

Hilltop Pet & Aquariums

Puppy Information Sheet

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Open Monday - Friday 9:30am-6pm Weekends & Public Holidays 10am - 5pm

Purchasing a Puppy

Buying a puppy is an important step and you will need to observe several points for the health and happiness of your new family member.

Puppies should not be sold until 7-8 weeks of age due to the fact they will miss out on sibling socialization. This is very important for their learning process. This is where they learn to romp, play and learn how far they can go with their siblings (dominancy).

Check List for your new puppy:

1. Current food
2. Vaccination card
3. Worming tablets - intestinal and heart worm
4. Flea treatment
5. Collar and lead
6. I.D. tag
7. Food and water bowls - the water bowl should be large enough to hold enough water to last them all day and sturdy enough not to be tipped over.
8. Toys - they should have at least three. One for chewing, one for playing and one as a comfort toy.
9. Grooming equipment - brushes, combs, etc.
10. Shampoo - specifically for puppies
11. Car harness - the only safe way to travel in a car
12. Bedding
13. Kennel - if they are going to be spending nights or long periods outside
14. Doggy door (optional)
15. Dog coat for warmth and protection from the rain.

Day One at Home

Puppies are prone to stress when put through big changes such as moving home. They should be taken home as quickly and as quietly as possible. Once home, they should be left to check out their surroundings at their own pace. They should not be left unattended with children or be handled for long periods of time or handled roughly.

Early Stress for Pups

Stress 1: Leaving home and siblings can cause stress so the transition should be made as smooth as possible. To make this easier on the puppy, a plush toy (around the size of the puppy) should be purchased and placed in with the puppies (prior to the puppy leaving) so it can be coated with the scent of their litter mates, and taken home with them for familiarity. Please see staff for advice.

Stress 2: Change of diet. Changing the diet should be done gradually by decreasing their current food and increasing the new food (hopefully a super premium diet) over a period of 7-14 days.

Feeding

As dog food contains calcium, vitamins, etc, it must be the main part of the diet. Meat does not contain calcium or vitamins. The "add hoc" supplementing of calcium powder is not recommended as most quality dry food has the correct dosage for your animal's health.

We recommend Hills Science Diet for every stage of your dog's life. It will assist in keeping their body and coat in great condition. Hills Science Diet is a super premium concentrated food, therefore not containing a lot of unnecessary ingredients, compared to a lot of other cheaper brands. The dog is not required to consume as much so the cost to feed them per day is around the same. You will also find they have less waste as the majority of the ingredients are being absorbed by the body.

Puppies should be fed three times a day and need to be on a puppy food until 12 months of age. If the puppy is reluctant to eat, try warming the food or adding a warm broth (stock or vegemite) or small amounts of can food.

If supplementing with puppy wet food, dispose of any unwanted food shortly after as wet food deteriorates quickly and will go off if left out.

It is best to remove the bowl 10 - 20 minutes after the meal. You can find leaving the bowl out can lead to 'fussy eaters' and 'grazers'. If the dog is allowed to graze on food left out during the day, it can become overweight later in life due to the constant eating and not burning it off.

If the dog does not eat the food at that time, take it away and try again at the next meal time. Constant change of food generally ends up with the dog being very fussy.

If you do choose to change the food your dog is currently on, you should do so over a 7 to 14 day period. Any sudden changes in the diet usually results in an upset stomach and can cause diarrhoea and vomiting.

Despite the popular belief, puppies of this age should not be given milk as animals are lactose intolerant and milk can lead to stomach upsets and diarrhoea. If you feel the need to give your puppy milk, only give it specified pet milk.

Fresh water should always be made available.

Warning

Below are some diets dogs should NOT be on.

1. Weet-Bix and milk. Contact a veterinarian if in doubt of this.
2. Meat only or as the main part of their diet. Meat has no calcium what so ever and is high in iron and protein. These days' premium foods have correct proportions of all requirements.
3. Chocolates, nuts, some vegetables (e.g. onions and potato peel), biscuits*, lollies, cooked bones, etc. can be harmful or even fatal to your pet. Avoid these at all times.

*The only exception is ginger biscuits which can be given in small quantities to help with travel sickness.

Check with our staff or a veterinarian if in doubt of what to feed your new pup.

