

# I Have a New Puppy



**C**ongratulations on your new puppy. Owning a dog is very rewarding, but also requires responsibility as your puppy will rely on you for everything—food, water, exercise, training, good health and, of course, lots of love and attention. These notes will give you some help in adjusting your puppy to your family life.

## Feeding

Your puppy will need two separate bowls, one for food and one for water. Make sure your pup always has fresh water available.

Puppies are very susceptible to tummy upsets, so find out what the puppy was eating before you took him home and start by giving a similar diet. Any changes to the diet should be made gradually over about a week.

We recommend a high quality, easily digestible, complete and balanced puppy food, like Hill's Science Diet™ Growth. Hill's Science Diet™ Growth has all the necessary nutrients for a growing puppy in a concentrated form, resulting in less faeces produced which is less smelly. This will help with toilet training. Hill's Science Diet™ Growth also has high levels of DHA for brain and vision development. Avoid "meat only" meals as these do not provide the full range of nutrients a puppy needs. It is difficult to make a home cooked diet that has the correct amounts of protein, fats, carbohydrates, calcium and other vitamins and minerals for a growing puppy.

Be consistent with feeding times. Puppies are much more comfortable with routine. This will also help with toilet training.

## Toilet Training

Toilet training puppies relies on positive reinforcement. The most effective way to toilet train your puppy is to take your pup into the garden in the area you have designated toilet-zone and give a reward of a pat or a treat afterwards. The times when puppies are most likely to need to go to the toilet is after they have woken up from a nap, after eating and after playing. Puppies will start to circle and sniff around when they need to go to the toilet, which is also a good time to take your pup outside.

Patience is important, as most puppies don't develop full bladder control until around 14 weeks of age. Never rub your pup's nose into their "mistakes"; puppies won't associate the "accident" 15 minutes ago with the punishment you give.



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## Vaccinations

Puppies need to be vaccinated to protect them from contagious diseases. Our standard vaccination protects against distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus, all of which are potential fatal diseases. It also protects against two strains of canine cough. Your puppy requires a vaccination at 6 to 8 weeks, 12 weeks of age and again at 16 weeks. Until your puppy has had at least the second vaccination, we recommend staying away from dogs with an unknown vaccination status. If you have another dog, you should ensure that their vaccinations are current.

## Desexing

We recommend that all dogs are desexed, unless they will be used for breeding or showing. There are many reasons for this, which are based on improved health and temperament. We find that four months of age is the optimal time for this surgery. At this age, the surgery is low risk and young animals recover more quickly.

## Grooming

All dogs should be brushed regularly to optimize the condition of the skin, and remove dead hair from their coat. Dogs with a medium to long coat may need to be brushed daily. Puppies can be brushed from a young age. Initially, use a soft brush can be used gently for short periods of time until your puppy is accustomed to it. Dogs with long coats may also need to have their face trimmed and ears plucked from a young age, to prevent eye and ear irritations.

Puppies can be bathed from a young age, but an appropriate puppy shampoo should be used. Don't use human shampoos or velvet soap or other such preparations on your pup; it will dry the coat out. You can ask our staff about what shampoo would suit your pup.

Some long haired breeds require their coats to be clipped regularly to keep them manageable. They should be kept short in summer so they don't get too hot, but it also helps to reduce the amount of grass seeds and burrs caught in the coat. It is also worthwhile to have the feet trimmed short for the same reason. We can recommend a groomer for you if needed.

Look in your pup's ears and mouth and touch the paws. It is even possible to clean their teeth! Regular grooming and handling means that your puppy will be happier when visiting the vet, and when taking medications.

## Worming

Your pup needs to be wormed against intestinal worms every two weeks until 12 weeks of age, then monthly until 6 months of age. Thereafter, every 3 months is ideal.



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## Heartworm Prevention

Heartworm is a worm that lives in the blood vessels around the heart. It can be a fatal disease and once dogs contract heartworm, treatment can be associated with many serious side effects. We recommend that all dogs have a heartworm prevention program. This may involve either a tablet or a spot-on treatment on a monthly basis, and most effective products will also take care of intestinal worming or flea treatment also.

## Microchipping

Microchipping is a safe and permanent form of identification for your dog. Unlike collars and tags, microchips cannot be lost. The microchip is approximately the size of a grain of rice, and implanted between the shoulder blades by injection. All stray animals which present to the pound, animal shelter, or vet clinic are scanned for a microchip. If a microchip has been implanted, your dog can be quickly reunited with you. We generally implant microchips at the time of desexing, but it can also be performed during a normal consultation.

## Puppy Preschool

Puppies require exposure to as many different experiences as possible, as socialisation is pertinent to your pup's emotional development. The optimal age for socialisation is less than 14 weeks of age. Pups which are isolated during this time are more likely to be aggressive, fearful and antisocial. Puppy Preschool promotes socialisation in a safe and non-threatening environment, resulting in a well-adjusted dog. Before taking your puppy to Preschool, your pup must be checked by one of our vets and their vaccinations must be up to date. Puppy Preschool is run in conjunction with the Narre Warren Veterinary Clinic.

## Registration

Your pup needs to be registered with the local council from 3 months of age. Registration forms are available at the council offices. Pets which have been desexed or have a microchip implanted are eligible for a discounted rate.



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