

If your puppy is to be an indoor dog, then housebreaking should be at the top of your training to-do list. The first thing you should do is decide where you want your pup to eliminate.

Ideally, the puppy should be allowed to go potty outside. Sometimes, this is not possible and people may choose to use potty pads or newspapers. This is fine only if this is where your puppy will go when he is an adult dog. Switching back and forth from indoor to outdoor elimination can be very confusing to a puppy and could end in housebreaking failure. Take your pup to the same general spot every time. Keeping your puppy in a confined area, such as a kitchen or bathroom, is also very important. The most common mistake in housebreaking a puppy is allowing too much freedom for the puppy to eliminate itself wherever it wants in your home, especially when you aren't watching. You should be very consistent, taking it out every 1 to 2 hours at first, and praising it when it goes where it should. There will ultimately be messes until your puppy is housebroken. If you find a mess, do not punish the puppy, it won't understand what it is being scolded for. If you catch the pup in the act, don't scream at or hit it, but do clap your hands or shake a can of coins to startle it. Puppies will usually stop. You can quickly take it where it needs to go to finish, then give lots of praise or a small treat.

Many puppies are housebroken quickly and easily by crate training. This involves when you cannot actively watch it, keeping your puppy in a crate or very small area. The puppy should have enough room to stand up and completely stretch out. This method works because dogs instinctively do not want to eliminate in the same area where they are to sleep. The puppy should still be consistently taken out and allowed to get plenty of exercise, but, if you get busy, have to leave, or go to bed, the puppy is returned to the crate. The crate becomes the den for the puppy, and as an adult dog, it will probably still return to the crate to sleep when the door is left open. At first it will probably cry and continue to have accidents in the crate, but the crying will stop within a few days, and many puppies are completely housebroken within a few weeks. Remember, strict adherence and being consistent are the keys to successful housebreaking. Puppies easily fall into bad housetraining habits, so be sure to check with the veterinarian if you are having problems.

When it comes to training, you should also be aware of how you may be rewarding undesirable behavior. For example, you come home and your new little puppy runs to you, jumping with joy to see you. We immediately want to give attention to the puppy, petting and greeting it in return. However, this attention you give is rewarding it for jumping on you. When this puppy becomes full grown, it may still think it is okay to run and jump on you or your guests, probably knocking a person down if the dog is large. It would be best to wait until your puppy calms down and learns to sit, then it can be rewarded with your attention. All puppies should also be taught to walk on a leash, regardless of their puppy size. We tend to want to carry them around when they are small, but remember that they will be growing larger, and it will make leash walking an adult dog much easier.

Training and socializing your puppy now will help build a strong and happy relationship between you and your soon-to-be adult dog.

## Peace of Mind

You have all the supplies your new puppy will need, it is on track with veterinary care and proper nutrition, and training is going well. So, what else could there be to help ensure a lifelong, happy and healthy relationship with your new puppy? For starts, being prepared financially for unpredictable accidents and illnesses can give peace of mind as well as microchipping your puppy with permanent identification.

Your veterinarian can simply inject your puppy with a microchip that will stay with your pet for life. 90% of lost pets never return home, but the HomeAgain microchip gives your puppy the best chance of being returned home should it be lost or stolen. It is nearly painless to inject and is relatively inexpensive. If your dog becomes lost, the HomeAgain Company will send out an alert to help bring it home. They have a 24/7 hotline and offer services such as an emergency medical hotline and travel assistance. HomeAgain has reunited over 600,000 lost pets with their families. Talk to your veterinarian about having your puppy microchipped or visit [www.homeagain.com](http://www.homeagain.com) for more information.

Unfortunately, accidents and illness do happen to our pets during their lifetime. Prevention is the best protection, but when the unexpected does happen, veterinary testing and treatment can add up. A veterinary pet insurance plan is a smart way to cover these costs. It is also a good way to help pay for veterinary recommendations such as vaccinations, spay and neuter, and dental care. There are several affordable plans available.

Visit [www.petinsurance.com](http://www.petinsurance.com) for more information

We hope this helps you and your puppy to start off on the right paw in a lifetime of happiness. If you have any questions please contact us at Flanary Veterinary Clinic, 270-898-9738 or through the website, [www.flanaryvet.com](http://www.flanaryvet.com) and we will be happy to help you.



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# PET NEWS

## Starting Off On The Right Paw A life plan for your puppy

Bringing a new puppy into your family is fun and rewarding; however, it also means taking on the responsibility of caring for the puppy now and throughout its life. Your puppy's lifelong health and happiness starts on day one.

