



NEW PUPPY PARENT GUIDE

BY:



FOOD



Puppies need special food to support their increased need for energy, calcium and other nutrients during growth. Feeding your pup a high quality puppy food in their first year of life will set them up for a healthy life. Look for premium diets based on scientific research and development from brands including Hill's Science Diet, Royal Canin and Advance.

Science based puppy foods are rigorously tested to ensure safety, quality, nutritional soundness, palatability and digestibility. The end result is food that tastes great, is gentle on your pup's tummy and delivers everything they need to grow and thrive.

SMALL BREEDS

Small and toy breed puppies (those with an expected adult weight under 10kg) mature faster than medium and large breeds, so choose tailored small breed formulas to ensure your pup's unique nutritional needs are met.

LARGE BREEDS

For puppies with an expected adult weight over 25kg, we recommend feeding a tailored large breed puppy diet. These diets

have been formulated to account for the rapid growth rate and heavier body weight that is placed on their growing skeletons. The main difference between a regular puppy food and a large or giant breed puppy food is the energy density, calcium content, and the calcium to phosphorus ratio.

High energy diets and rapid growth are known risk factors for developmental bone and joint diseases in large breed puppies, so large breed puppy foods are less energy dense to promote controlled bone growth.

Q&A

How often should I feed my puppy?

Puppies need to eat more frequently than adult dogs, after all they only have tiny little stomachs! Up until the age of about 5 to 6 months it's recommended to split your puppy's daily feeding amount into 3 separate meals.

How much should I feed my puppy?

The ideal feeding amount will vary from formula to formula and depends on your puppy's age and weight. To work out how much to feed your puppy, consult the feeding guidelines on the food packaging and use this as a starting point, adjusting the amount up or down depending on your puppy's needs. If you need help or aren't sure how much to feed, check with your veterinarian or ask our **Pet Circle Vet Squad** for help.



HEALTH



FLEA, TICK & WORMING TREATMENTS

Your puppy needs to be protected from fleas, intestinal worms, tapeworm and heartworm. For those living in or visiting the east coast of Australia, protection against paralysis ticks is also extremely important.



INTESTINAL WORMS & TAPEWORM



Your puppy needs to be wormed:

- Every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age
- Every month until 6 months of age
- Every 3 months after 6 months of age (OR monthly, if you prefer to combine with heartworm prevention).

HEARTWORM



Heartworm prevention needs to be maintained for life. You can either choose to get your pup an annual heartworm injection at your vet or you can give a monthly product yourself at home. Monthly products usually combine heartworm with intestinal worming, and some even combine flea and tick treatments in the mix too.

FLEAS & TICKS



Depending on the product, flea and tick prevention can be started around 6-9 weeks of age. As previously discussed, you can combine flea and tick protection with worming, or you might like to give two separate products. Ask your vet about whether there are ticks, particularly paralysis ticks, in your area.



VACCINATIONS & HEALTH CHECKS

Typical vaccinations for puppies involve 3 injections spaced approximately 4 weeks apart. These usually occur at 6-8 weeks of age, 12 weeks of age, and 16 weeks of age but can vary depending on your location and the type of vaccine your vet uses. Once the puppy series has been completed your dog will need yearly, or in some cases 3 yearly, vaccinations for life.

In general, dogs in Australia are routinely vaccinated against Canine Parvovirus, Canine Adenovirus, Distemper and Kennel Cough. Additional vaccinations may be recommended in certain areas so consult with your local veterinarian for recommendations specific to your dog's needs.

Remember that **vaccinations can take up to two weeks to have their full effect**, so unless your vet has advised otherwise avoid taking your puppy out and about, particularly to dog parks, beaches and other dog hotspots until 2 weeks after they have had their final vaccination.

DESEXING

Desexing your puppy before he or she reaches sexual maturity (from 4 to 6 months of age) will prevent unwanted pregnancies as well as reducing roaming behaviour and territorial marking. Not only that, female dogs who are desexed before their second heat have a significantly reduced risk of mammary cancer and uterine infection. Male dogs who are desexed are less likely to experience prostate problems and testicular cancers.

Most vets will recommend desexing your puppy at about 5 to 6 months of age, although in some cases puppies can be desexed as early as 16 weeks depending on the size and breed of the dog.



DENTAL CARE

Your puppy will start teething from about 12 weeks as their adult teeth start to come through. Most of the time owners don't even notice these baby teeth fall out as they are often swallowed, but don't be worried if you find the occasional little tooth around the house!

While they are teething your pup will probably start to chew on everything, so make sure you give them plenty of appropriate chew toys to save your shoes and furniture. Until your pup has all their adult teeth avoid giving harder dental chews or bones as baby teeth are a little more delicate and may break if they chew hard objects.

Once all your puppy's adult teeth are through (usually by about 6 months), it's time to start thinking about how you will care for their

dental health throughout their life. Veterinary dentists recommend daily tooth brushing as the gold standard for dog dental care, and the earlier you start the easier it will be for your dog to accept this. Try to get your puppy used to having their mouth examined and handled from an early age.