Bedding

Plastic baskets, cotton baskets, trampoline beds or a cane baskets (cane is the easiest to chew) are some of the common beds used. It should be placed in a warm, dry and draft free position, with a favorite toy. When the puppy first arrives home, make the bed lumpy. This will then give them the comfort that they are still sleeping with their litter mates.

If the dog is spending the night outside (which is not recommended until they have passed the puppy stage) they should have a kennel. Insulated plastic is recommended for ease of cleaning. Regular checks should be made for dampness and fleas, especially if the kennel is wooden.

Sleeping

As difficult as it may be, it is best to avoid getting up to attention seeking "I'm lonely..." cries and whines during the night. If you weaken they can continue the habit as they now know how to get your attention. It is a habit that is very difficult to break. A ticking clock, lumpy bed (improvises sleeping in a litter) and security toys may help. The dog may feel secure sleeping next to your bed but beware if you don't want this practice to continue. This also includes the dog sleeping on your bed.

Toilet Training

Monitor from the start, praise and/or treat when the dog is successful. Puppies generally need to go 5 - 10 minutes after sleep, feeding, playing and excitement. One tell tale sign is sniffing the floor (although dogs will also sniff the floor when they don't need to go). As soon as you see the signs take them to the designated toilet site.

When designating a site be sure to always take the puppy out the same way (through the same door) every time. This way they will identify the route with going to the toilet. Puppies will get confused if you take them out a different way every time which can lengthen the time it takes for your puppy to be toilet trained. This can be a very trying time but keep in mind puppies do not gain full control of their bladder until after 6 months of age.

We have toilet training aids such as 'wee pads' and 'housebreaking' drops available. Please see staff for assistance.

Immunization

Your dog needs to be immunized against Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvo Virus. They should also be vaccinated against Kennel Cough even if you do not plan on taking them into boarding kennels. It is better to prevent the disease rather than trying to cure it once the dog is infected.

Tetanus is another vaccination that can be given but is only generally administered if your dog receives a laceration from timber, metal, etc.

The first vaccination takes place at 6-8* weeks of age. This vaccination is only temporary therefore the puppy must then be vaccinated at 12-14* weeks of age. When vaccinating against Kennel Cough, a booster will be required at 16-18* weeks of age. Boosters are required for all vaccinations yearly.

* Vaccination schedules can differ between different veterinary practices due to using different brands/types of vaccines. Please contact your veterinarian regarding their recommended schedule.

Immunity

It is very important that your puppy does not come into contact (directly or indirectly) with any dogs, or be walked, until 14 days AFTER it is completely vaccinated (after the final puppy vaccination at 12-18 weeks, depending on your veterinarian's vaccination schedule). Puppies are very vulnerable to contracting diseases from unvaccinated dogs.

Always feel free to speak to our staff or your veterinarian if you have any concerns.

Desexing

Male and female dogs should be desexed at 6 months of age. Desexing your dog at this age is strongly recommended. Undesexed dogs are more likely to experience such problems as cancer (testicular and mammary), tumors and other medical disorders that can be life threatening and very costly.

Desexing your dog can also make it more controllable and will stop unwanted pregnancies, which can lead to expensive vet bills.

Desexing your puppy between 6 and 12 months of age is recommended because as the dog gets older it costs more to desex. In the case of females they should be desexed before their first 'heat' as the vet bill can also increase once they have had their first heat. Remember female dogs cannot be desexed when they are on heat.

Training

Start training as soon as the dog settles in. Reward by treats and praise. If the puppy has done wrong an immediate deep "NO" growl is best. This MUST be done immediately. If you find something the puppy has done prior to you seeing it happen you should not discipline it as it will not be able to remember what it has done wrong.

You should never use the puppies name when it has done something wrong. It cannot tell the difference between its name and doing something wrong. It will just confuse the puppy.

Walking the dog should be started slowly as a pup, after it is fully vaccinated. Usually if training is started straight away, correctional devices are not necessary but if you find they are, different devices are available including choker chains - which are not recommended as they are difficult to use correctly and can cause serious damage. Despite their name they are not meant to 'choke' the dog. Harnesses and Halters give the most control in the gentlest way.

It is very important to note that these times are the most important times of your puppy's life. What you teach it and let it get away with now (i.e. sleeping on the bed!), will stick with the puppy for life.

