

A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a pink and white striped long-sleeved shirt, is lying on a couch and sleeping. She is resting her head on a green and white patterned pillow. A light-colored puppy is lying down next to her, also sleeping. The scene is set outdoors, with a dark wooden fence visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and cozy.

PUPPY PARENTING: A HOW-TO GUIDE

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WELCOME TO THE PACK.

As dog lovers, we are happy to welcome you to the joys of puppy parenting. Whether this is your first go-round or your fifth, we know that so much goes in to raising healthy, happy pups. So, we're happy to provide you with a how-to guide to help you not only survive but love these first few months together. May they be the start of an incredible friendship.

In addition to this guide, be sure to also talk to your veterinarian.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 HOW TO GET YOUR HOME READY FOR A PUPPY

Start by puppy proofing, gathering a few basics and finding the right size crate.

06 HOW TO INTRODUCE YOUR PUPPY TO THE FAMILY

Start slow and on neutral ground with both children and other pets.

07 HOW TO GET YOUR PUPPY TO POTTY OUTSIDE

A combination of crate training, a consistent schedule and positive reinforcement is key.

08 HOW TO ENSURE YOUR PUPPY EATS WELL

Serve a food made for puppies with your specific breed in mind, and be mindful of household toxins.

11 HOW TO PREPARE FOR INJURIES

Prepare a puppy first aid kit and prepare for handling minor and major injuries.

13 HOW TO SOCIALIZE YOUR PUPPY

Start at home, ideally when your puppy is 7-8 weeks old.

14 HOW TO KEEP YOUR PUPPY HEALTHY

Regular veterinary visits, parasite protection and vaccines are the pillars of pup health.

17 HOW TO KEEP YOUR PUPPY CLEAN

Bathe them no more than once a month with shampoo formulated for dogs.

18 HOW TO TRAVEL WITH YOUR PUPPY

Find a sturdy puppy travel carrier. And for long trips, be prepared with the necessary paperwork.

20 HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY PUPPY

Give them lots of love, playtime and some proper training.

HOW TO GET YOUR HOME READY FOR A PUPPY

The very first step to ensuring a happy, healthy puppy is to make sure your home is ready.

Get the gear you'll need

It's true that puppies need a lot.
But to start off, you'll primarily need:

- A collar and leash; consider ordering an identification tag as well
- Food and water bowls
- A dog bed and crate
- Dog poop disposal bags
- Dog food (find more on this [here](#))
- Treats
- Toys like tennis balls or chew toys

When it comes to toys and treats, start out with just a few options while you get to know your pup's personality, digestive system and preferences. As you learn what your dog likes, you can add more to their collection.



Find the right crate

A crate will help your new puppy learn where to use the bathroom, be comfortable while alone at home and give them a safe space. So, which crate is the right crate? It's really a matter of size. The crate should be large enough for your pup to stand up and turn around in but not large enough to be able to relieve themselves and then move away. After all, your puppy will not want to eliminate in their resting space. Learn more about the benefits of finding a good crate and incorporating it in your puppy's training [here](#).

Puppy proof your home

Puppies explore the world with their mouths. So it's important to make sure that your home is prepared for their curiosity. Items that could be swallowed should be kept out of reach, because they could get stuck in your puppy's intestines or cause other injuries. Items that could be particularly dangerous include socks, jewelry, children's toys, foam mats, corn cobs, string or yarn and rocks. It's also important to make sure that electrical cords are out of reach, and trash and recycling are in lidded containers or behind closed doors.



HOW TO INTRODUCE YOUR PUPPY TO THE FAMILY

A harmonious home is a happy home. For you. And for your pup.

Introducing your pup to children

Children can be excited about the idea of a new puppy, but it's important to allow the puppy to approach your children, rather than letting children run up to the puppy. Teach children to watch the puppy for signs of fear or anxiety, like lip licking, yawning, raised hackles, pacing and whimpering, so they can leave the puppy alone for a bit. Most importantly: never leave a young child alone with the puppy.



