

General Practice Service
Willows Information Sheets

Looking after your puppy





Looking after your puppy

Congratulations on acquiring your new puppy. We are sure that by now you will have fallen in love with your new family member! Please read on for simple guidelines regarding the care of your new pet.

Things your puppy needs

- a food and water bowl
- toys
- a collar and lead
- an identification tag with the puppy's and your name and telephone number needs to be fastened to the collar. This is actually a legal requirement.
- pet health insurance – puppies can be accident prone!

What to do next

- **Feeding.** For the first few days after taking your puppy home it is advisable to feed it on the same food it has been used to. After your puppy has settled in, you can change the diet if you wish to. We advise feeding good quality puppy food rather than home-cooked diets. Any new diet should be gradually introduced over a period of a few days. Dogs differ in their nutritional needs from humans, but are by no means pure 'meat-eaters'. Rapid growth and proper development of bones, joints and muscles mean that a correct diet is of extreme importance for puppies. Small puppies (8 to 12 weeks old) need four meals per day. This can gradually be reduced to one or two meals by the time your dog is six months old. (See [Nutrition advice for dogs information sheet](#)).
- **Bedding.** Moving to a new home and away from its mother and litter mates is a stressful situation for your puppy, no matter how much you may welcome your new addition to the family. This means that your puppy needs a private place to retreat to when he or she is tired or a bit scared. A soft warm bed placed in a puppy crate or a basket is ideal. Make sure no-one disturbs the puppy when it is in the bed. A plug-in DAP (dog appeasing pheromone) diffuser may also help your puppy settle in – it releases pheromones (scents) similar to those that its mother would produce, and this often helps puppies feel more secure in their new environment.
- **Grooming.** Spend time grooming and getting your puppy used to having its ears, mouth and feet handled. This will help to establish a strong bond with your puppy and will make it much easier later when ears, mouth and feet have to be cleaned or checked. This is also a good time to gently introduce teeth cleaning. (See [Dental care for dogs and cats information sheet](#)).
- **Toilet Training.** If you anticipate when your puppy is likely to need to go to the toilet then you will have far greater success. Puppies will generally need to go to the toilet when they have first woken up, had a drink or some food, and after playtime. Take your puppy outside in the garden and give them a command like 'get busy' – if they go to the toilet then you should reward them. Never tell them off if they have an accident in the house, as they won't understand why they are being scolded and it can have a bad effect on their behaviour.
- **Dog Training.** You can start with basic training as soon as you have brought your puppy home. It actually helps the puppy to settle in if you establish a daily routine – your puppy will soon know when to expect food and walks.
- **Toys.** Take care to choose toys that your puppy cannot destroy easily and potentially ingest (eat). Ingestion of a toy might cause a blockage of the intestines which can be life-threatening.

Vaccination

Your puppy needs vaccinating against distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus and leptospirosis. To ensure full protection, puppies need to be vaccinated twice within two to four weeks. The protection will start about seven to ten days after the second vaccination.

Other vaccinations, for example against kennel cough, are not part of the routine protocol and are only given when necessary e.g. before staying in boarding kennels. (See [Vaccination in dogs information sheet](#)).

Microchipping (identichipping)

Your puppy can be microchipped at the time of vaccination. A microchip is about the size of a grain of rice and contains a unique bar code number which can be read using a small scanner. The microchip number, together with the details of the owner and dog are then registered on a national database. Should your dog ever become lost and is found, the chip number can easily be read by using the scanner and your dog can be re-united with you.

Worming

No matter how diligent the breeder or previous carer has been, your puppy will have picked up a few worms. Regular worming should be performed every two to three weeks until three months of age and then monthly until six months of age. Afterwards, regular worming at least every three months is advisable to protect both your dog and your family. Effective safe veterinary worming tablets and spot-on products are available from reception, providing your dog has been seen by one of our vets within a reasonable period – this is a legal requirement for prescription medications. (See [Worming your dog information sheet](#)).

Fleas, mites and ticks

Fleas and ear mites are common parasites in both puppies and adult dogs. Both can cause severe irritation and skin or ear infections. Fleas can also transmit tape worms. Spot-on products can be used to treat or prevent fleas and ticks. Please ask us for guidance. (See [Ectoparasites \(fleas and other skin parasites\) in dogs information sheet](#)).

Free health checks

As part of our vaccination package we offer a free health check when your puppy is six months old. Apart from your puppy having a thorough examination, this is also a good time to discuss neutering, feeding, preventative health issues and any other questions you may have.

Socialisation and training

Puppy training and socialisation classes are great fun for both your family and your puppy and are a good way of introducing the puppy to friends of his or her age group. Basic training is usually included and you will have the opportunity to meet like-minded people to chat to and to discuss questions. Feel free to ask at reception for details about classes in this area.

Should your puppy be unwell or should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

General Practice Service
www.willows.uk.net



The information contained is proprietary to Willows Veterinary Centre & Referral Service and may not be modified, reproduced, distributed or utilised in any manner in whole or in part, without the express prior written permission of Willows Veterinary Centre & Referral Service.