Car Travel

When traveling in the car, the dog must always wear a safety car harness. This not only keeps the dog safe, but you as well. There have been incidents in which the driver and or dog have been killed/injured in the car or ute due to lack of safety precautions e.g. car harness. Cargo barriers will only keep you safe, It will not prevent harm or death to the dog.

Boredom

It is inevitable that sometimes your dog will be left at home by themselves. If this happens and they have nothing to do, they can become destructive. This can be avoided by providing stimulating toys, such as treat balls, in which they have to roll the ball or work out how to remove the treat. These toys can occupy them for hours. It is still recommended not to allow the puppy to roam the house by themselves as they can get into a lot of trouble, e.g. chewing your new pair of shoes.

Also keep in mind when puppies begin teething, they will require teething toys to keep them away from your belongings and clothes.

Large Breed Puppies

Puppies such as Retrievers, Saint Bernards, Shepherds and any dog maturing over 25kg, are considered large breed dogs. These dogs should be fed a specific large breed food. The large breed foods contain the

Socialization

The most important time of a dog's life is the 8-14 week stage when the pup learns its social skills. The pup should be introduced to other animals (under supervision) and friends, etc, during this period. Puppy preschool is highly recommended.

As the pups are not fully immunized during this time, it is wise to ask your friends to wash their hands if they have recently patted or handled another dog.

Worming

Puppies should be wormed every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age, then every 3 months for the rest of their life. When purchasing wormers make certain they cover all 11 intestinal worms including tapeworms. Not all worming products available treat all worms.

Fleas

Your puppy should be treated against fleas. It is better to prevent fleas than to wait for them to occur. We treat our puppies with Advantage (a spot on flea treatment applied onto the skin that lasts 4-6 weeks per application). The best way to ensure fleas are destroyed is to use Advantage as it also helps control fleas in the environment (bedding, etc) and because of the time frame it has. Shampoos, sprays and powders are also available but only last up to 5 days.

Heart Worm

Heart worm prevention is a monthly treatment that should begin from 12 weeks of age. There are tablets, chewables and spot on treatments available. If it is not started by the age of 6 months, heart worm prevention must not be given until a Heart Worm test is performed by your veterinarian.

Please note that most all wormers do not control heartworm so always read your packaging thoroughly.

Grooming

Grooming should be done on a regular basis but it is breed dependant (e.g. long hair/short hair) on how often you will be required to do it. Different combs and brushes, etc. are available to suit individual breeds. Please feel free to discuss their specific needs with us. Grooming should begin at a young age to get them used to it.

Pups should not be washed with human shampoo. Only wash your pup with pet shampoo marked 'suitable for puppies'. Do not wash the puppy too frequently as you can reduce the amount of natural oils the coat produces which could lead to skin irritations and other skin problems.

Exercise

When the puppies are young they don't need a lot of exercise. All they need is puppy play. This includes chasing balls and chewing on toys. It is crucial that they get plenty of sleep. Remember that they are only babies and need to spend most of their time sleeping.

Identification

Local councils require all dogs to be registered by 3 months of age and must wear ID and registration tags at all times.

Micro-chipping is an excellent idea as it is a permanent way of identifying your dog and cannot be lost like collars.

A rice-sized chip is implanted underneath the skin and an 'M' tattoo is placed in the right ear to identify that the dog is microchipped. Micro-chipping can be done at any time by the vet using local anaesthetic but the tattoo can not be applied until the dog is under a full anaesthetic (e.g. at time of desexing).

correct amount of vitamins, calcium, etc. required for these breeds. Incorrect amounts of these can lead to arthritis and other medical problems as they get older.

It is important that you do not allow the puppy to jump up, go up and down stairs or play tug of war games until they are fully grown as these movements can lead to bone problems and deformities.

Some large breed puppies need to stay on specific puppy food for 2-3 years. This is breed dependant. Speak to your veterinarian regarding this.

Veterinary Care

You must be prepared to take any sick or injured animal to a vet without delay to minimize any pain or further complications to the health of your pet.

Something that may begin as a minor problem can easily end up developing into something major, and possibly life threatening, so it is advisable to contact your vet without delay.

This brochure was put together by the staff of Hilltop Pet & Aquariums as a general guide to assist you in raising your pet and advising requirements to keep your friend happy and healthy.

If you cannot provide the proper care and housing, we strongly suggest you not purchase the animal.

We have books available for sale should you require more information.

HILLTOP PET & AQUARIUMS