### Picking A New Puppy

Choosing a puppy to be an addition to your family can be a wonderful experience, but a lot of thought and planning is needed before making such a big decision. The first decision is which breed you will choose. How big will the dog get? What is the temperament of this breed? What medical problems might the breed of dog be predisposed to? Will the dog get along well with your children or other pets? Will this dog shed a great deal or will it need to see a groomer? A hunting dog will not be happy with apartment living or no room to exercise. A pug does not tolerate heat well and should not be kept primarily outdoors, especially during the summers. Mixed breed dogs will vary in size, coat type, and temperament. A veterinarian can give a good guess as to which breeds the dog may consist of and the size it may become.

After you pick out which breed best suits you, be aware of the temperament and health of the puppy. Often times a runt that isn't growing properly may have a genetic problem. Puppies that are very lethargic or have runny eyes and noses may be sickly. Take notice if you see fleas or ticks on the puppy which will require prompt treatment to stop possible illness. Also, look under the puppy's tail. If you notice a lot of feces or if it is wet and yellow, it probably has diarrhea. This could indicate illness or parasites. Also, observe if the puppy has an appetite. Ask the owner or shelter worker if you can offer the puppy a treat. This, too, will help you to see the puppy's personality.

Avoid picking a pup that is skittish and acts "scared". Try to pick one that is laid back and friendly. (This doesn't necessarily mean it will be a lazy dog.) Also, a good rule of thumb for picking a friendly, well socialized puppy is to turn the puppy over and hold it on its back in your arms. When cradling it like a baby, the puppy should not resist or panic. Puppies that resist and are more jumpy can sometimes be headstrong. Those may only be right for the owner that has the time and patience to work with and train them, be sure that is you before taking on the responsibility.

Taking the time to pick the right puppy for you and your lifestyle will mean a happier relationship between you and your best friend, now and for the years to come.

### Plan Ahead Before Bringing Your New Puppy Home

Being prepared to bring your new puppy home is nearly as important as choosing the right puppy for you and your family. If you haven't acquired supplies or puppy-proofed your home at the time you pick out your puppy, ask the breeder or shelter if the puppy can stay with them until you do so. It will make the transition easier on you and your puppy.

Introducing your new pup into your home should start with the car ride. This can be a stressful time for the puppy who is being separated from the mother and littermates, most likely for the first time. A crate is the best way to transport your puppy. Make sure it is of adequate size so the puppy can stretch out and stand up, but not too big. Provide a comfy bed of towels or a blanket. Do not place any food or water in the crate as it is likely to be spilled. If you have a long drive, it is best to stop to offer water. Some puppies will get carsick, so you still may want to avoid feeding until you get home. Avoid trying to hold your puppy and drive or letting it loose in your vehicle. This could end in an accident and/or injury to both of you.

If the puppy is going to be an indoor dog, then your house should be puppy-proofed just as you would baby-proof it. Anything and everything a puppy can get into its mouth, it will chew. Dangers include electrical cords, string, coins, and many houseplants. You should avoid letting the puppy have free roam of your house. A baby gate blocking off the kitchen or a bathroom is a good way to help keep the puppy under control. Until housebroken, a tiled or linoleum floor is ideal, since messes will be easier to clean up. The crate that you bring the puppy home in is a great sleeping area and will make the puppy feel more secure.

If your puppy is to be an outdoor dog, you should also be sure to puppy-proof its area. A fenced in space is the safest outdoor area for your puppy. Be sure there is adequate shelter. If the outdoor temperature is a drastic change from what the puppy has been use to, allow time for acclimation. Consider letting it stay



in a safe, clean area in a barn or garage, or even indoors.

You will also need to have the following supplies ready for a new puppy: a collar and leash with identification tag, ceramic or stainless steel food and water dishes, and puppy safe toys. You should have food for your puppy, too. Starting your puppy out on the right food can greatly affect its health and mood (See Nutrition for Life section). Ask the breeder or shelter for a small amount of the food they were feeding the puppy. You should offer this to the puppy the first day home; then, gradually mix the old and new foods in increasing amounts every day. This will be easier on the puppy's digestive system. Many puppies do not want to eat the first day home since everything is new to them. This is usually not of any concern, unless the breed is a small one such as a Pomeranian or Yorkshire Terrier. Their blood sugars tend to drop very quickly (hypoglycemia) if they do not eat, so you should keep some pancake syrup and beef or chicken baby food on hand in case the puppy acts very lethargic or lifeless. Check with the veterinarian for more information on preventing and treating hypoglycemia in small puppies.