Introducing your pup to other pets

The ideal place for your current and new best friends to first meet is a neutral space, away from your home. Look for somewhere with a chain link fence so that the pets can sniff each other with a comfortable barrier between them. You can then ask a friend or family member to assist you in taking both for a side-by-side walk. Only after your pets have met on neutral ground on a few occasions are they ready to meet at home. For a step-by-step guide to this introduction, [click here](#).

QUICK TIP:

Put away old toys for a few weeks to prevent possessive aggression issues until your current pets and new puppy have learned to get along.

HOW TO GET YOUR PUPPY TO POTTY OUTSIDE



Housetraining your pup is as much about “when” as it is about “where.”

Get your pup comfortable with their crate

Your pup’s crate is more than just a safe and secure space. Crates are also effective for housetraining. Since your pup won’t want to soil in their resting space, they’ll be more likely to let you know when they need to go outside. This is why [finding the right size crate](#) is very important.

Develop a consistent routine

As soon as you bring your puppy home, identify a designated potty spot. Take your puppy there first thing in the morning and then on a regular schedule throughout the day, starting with every two hours. Other times to take them there are after naps or playtime, before and after spending time in the crate, before bed, and when you see your puppy looking like they may be searching for a place to go. When they use the designated potty spot, praise your pup while giving them treats. They will soon learn that going outside is a good thing.



When accidents happen

If you catch your pup in the act, quickly pick them up and take them outside. Don't yell at or hit your puppy for having an accident. It's also not a good idea to rub your puppy's nose in it. Positive reinforcement is the key to effective potty training.

QUICK TIP:

Generally, trainers say the number of hours a puppy can hold their bladder is equal to their age in months. For example, 3 hours for a 3-month-old puppy.



HOW TO ENSURE YOUR PUPPY EATS WELL

A good diet for your pup means a good day for you both.

Choose the right food

Your puppy's food should be formulated specifically for growing puppies. But the breed of your puppy will also determine what kind of food they need, as larger breeds have different nutritional requirements than smaller breed dogs. Talk to your veterinarian about diet recommendations. And remember that the three most important factors of a good diet are: that it's complete and balanced, that your pup will eat it and that your pup will tolerate it. For more helpful information about feeding your puppy, [click here](#).



QUICK TIP:

Check with your shelter or breeder to find out what food your pup has been eating and if they will provide a starter portion. Always transition to new food gradually to avoid causing an upset stomach.

Use Treats

Giving treats is a great way to reinforce good behavior and help your puppy thrive in their new environment. But keep in mind, the number of treats you give should be no more than 10% of the total amount of food your puppy eats in a given day.

Avoid toxins

While you're focusing on all the good things that should be in your puppy's diet, it's important to remember the everyday items that shouldn't be included. Be aware of household toxins that could cause gastrointestinal upset, seizures, internal bleeding, kidney disease or death. Here's a list of just some things that are dangerous for your dog to ingest:

- Chocolate
- Mouse and rat poisons (rodenticides)
- Insecticides
- Grapes and raisins
- Antidepressant medications
- Marijuana
- Fertilizers
- Various plants
- Anti-inflammatory medications (ibuprofen, aspirin, naproxen) and acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol)
- Xylitol (found in some sugar-free gums and candies, some medications, toothpastes and more)



HOW TO PREPARE FOR INJURIES

First aid for the friends who explore with their mouths.

Puppy proofing your home is essential. Still, accidents may happen. So it's critical to be prepared to care for your pup in case of injury.

Create a puppy first aid kit

This should include:

- Antiseptic liquid
- Bandages
- Gauze pads
- Antibacterial ointment
- Scissors
- Adhesive medical tape
- Tweezers
- A pet thermometer
- Large towel or sheet
- Gauze pads
- Flashlight
- Styptic stick
- Contact information for your regular and emergency veterinarians

Treating minor cuts and bruises

To treat minor scrapes from outdoor play, wash and clean your puppy's wounds with antiseptic liquid. For a bleeding wound, apply pressure to it for 5 to 7 minutes to stop the bleeding. Or use a styptic stick on minor wounds. Apply antibacterial ointment to the wound and bandage it. Remember that small cuts might be deeper than they appear and become easily infected, so get them checked by your veterinarian.