BATHING & GROOMING

Puppies have a habit of getting dirty, so you'll need to keep some gentle shampoo on standby. As a general rule, aim to bathe your puppy about once every 2 weeks or so from the time you bring them home. Bathing your pup very frequently may dry out their skin which can cause itching or flaking. Use a sensitive skin or puppy specific formula to help protect that soft skin and keep your pup's coat smooth and shiny. For quick clean ups in between washes you can also use pet cleansing wipes and coat refreshing sprays.

Medium and long haired breeds will need to be brushed daily to prevent knots and mats from forming. They'll also need to get used to having their coats clipped to keep things neat and tidy. Start getting your puppy used to being groomed, handled and having their nails trimmed as soon as you bring them home; this will make life much easier for you and any dog groomers in the long run!

TRAINING & BEHAVIOUR

POSITIVE PET PARENTING

Positive or reward based behavioural training is widely accepted to be the most effective and enjoyable way to encourage dogs to behave in the ways that we want. This concept hinges on capturing and rewarding desirable behaviours (with treats and praise) while ignoring undesirable ones.



Attempting to stop unwanted behaviours by yelling, picking up or interacting with your dog in any way can actually encourage them; your dog may well see any form of attention as positive reinforcement. The use of physical force such as hitting, kicking or smacking is also not an appropriate or humane way to train a dog.

In the case of negative behaviours with dogs and puppies, the best approach is to 'shape' their behaviour by redirecting them away from the undesirable behaviour (eg. barking at the neighbours) towards a learned desirable behaviour (eg. sitting quietly on a mat). While it

can take time and patience, positive pet parenting will help your dog to learn how to behave and interact with people and other animals appropriately without damaging your relationship or causing distress, anxiety or pain.

A handy mantra for positive pet parenting is to train the dog you want - acknowledge and reward behaviours you desire in your dog, ignore and reshape the behaviours that you don't desire.

CLICKER TRAINING

Clicker training is a way of signalling desirable behaviour to your dog in order to 'capture' it and can help to accelerate training. A good way to think of the clicker is like a camera that takes a picture of the desired behaviour at the instant it occurs. The clicker is paired with positive reinforcement (usually treats) to reinforce and teach the behaviour.





TOILET TRAINING

The key to successful toilet training is consistency and patience. You will need to take your puppy outside to the area where you would prefer them to toilet a lot, ideally every 2 hours for young pups! A good rule of thumb is to take your pup to the toilet whenever they wake up from a nap, after eating or drinking, after play sessions or if they are showing signs that they need to go such as sniffing around the ground in circles. When you take your pup out to the toilet, avoid the temptation to play with them, simply give a command like 'go wee' and wait patiently for a few minutes.

Reward your puppy with plenty of praise every time they do the right thing. Remember that you'll need to get up during the night too in the early months to avoid any accidents in the house.

When your pup has a toilet training accident in the house, don't scold them or rub their nose in it as this will only breed anxiety and fear. Simply clean up the mess without delay, using an enzymatic cleaner to remove the scent which can attract your puppy back to that spot again next time.

For puppies in apartments or situations where it is difficult to take them outside overnight, you can also train them to use a puppy pad as an alternative toileting spot. Use the same approach as above to show your puppy that the pad is the place to go.



SLEEPING

Remember that your puppy is doing a lot of growing and developing, which means that he or she will need plenty of sleep at night and daytime naps. It's perfectly normal for young puppies to sleep about 15 to 20 hours a day!

In order to maximise your puppy's sleep and help them settle quickly at night time, try to stick to a bedtime routine, for example: dinner, a walk, playtime, a toilet trip and then into the crate or sleeping area. It's normal for your pup to wake during the night and need a toilet break until about 16 weeks of age.



CRATE TRAINING

Crate training is a way to create a safe, personal space for your dog in your home. It draws on your dog's natural instincts to create a den, a safe refuge in which to sleep and hide. Although adult dogs can be crate trained, the ideal time to start is when your dog is a puppy.

Crate training offers a lot of practical benefits and can be particularly useful with puppies as an aid to toilet training and preventing destructive or undesirable behaviours.



SOCIALISATION

The first 14 to 16 weeks of your puppy's life is when they will be most open to new experiences and is often referred to as the 'socialisation window'. Socialising your puppy involves exposing them to lots of different environments, things, people and animals in a positive and safe way to help them have the best chance of being well adjusted canine citizens.

As this window coincides with the period of time in which your puppy may not have full immunity and protection from their vaccinations, it's crucial to choose the location of any socialisation very wisely. This is particularly important for avoiding parvovirus, which still kills plenty of puppies in Australia every year.

Socialising your puppy effectively is more than just chucking them in the deep end at the dog park! Negative experiences at any time during their development can stick with a puppy well into adulthood, so being beaten up by the local dog park bully is not going to help your puppy play well with others later on.

