

your new puppy

canine health

Bringing home a puppy can be a fun, exciting and overwhelming experience for both you and your puppy. Preparing for the homecoming in advance and understanding what your puppy really needs will go a long way toward helping them become a happy, polite member of your family.

Is a puppy the right companion for you?

Check “Yes” or “No” after reading the following statements:

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. I have an appropriate location and space for the breed I am considering

2. I will spay or neuter my puppy

3. I have the time, patience and energy necessary to commit to training my puppy

4. I have researched and can commit to providing proper care, veterinary attention and nutrition for my puppy

5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for my puppy

If you answered “Yes” to all of these statements, a puppy may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a puppy and ask a Petco store partner to learn more. Petco is committed to responsible animal care.

Finding your puppy:

Local humane societies and animal shelters are a great place to start your search for the perfect puppy. The staff can provide helpful information and advice on breeds, temperaments and adult sizes.

If your heart is set on a purebred, try contacting local breed rescues who dedicate their time to finding forever homes for a specific breed or local breed clubs to find reputable breeders. Good breeders will not only answer your questions, but will also ask many of their own, since their main



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

goal is to find responsible, permanent homes for their puppies. If possible, observe the mother and father—their personalities will tell you a lot about what the puppies will be like. Puppies should stay with their mother for at least eight weeks after birth to learn important socialization skills. Petfinder.com is another great resource that can help you locate shelters and rescues that have the type of puppy you are looking for.

Before you bring puppy home:

Make certain your house has been puppy-proofed. Pick up anything small enough to be swallowed and remove anything you would prefer the puppy not chew. Puppies chew—it is a natural and necessary part of puppyhood. Prevention and management are the best ways to protect both your puppy and your possessions.

Decide where to put the puppy's crate, food and water dishes and toys. You'll want to focus on your new puppy once you bring them home, not on where you want things to go.

Have a supply of high-quality puppy food on hand (check with the breeder or shelter and ask what kind of food the puppy is currently on), as well as the name and phone number of a local veterinarian.

If possible, have an appointment already made for a new puppy checkup to ensure all vaccinations are up-to-date.

Recommended supplies:

- Kennel or crate
- Food and water bowls
- Training treats
- High-quality puppy food
- Toys
- Enzymatic cleaner
- Pet gate(s)
- Chew toys
- Books on dog breeds, training and raising puppies
- Collar, leash and ID tag
- Pet bed
- Grooming supplies
- Pick-up bags
- Flea & tick preventive

The trip home:

The safest way to bring your puppy home is in a travel crate or kennel, not in your lap. Line the floor of the crate with an absorbent towel, since many puppies may experience motion sickness. Secure the kennel with a seat belt so that movement is kept to a minimum. Although everyone else in the car will be excited, your puppy may be scared and confused. Talk to your puppy in a gentle, soft voice to help them settle and feel more comfortable.

Training and socializing:

Start out right with your new puppy. While behaviors like jumping up on you and chewing on your shoelaces may be cute at first, they quickly become tiresome or even dangerous with an adult dog. Only encourage behaviors that would be acceptable in an adult dog.

Keep training sessions short and upbeat. Puppies have very short attention spans, and, like children, respond better to praise than punishment. Keep small, easily eaten treats on hand as rewards for desired behaviors. Positive reinforcement also increases self-esteem and self-confidence in an adult dog.

Decide how you will house-train your puppy before you bring them home. Will you teach them to go outside or use a litter box? Refer to the Housebreaking Your Dog Care Sheet for further information.

A regular schedule of feeding, potty breaks and bedtimes will help ease your puppy through the transition into your home and make house-training much easier. Use an enzymatic cleaner to clean up accidents and eliminate odors.

Once your puppy has settled in, begin introducing them to basic grooming and having every part of their body touched and handled. This will make future grooming and veterinarian visits much more pleasant.

Introduce your puppy to new surroundings, new footings and new people in a variety of settings. Once their vaccinations are up-to-date, puppy training classes are wonderful ways to socialize them with both new people and new dogs. Socialization now will help avert aggression and fear responses later.

Do not take your new puppy outside of your yard until at least two weeks after their initial set of vaccinations to reduce the risk of infectious disease exposure.

Signs of a healthy animal:

- Active, alert, and sociable
- Eats and drinks regularly
- Clean fur
- Walks normally
- Clear eyes and nose
- No bald patches
- Regular bowel movements or normal stool
- Clear, bright eyes
- No nasal discharge
- Well-formed teeth with healthy gums

Common health issues

Health Issue (alpha)	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Diarrhea	Loose stools caused by poor diet, a sudden change in diet, stress or other illness.	Consult with a veterinarian to determine cause and treatment. Keep vaccinations current.
Mites, fleas & ticks	External parasites; cause itching, loss of hair and certain diseases.	Contact a veterinarian for treatment.

Red flags:

- Missing fur
- Diarrhea or dirty bottom
- Uneven gait
- Distressed breathing
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Weight loss
- Lethargic
- Excessive thirst
- Excessive scratching and dirty ears with a foul odor

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your veterinarian.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please contact your veterinarian.

Ask a store partner about Petco Positive Dog Training classes, workshops and seminars.