Dealing with major injuries

Broken bones, animal bites, deep cuts, swelling, and bug stings will all require a visit to your veterinarian. Stay calm and apply pressure to any bleeding wounds on the way to the veterinarian. Keep in mind that your dog will be in pain, so they may attempt to bite you as you treat them. A soft muzzle collar can help.

Suspected poisoning

Puppies can accidentally ingest things they shouldn't from around your home or even from your own dinner plate. If possible, place a sample of what you suspect they ate in a bag and get your dog to the veterinarian immediately for treatment. Don't wait for symptoms like drooling or nausea to occur.

Choking and breathing issues

If your pup is choking or having breathing issues, take them to a veterinarian right away. If you have pet first aid training, provide them with respiratory assistance or check for items lodged in their mouth before taking them to the vet.

QUICK TIP:

For a puppy who is unable to walk or who has a deep bleeding wound, place them on a large towel or sheet to carry them to your car.

HOW TO SOCIALIZE YOUR PUPPY

Helping your puppy interact with the world around them.

The first four months of a dog's life are a critical time in their development. This is when dogs learn what is acceptable during interactions with both other dogs and humans. This understanding will shape their view of the world for years to come. Because of this, the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) recommends beginning to socialize your puppy when they are 7-8 weeks old.



Getting started

You can start the process gradually and at home. To start, involve the whole family in playing dress-up with items like hats and umbrellas so that your puppy becomes acclimated to other objects. Then invite a few friends over to slowly increase the number of people your pup interacts with. Regular strolls around the neighborhood will also help get your puppy used to seeing other people and animals.

To learn the next steps in socializing your puppy, [click here](#).

QUICK TIP:

Only expose your puppy to healthy, vaccinated dogs and people you know. Keep your puppy in low-risk environments initially; caution is key.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR PUPPY HEALTHY

A few important things you can do to keep the love growing strong.

Regular Veterinary visits

Your pup's first vet visit sets the foundation for good health, and it's where your veterinarian can answer the questions that will help you take better care of your new friend. During this visit, you'll be able to talk to your veterinarian about the regular care your pup will need and how often they'll want to see your puppy. After that, regular wellness visits will help to improve your puppy's quality of life.

Find out exactly what you can expect from your first vet visit including the questions you may want to ask. Click [here](#).



QUICK TIP:

If your puppy shows signs of anxiety or stress for vet visits, ask your veterinarian about medications or supplements that may help relax your dog. There are many safe options available.

Protect them from parasites

Internal parasites can be dangerous for all pets, but especially puppies, since puppies are still growing and vulnerable to any type of disease. Learn all the unpleasant details [here](#). One of the pillars of puppy care is effective deworming and prevention. Talk to your vet about the threat of internal parasites. And, for effective protection from heartworm disease and intestinal worms, [click here](#).

External parasites, like fleas and ticks, can not only steal your pup's nutrients, they can pass on Lyme disease and heartworms. Learn about the significant dangers they pose [here](#). Monthly prevention is key to keeping your puppy free from itching and serious illness. Talk to your vet about the external parasites currently in your area. And, for effective protection against fleas and ticks, [click here](#).



