

New Puppy Checklist

Adopting a new puppy is exciting for the whole family. You have a brand new, adorable family member you get to share your life with. However, it can also be stressful, especially if you are a new pet parent or do not have much experience with puppies. Puppies are a lot of work, care, and attention. Their wellbeing depends solely on you, which can be demanding.

Luckily, with our complete new puppy checklist, you'll have all the information you'll need to take care of your new puppy all in one place. You don't have to worry about forgetting a key piece of puppy equipment or an important part of their training. All the information you need to help your puppy grow into a happy and healthy dog is right here.



ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR A NEW PUPPY

Puppies require a few essentials, from feeding supplies to beds, crates, and toys. Check off the items on this list to ensure you have all the essentials on hand before bringing your new puppy home.

A high-quality puppy food. You should purchase a superior puppy food to support your new pet's development and a healthy lifestyle. Preferably, your pet's food should have a protein source as the first ingredient and be specifically designed for puppies.

Training treats. You are going to be doing a lot of training with your puppy during the first few weeks. Training treats are essential to this process and can help motivate your puppy to learn all the new things they'll need to know.

Chews. It is no secret that puppies chew a lot. Having a few chews laying around can help prevent your new puppy from chewing on inappropriate things, like your shoes and their dog bed.

Food and water bowls. You should choose a metal food and water bowl to prevent the building up of bacteria. Your dog's water bowl should also be large enough to provide them with constant access to fresh water. You do not want to have to fill up your puppy's water every few hours.

Crate. A crate can do wonders for the housetraining process and also help your puppy get used to their new home faster. Your puppy's crate should be just big enough for them to stand up completely and turn around, but no bigger.

Dog bed. Your puppy is going to need a dog bed if only to cushion the bottom of their crate. We highly recommend a water-proof and extremely durable dog bed.

Gates. You might want to portion off sections of the house from your new puppy, especially when you aren't at home. This can be particularly useful in the first couple of days when your puppy is still getting used to everything.

Cleaning products. Even if your puppy is already potty trained, your dog is going to have an accident in the house eventually, and it is paramount that you have the equipment to clean it up properly.

Collar and/or harness. Your new puppy is going to need an appropriately fitted collar to attach their identification tags and leash to. A harness might also be useful if your particular puppy belongs to a brachycephalic (short-nosed) breed, which can have breathing problems that collars tend to irritate.

A travel crate or dog seat-belt. Even if you don't plan on taking your puppy out much, you will need a safe way to transport them in the car to vet visits and in the case of an emergency. A travel crate or dog seat belt is perfect for these situations.

Toys. Puppies have lots of energy. A few high-quality toys can help them direct this energy towards something appropriate. We recommend purchasing a variety of toys, especially if you don't know what your puppy prefers.

Flea and tick prevention. Your puppy is going to need some flea and tick protection medication, collar, or other devices. You should speak to your vet before choosing something, especially if your puppy is particularly young.

Dental care. You should begin taking care of your dog's teeth right away. There are numerous ways to do this – dental sprays, dog toothbrushes, dental chews, etc. We recommend trying a few different methods to see what works best for you.

Grooming tools. Almost every puppy is going to need some grooming, but some puppies will need more than others. Consider your puppy's breed and coat type when selecting which grooming equipment to buy.

YOUR FIRST VETERINARIAN VISIT

Regular veterinary care is a must. These steps will help you find the right veterinarian for your new puppy and ensure that she's getting regular checkups and vaccinations.

Research veterinarians in your area carefully. Different veterinarians have different philosophies, reviews, and some even specialize in specific dogs. It is worth taking the time to research the veterinarians in your area to choose the best one for you and your pet.

Schedule an appointment in advance if possible. If you have a good idea when you're bringing your new puppy home, it is a good idea to call your chosen vet beforehand and schedule an appointment. Your puppy should be looked over by a vet shortly after you adopt them.

Your puppy will likely need vaccinations. Depending on the age of your puppy, your new dog will likely need a couple vaccinations. The DHLPP and the rabies vaccine are the most common. Both of these vaccinations are required by most boarding kennels and puppy classes.

Keep up with your puppy's medical records. Ask for a copy of your puppy's vaccination record when you leave the veterinary office. If you enroll your puppy in puppy kindergarten classes, they will likely require proof that your dog has been vaccinating.

Prepare to discuss your puppy's medical history. Your veterinarian will likely have a few questions about your puppy's medical history, including shots they have already gotten. If you don't know this information, be sure to ask the breeder or rescue you adopted your puppy from.

Ask if you need to bring a fecal sample. Many vets will ask for a fecal sample to check your puppy for worms. Many puppies have roundworms, which are detectable in feces. If in doubt, call your vet and ask if they would like you to bring a sample in.

Get emergency contact information. Many pet emergencies happen at night after the veterinarian offices have closed. Do not leave the vet's office without collecting their emergency contact information for after-hours emergencies – just in case.

GROOMING YOUR PUPPY

Some dogs require more grooming than others, but every dog benefits from a bath and a good brushing, particularly if your puppy is prone to shedding. Here's what you need to know about proper grooming for your new pet.

Consider your puppy's breed. Your first step to grooming your puppy is to consider their breed. Some breeds require lots of brushing, while others hardly even need a bath. Research your puppy's breed or ask whomever you adopted them from when preparing your grooming schedule.

Keep sessions short and sweet. Puppies are packed full of energy and can't sit still for long. Do not plan on having long grooming sessions at first; this will only turn off your puppy to grooming.

Desensitize your puppy to your grooming equipment. It is not uncommon for puppies to be scared of brushes and other grooming implements. Before you begin grooming, let your puppy sniff the brushes and reward him when he doesn't move away. You want your puppy to see grooming as a positive experience.

Prepare for a bath – just in case. Most puppies will not need a bath very often. Bathing your dog too much can dry out their skin, so you only need to bath them when they're actually dirty. However, you should have shampoo and a towel stored in easy reach just in case your puppy decides to roll in the mud.

Don't forget about the small stuff. On top of brushing and baths, puppies also need their ears cleaned and their nails clipped. Set up a schedule to do these things regularly. They might seem small, but they are vital to your puppy's overall health.

STARTING YOUR PUPPY'S TRAINING

Training your new puppy right from the start will help you develop a strong, trusting bond (and will help to keep your pup out of trouble, too). Here's what you need to know about properly training your new puppy.

Start training as soon as possible. It is never too early to begin training your puppy. You should preferably begin training your puppy as soon as you bring them home, especially if they are of a breed that requires a lot of mental stimulation.

Don't forget about socialization. All puppies need to be socialized with other dogs, people, and pets. Take your puppy out to meet new people and explore new places. This will teach him good manners and prevent him from becoming fearful later.

Start with Focus training. You should begin with focus training. Start by holding a treat in one hand and kneeling very close to your puppy. When your puppy stops looking at the treat and looks at you, reward him with the treat. Repeat multiple times and begin extending the distance and time as your puppy gets it down.

Throw in crate training and potty training. Potty and crate training can both be worked on in tangent with focus training. Both potty and crate training are paramount for your dog's well-being as a companion pet.

Move onto more advanced commands. When your puppy is pretty good with those commands, move onto more advanced ones, such as sitting and staying. Be sure to practice each command in different locations and situations, so your puppy learns to generalize them.

Consider joining a puppy class. Puppy classes are a wonderful opportunity for you to learn how to train your puppy while they also get some much-needed socialization.

Adopting a new puppy is exciting, but you need to ensure that you have all the essential supplies and know what you need to do to arrange for veterinary care, training, and more. Follow the steps in this checklist to prepare for your new pup.