To socialise your pup, get in touch with your local vet or dog trainer about puppy preschool classes. Puppy preschool offers a safe, supervised environment where your puppy can meet and play with other pups (and usually learn a few basic obedience skills and healthcare tips too!). If you have friends or family members with

healthy, fully vaccinated, well socialised dogs you could also ask them to come around for a puppy playdate, just be sure to keep an eye on things to make sure the play doesn't get out of hand.

As well as other dogs, try to expose your puppy to as many different people (including the postie and tradesmen and women in uniform), sounds (such as the vacuum cleaner or thunder) in a calm, friendly and non overwhelming environment as you can during this socialisation window.



TOYS

Play is essential to keep your puppy physically and mentally stimulated. You will need to stock up on a range of toys and rotate through around 2 to 3 on a daily basis to keep your pup interested. Try to offer a few different types of toys each day, such as chew toys, fetch toys, soft cuddly toys, treat dispensing toys and rope toys.

Remember that while many toys are durable, none are indestructible. Always supervise your pup with new toys, check them regularly and remove if damaged.





BASIC OBEDIENCE

You can start teaching your puppy basic obedience and 'manners' as soon as they come home, beginning with mastering 'sit' and walking on a lead. For best results, join up with a puppy preschool or puppy training class in your local area.

TEACHING 'SIT'

1. Find a space without many distractions so that your pup can focus. Show them a treat to get their interest.
2. While your puppy is focussed on the treat, hold it above their head so that they look upward. Move the treat backwards, just behind their nose so that they begin to tilt their head back. Using a treat in this way known as 'luring'.
3. Your pup will naturally try to get to the treat, and to do this from their current position they will need to put their bottom on the floor. As soon as this occurs you must 'capture' the behaviour. This is done by either using a clicker or a praise word (like 'yes') and giving them the treat.
4. Repeat step 3 until your puppy seems to understand what it is that you are wanting them to do. Once they understand, you can repeat the process but use the word 'sit' as you ask them to sit so that they will associate the action with the command.

5. Continue to practice and over time you will find that you no longer need to 'lure' them into the sitting position, and they will respond just to the voice command.

TEACHING YOUR PUPPY TO WALK ON A LEAD

1. Get your puppy used to wearing a simple flat collar by putting it on for short periods of time to begin with. If you notice them scratching at the collar try and redirect their attention with a game or short training session. Once they are used to the collar, you can start to get them accustomed to the feeling of the lead dragging behind them. An easy way to do this is to attach the lead and let them run around or play in the backyard under your supervision.
2. Now you can start to pick up the lead and train them to walk alongside you. Some puppies may just start trotting happily alongside you, but others can be more challenging. The two main problems that you are likely to encounter are:
 - Puppy Sits Down and Won't Move - This is a common response initially, especially if your puppy is in a new and potentially scary place. Overcome it by getting down on their level and enticing them to move forwards with a treat or favourite toy. As they move forwards give them lots of praise. Be patient and in time you will find that they become more confident about walking with you.

- **Puppy Pulls on Lead** - Pulling on the lead means your puppy is excited and can't wait to get out and explore the world! If your puppy begins to pull, stop and call them back to you and praise them when they come. Start walking again, this time with a handful of treats in the hand closest to the puppy. Lure your pup along with the treats in the desired direction, giving them plenty of praise and a treat every few moments to reward the behaviour. Once again, if your puppy begins to pull, stop and call them back and repeat the process. Over time you can increase the interval between the treats from a few seconds to a few minutes and then longer as they start to get the idea. This method will take time and patience but is an effective and gentle way to train your puppy to walk at your side. If you are still having trouble with a puppy that pulls, you could also try using a headcollar or front attaching harness. These are designed to distribute pressure from pulling to bring your puppy's attention back to you.

Walking on a lead can be a challenge for puppies at first, but with perseverance, kindness and some tasty treats as motivation, they will soon be walking nicely on the lead beside you.

With a little patience, preparation and love, your puppy will grow into a happy, healthy, much cherished family member.

From all of us at Pet Circle, we wish you and your new puppy many happy years together.

Teagan

Dr Teagan Lever BVSc
Pet Circle Veterinarian



Need more help?

Scan this code with your phone or visit petcircle.com.au/vet-pet-plan for a personalised pet health, lifestyle and nutrition plan from our Pet Circle Vet Squad.

YOUR PUPPY'S HEALTH RECORD

NAME		YOUR PUP'S PHOTO
SEX		
BIRTHDATE		
BREED		
COLOUR		
MICROCHIP #		
REGISTRY		

DATE DESEXED		VETERINARIAN	
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VACCINATION RECORD				
VACCINE	DATE	WEIGHT	NEXT DUE	VET

FLEA & WORMING TREATMENTS		
PRODUCT	WHAT DOES IT COVER	FREQUENCY

IMPORTANT DETAILS	
REGULAR VET CLINIC NAME	
PHONE	
EMERGENCY VET	
PHONE	
PET INSURANCE PROVIDER	
POLICY NUMBER	



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