Introducing your new puppy to its new family should be a gradual process. If you bring your pup home and put it in a new environment with 2 kids, a cat, and another dog all who want to immediately check it out or pick it up, the puppy could be terrified. Introductions should be done one at a time and calmly. Keeping pets separated, such as behind a baby gate, is a good way for them to become familiar with each other without feeling either threatened or overwhelmed. Before the puppy's arrival, teach children to stay calm, and not to yell or run around the new puppy for awhile. It will take time, but the puppy will eventually get used to the new environment, new pets and new people, and will begin to fit right in as part of the family.

## Puppy's Veterinary Visit

Your puppy may have already seen a veterinarian and/or received some of its first vaccinations; however, taking your puppy to the veterinarian is crucial for your pet's health. It is also an educational experience where you can learn how to help your new best friend live a long and healthy life. You should expect that your puppy will have several veterinary visits for examinations, vaccinations and de-worming within the first few months of life. When you visit the vet's office, be sure to ask questions about your puppy since the veterinarian is the best source of information for your pet's health. After the puppy series is complete, twice a year wellness exams will allow the veterinarian to diagnose, treat, and prevent health problems before they become serious.

During the examination, the veterinarian will do a thorough check from nose to tail, feeling the abdomen, listening to the heart and lungs, looking in the eyes, ears, and mouth, and assessing the overall condition of your puppy. Even puppies that appear normal and healthy can have underlying, sometimes serious, medical problems such as heart murmurs, which can be detected with an examination.

Any changes in your puppy's appearance or behavior should be brought to your veterinarian's attention. Changes in

eating, urinating or defecating, and general behavior can all indicate illnesses. You should also notice if there are any eye discharges, unusual mouth or ear odors, or skin or coat changes. The sooner problems can be detected, the sooner treatment can be provided.

## Vaccinations

Ideally, your new puppy will receive vaccinations at 6, 9, 12, and 16 weeks. This may be adjusted depending on the age at which you receive your puppy and the vaccines it may have already been given. Vaccinations prepare your pet's immune system to prevent diseases that can cause serious illness and death. At each visit, your puppy will be vaccinated to prevent the following diseases:

- Distemper, a disease that affects the respiratory, digestive, and nervous systems.
- Hepatitis; a disease that affects the liver.
- Leptospirosis; a bacterial disease that causes kidney disease and can be fatal.
- Parvovirus; a highly contagious disease that causes severe diarrhea and vomiting. It is usually fatal if treatment is not sought in time.
- Parainfluenza; a contagious respiratory disease that causes a dry, hacking cough.
- Bordetella (Kennel Cough); an airborne disease that causes bronchitis and can lead to pneumonia.
- Rabies; a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system and can be transmitted to people and other animals usually through a bite wound.

For most dogs, one Kennel Cough vaccine is given at about 3 months, and then, every 6 months. One Rabies vaccine is given at 4 months, then yearly thereafter. As a young dog, your new puppy will receive 3 to 4 vaccinations consisting of Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus, and Parainfluenza. So, why does a puppy need the same vaccines several times while young? A young puppy is very susceptible to infection, particularly because the natural immunity provided in its mother's milk may wear off before the puppy's own immune systems is mature enough to fight off infection. If a puppy is exposed to a virus during this gap in protection, it may become ill. To narrow gaps in protection and optimally defend against diseases during the first few months of life, a series of vaccinations is given. Each vaccine "boosters" the previous one, increasing the immunity level. Once the puppy series is complete, the vaccines will need to be given every year to ensure the protection level remains high.

## Internal and External Parasites

Nearly all puppies are born with worms and if not treated, they can cause numerous health problems. The most common worms are roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworms. The risks to your pet include blood loss, malnutrition, diarrhea, vomiting, dehydration and sometimes even death. Some intestinal worms can also be spread to humans and cause damaging effects such as permanent or partial vision loss. At Flanary Veterinary Clinic, your puppy will be de-wormed at 6 weeks of age. At 9 weeks, a microscopic exam



of the puppy's stool will be done to look for worm eggs, indicating the presence of worms. This is done since puppies very easily re-infect themselves with worms, even after de-worming. This fecal exam can also detect other intestinal parasites such as Giardia and Coccidia, both of which are organisms that live in the intestines and often cause diarrhea and poor weight gain.