FLEAS

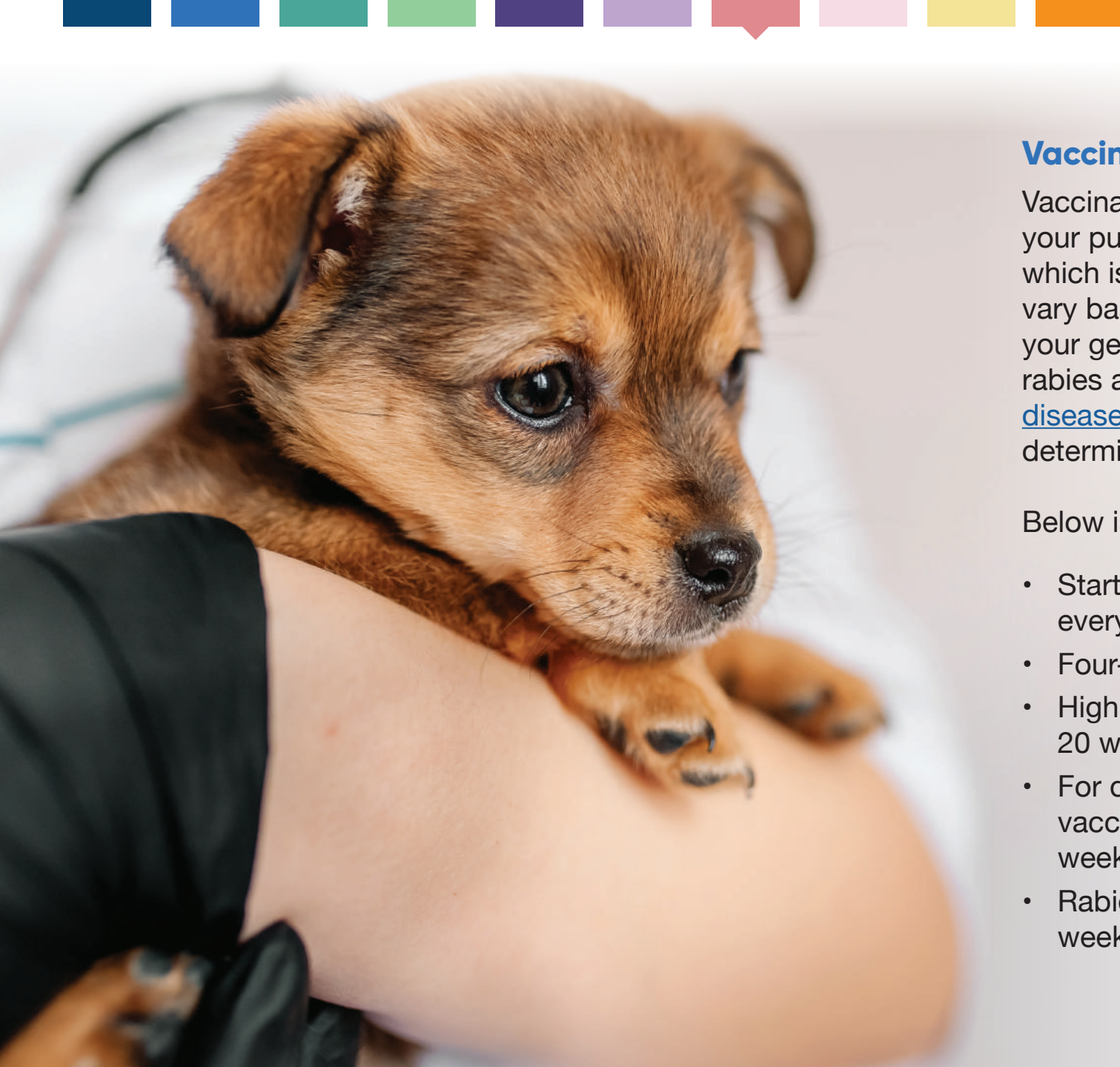


TICKS



WORMS





Vaccines

Vaccinations are another critical component of keeping your puppy healthy. They are typically divided into “core,” which is the minimum required, and “non-core,” which vary based on the type of lifestyle your puppy lives and your geographic region. Examples of core vaccines include rabies and distemper. Non-core vaccines include [Lyme disease](#) and canine influenza. Talk to your veterinarian to determine which vaccines your puppy needs.

