppy be placed on a monthly worming schedule to ensure ongoing good health.

HEARTWORMS

As your dog comes from an area where heartworm is prevalent we test all dogs to ensure that they are negative and every puppy receives prophylactic treatment prior to shipping to ensure that they do not become infected. Again we recommend a monthly worming regimen to ensure that your dog does not become infected with heartworm, particularly if you are travelling to areas where there it is common. Fortunately in BC we do not have issues with heartworm but many Provinces and most of the US have reported cases.

ONE ANSWER TO WORMS AND FLEAS

We recommend Interceptor or Sentinel monthly wormers because they only need to be given only once a month. In addition, they kill hookworms, whipworms and roundworms, and Sentinel also treats fleas' infestations. Simple prevention will definitely give you peace of mind that your pet is in good health and you don't have to use a topical flea control (pesticide) if you have concerns with it coming into contact with your children. Again, ask your vet about what is best for your pet.

TRAINING

Kim Toepfer of Fresno Dog Training <http://www.fresnodogtraining.com/> offers basic manners courses on line and offers a significant discount for Dog Bless Clients. Kim's site also has some excellent papers and advice on house training, stopping unwanted barking and other behavioural tips. <http://www.fresnodogtraining.com/articles.html>

You can expect accidents, chewing and other typical puppy behaviours. There are some great resources on the internet that can provide you with assistance. You may wish to explore crate training as an option as it does reinforce house training. We do recommend crates for transporting

HOUSE TRAINING

Puppies have a strong natural instinct to avoid soiling their own area. If you are consistent and patient, this natural urge for cleanliness makes house training fairly easy for most puppies. Your dog may already be house trained and if so you need to maintain consistency until the behaviour is firmly established. A little extra effort and patience in puppyhood will make the difference later on between a happy, cooperative pet and one that causes problems for you.

Again Kim Toepfer has an excellent paper on house training your pet. I highly recommend reading it http://www.fresnodogtraining.com/article_housetraining.html

TEACHING YOUR PUPPY HIS PLACE IN THE FAMILY

The reason dogs are such good pets and fit so well into human society is that they are social animals by nature. Their greatest psychological need is to be part of a group. Whether it's a family of just you and puppy, or a boisterous household full of children and pets, in order to be happy your new puppy must feel secure and understand her/his place in the group.

If you watch puppies at play, you will see a lot of growling and tussling. There is more to this play fighting than meets the eye. Those little guys are already deciding who is going to be "top dog". Whether you realize it or not, something very much like this play fighting is happening at home between your puppy and the rest of the family.

To be confident and secure what puppies need most is a master they can depend on. For your dog to have a happy life and be a pleasure to own, at least one person in the family must become such a master. Dogs have no mental concept of "friends and equals". Somebody has to be boss. Assertive puppies will grow up trying to be boss, which won't make either one of you happy. A submissive puppy may spend its entire life fretting and worrying, never sure what is expected. Everything usually works out just fine automatically--puppies find their place in the family without much trouble and everyone is happy with the arrangement. If, on the other hand, you have a strongly assertive or unusually submissive pet there are some things you should keep in mind:

WORKING WITH AN ASSERTIVE PUPPY

Assertive puppies tend to immediately investigate new people and objects. They are quick to begin play fighting activities with people. When they want to be petted or fed, they are insistent and demanding. These puppies fall easily into the role of family protector because they think the people belong to them. This is well and good, but because dogs cannot really understand human society, there is soon trouble. They become ill mannered and sometimes aggressive.

It is especially important for you to be master. Do not allow your dog to nip or bite at you in a friendly way. Do not stimulate your puppy by waving your arms and acting excited or by playing tug of war. Do not become what your puppy perceives to be an equal and competitive playmate.

WORKING WITH A SUBMISSIVE PUPPY

Submissive puppies tend to "shy away" from new people or things, either by lying down or actually running away. It is normal for most puppies to be slightly submissive. They wish for nothing more than to please you and this makes them easy to train.

Teach shy puppies things they can do that will earn your calm, reassuring praise. Try to provide a peaceful environment and a dependable schedule that includes exercise, a daily obedience session, and reliable feeding times.

SUBMISSIVE URINATION

Most puppies and young dogs have a tendency to urinate in response to new situations, when meeting a stranger, or even when their owners come home and greet them excitedly. This is a sign that your puppy is uncertain about what is expected. Never scold when this happens. Puppy is already trying hard to please. Calmly reassure, ignoring the urination. Clean up later, in private.

DESTRUCTIVE CHEWING

It is natural for puppies to chew--that's one of the ways they explore and learn. Try to keep valuable objects that are chewable safely out of reach and provide a satisfactory alternative like a Nylabone chew toy. Destructive chewing is merely a way to work off excitement and relieve frustration, not an insidious plan to get even with you. Help encourage your puppy to be calm. Be easygoing. Don't encourage tug of war or play that involves chewing and biting.

CHEW TREATS, BONES AND TOYS

I like to use good treats for training like liver bits or salmon jerky. The pet store has a myriad of things to choose from. Just stay away from the bulk milk bone types of biscuits. I also feed my dogs bones and pigs ears which are great for teeth. Again, ask your pet store for a recommendation on what might work. Treats are a great way to keep puppies focussed on chewing the right things. A Kong stuffed with kibble and a couple of blobs of peanut butter will keep them amused for hours. There are also many types of chews, I tend to stay away from the rawhide variety and choose tendons or other more natural products.

Toys are great but don't give your puppy anything small enough to swallow that can't be digested, or things that can be chewed into large indigestible chunks and swallowed. I definitely recommend Kong's and rope toys as favourites.

LOCAL TRAINERS

There are many wonderful local trainers, many of whom offer puppy classes which we highly recommend. Citizen Canine has a list and we suggest that you look into training with your puppy, it's a great way to bond and ensure that you start off on the right footing.

<http://www.citizencanine.org/victoria-dog-trainers.htm>

SELF DIRECTED LEARNING

There are a number of great training books out there and Cesar Millan has a great website with articles and other resources. His books are very popular and I personally like his methods. For further reference check out his site at <http://www.cesarmillaninc.com/>

QUESTIONS AND CONTACTS

Please feel free to ask questions. We are not vets or professional trainers but we will try our best to point you in the right direction. We hope you and your puppy have many long years together and thank you for considering rescue as opposed to buying a puppy. Our goal is to save lives and end the problem of animal homelessness. You have done a part in achieving that.

Please do send us pictures and updates of your puppy. There are many folks whom you may never meet but who have been a huge part in saving your dog from a terrible fate. They love to hear how well the dogs are doing and it gives them a reason to go on sometimes when it all seems terribly overwhelming.