At 12 weeks of age, your pup will be started on heartworm prevention. Heartworm prevention, such as Heartgard, Interceptor, or Iverhart, is given once a month for life and serves two purposes. It will help prevent some intestinal worms, essentially de-worming your pet every month. Its main purpose is to protect against heartworms, which are worms that are transmitted to dogs and cats by mosquitoes. They can grow up to a foot long and live in and around the pet's heart. If left untreated, the animal will develop serious complications and eventually die. A once a month "treat" should be given to prevent heartworm disease and is essential for keeping your puppy healthy for life.

Keeping your puppy free of fleas and ticks is also important to his health. Not only will fleas and ticks bug you and your pet, but they can spread diseases, cause anemia, and in extreme cases even death. Prevention is the key to controlling these creatures before they get out of hand. A monthly treatment for your pet, such as Frontline Plus for fleas and ticks or Comfortis for fleas, is your pup's best defense. Only use the products recommended by the veterinarian. Many of the products that are available at stores can be very dangerous to your puppy's health, not to mention the fact that they usually don't work very well.

## Nutrition for Life

The food your puppy eats now and throughout life has a great impact on its health and life expectancy. The right balance of quality nutrients promotes good health. Puppies grow very fast and proper nutrition is important for their development. They should be fed a puppy food until 1 year of age. Then your dog should be switched to an adult food, and finally a senior food at 7 years old. The veterinarian is the best source for the right food for your dog, as there are many different types available.

Hill's Science Diet is the number one brand recommended by veterinarians. Pets that are exclusively fed Science Diet lead longer and healthier lives because it has the right balance of the right nutrients. Different puppies may require different nutrient levels. Science Diet offers a Large Breed puppy food for the larger breed dogs, specifically formulated for their rapid and extensive growth. They also offer a Small Bite food for tiny puppies. Visit [www.hillspet.com](http://www.hillspet.com) for more information on nutrition and Science Diet foods. Remember to always provide clean, fresh water and clean dishes to help prevent bacteria.

The right food is important for your puppy's health, but also remember to be wise about table scraps and treats. Too many treats can cause your puppy not to eat his food, taking away from his nutritional needs. They can also add more calories than your pup needs, which can cause excessive weight gain. You should avoid feeding scraps and human food which not only cause weight gain, but can also cause sickness or even death.



## Spay or Neuter Your Puppy



Most puppies should be spayed or neutered at about 5 months of age. Spaying and neutering involves the removal of the reproductive organs. Not only does this help control pet overpopulation, but research has proven that these pets live longer and have a reduced risk of a variety of health problems, including certain types of cancer. Both operations are low-risk procedures, usually without complications.

Spaying and neutering at a young age can help limit some behavioral problems, such as aggression and urine marking. Some people may choose to breed their dog in the future but keep in mind that many complications can arise in the breeding process and unexpected expenses are often not considered. The cost of vaccinations and veterinary care of the offspring along with food can consume much of the profit. This doesn't even include the cost of such possible complications as C-sections.

Prior to surgery, your puppy should have several tests done to ensure his safety and quick recovery. Blood tests check the function of internal organs. This is important before surgery to be sure the liver and kidneys can excrete the anesthesia, resulting in a proper recovery. An EKG should also be performed to check the function of the puppy's heart before and during the surgery. The results from the bloodwork and the EKG are not only important before a surgery, but they also set a baseline for your puppy's future health. If the puppy becomes ill in the future, these test results can be used as a reference for diagnosis and treatment.

Spaying and neutering is not only best for your puppy, but it is also in your best interest. Your pet will live a longer and healthier life, making both of you happy.

## Teach and Train Your Pup

Training and socializing your puppy should start as soon as you arrive home with it. Teaching your pup to do tricks can be fun, but it is more important to begin concentrating on areas of socialization, housebreaking, and the prevention of unruly behaviors. Training sessions should be kept short but consistent with motivating factors to reinforce good behavior such as food (the puppy's own dry food), healthy treats, toys, and affection.

When your puppy has been adequately vaccinated, you should take him on as many walks and outings as you can. The more your puppy is socialized and learns about its world, the more comfortable you both will be when you do have to go out or have people in your home. Puppies should have positive interactions with children, adults, and other pets. You can also take your puppy on repeated, short car rides to help prevent anxiety associated with traveling.

Obedience training is a great way to socialize and train your puppy at the same time. Invite friends and family over to play with the puppy, and gradually introduce different noises, such as the vacuum cleaner or traffic sounds, so that the puppy grows up being use to as many different situations as possible.