Below is a vaccination schedule for core vaccines:

- Started by six weeks of age and should be repeated every two to four weeks until 16 weeks of age
- Four-week intervals are common for young puppies
- High-risk dogs may receive an additional dose around 20 weeks of age
- For dogs adopted around 16 weeks of age (and whose vaccination history is unknown), two doses two to four weeks apart is typical
- Rabies vaccine should be given no earlier than 12 weeks of age and then repeated one year later

HOW TO KEEP YOUR PUPPY CLEAN

So fresh. So clean. So ready to take on the world.

Bathing and grooming

It's important to start bathing and grooming your puppy at a young age so that they can get used to (and maybe even enjoy) the process. Choose a shampoo formulated for dogs since shampoos made for humans can dry out your puppy's skin. Bathing your puppy too frequently could also strip their skin of its natural oils, so most veterinarians recommend no more than one bath a month.

If your pup has longer hair, be sure to brush it regularly to prevent matting. Mats can be painful and cause infection. Want to teach your pup to enjoy bathing and grooming? Find a simple tip, on the next page.

QUICK TIP:

To keep your pup clean in between full baths, simply wipe a wet cloth over their coat.





HOW TO TRAVEL WITH YOUR PUPPY

Whether you're taking your puppy to the dog park or on a trip across the country, traveling with your pup requires taking the necessary steps to ensure their safety.

Get the right puppy travel carrier

Make sure you are able to secure your pup in a sturdy, well-ventilated carrier that has enough room to sit, stand, and stretch out comfortably during the trip. Line it with a comfortable blanket and puppy pad to catch any accidents. When [traveling by plane](#) with your pooch, make sure you have an airline-approved crate for them.

Drive safely

To ensure you and your pup stay [safe while driving](#), follow these tips:

- Larger dogs can strap in with a harness, but smaller dogs should always be kept in their crates.
- While dogs love sticking their heads out the open window of the car, this is not safe, so keep windows closed.
- During long car trips, stop every two hours for potty breaks and to offer small meals and water.
- Because some dogs get motion sickness, avoid feeding your pup large meals right before car trips.
- Never leave your pup unattended in a hot car.



Visit the veterinarian

Traveling by plane or train? You'll likely need a health certificate and rabies vaccination certificate from your veterinarian. Dogs traveling internationally may need additional paperwork. Before you head anywhere, get your pup protected from parasites. This is especially important when visiting a new location with parasites that aren't native to your area.

Travel Checklist

- Crate
- Harness
- Food
- Water
- Potty Pads
- Leash
- Proper paperwork (for airline, train or boat travel)
- Parasite protection
- Your pup's medication and supplements
- Your pup's medical records



Traveling a long distance? Your veterinarian may recommend a [probiotic](#) to prevent any tummy upset.

 **QUICK TIP:**

HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY PUPPY

Love, attention and a good set of rules go a very long way.

Playtime


Part of your puppy's daily routine should include plenty of playtime and easy physical exercise. Engage in play several times per day and play games like fetch and keep away. Allow your puppy to explore a variety of toys like balls and rope toys.

Training

At a very early age, your puppy is ready to be rewarded for the behaviors you want them to continue. In fact, you can start training classes as early as 7-8 weeks of age as long as proper cleaning procedures are followed and your puppy has had at least one set of vaccines and deworming. Classes should focus on socialization, basic obedience, confidence building, and positive reinforcement or conditioning.^{1,2}

You can train your puppy to accept nail trims, ear cleanings and tooth brushing by playing with their ears and around the mouth all while rewarding them with treats.





Wishing you and your newest family member health, happiness and a whole lot of love.

¹ American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) Position Statement on Puppy Socialization; 2008. Available at: <https://www.avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Puppy-Socialization-Position-Statement-FINAL.pdf>. Accessed March 22, 2019.

² Horwitz DF, Mills DS eds. BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Behavioural Medicine. Gloucester, UK: BSAVA; 2009: 71-72.

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