

VetSpec[®] *for dogs*



For Your New Puppy!



VetSpec®

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Welcome

VetSpec®

Dear New Puppy Owner

Congratulations on your new-found status as a puppy owner! This is the beginning of a long and trusting relationship with your new best friend.

You will have already invested a lot of time in researching the dog most suited to you. You are now entering the next, and most exciting, phase of your journey - taking your puppy home!

This booklet offers you practical tips and advice to help you through the vital stages of early development and day-to-day care of your puppy. It also incorporates information about your puppy's food, establishing a training programme and ensuring his overarching healthcare. This is a booklet you can quickly refer to for answers to those little queries that may develop as you get to know your puppy.

You can learn about the excellence in canine nutrition that VetSpec provides, which will give your puppy the best nutritional start he could hope for. Before long your puppy will literally come on in leaps and bounds as you both prepare for a lifetime of friendship and wonderful adventures together.

We hope to support you in building this lasting relationship with your dog, which will bring you both happiness and companionship for many years to come.

Best wishes



The Choice for You

You have already decided on the breed of puppy you feel is right for you, and the enormity of this decision must not be underestimated. You have obviously considered the commitment that will be needed from you and possibly your family.

You will have taken time to research your chosen breed and gained valuable insights from those with experience. Nowadays the search for information can be a little easier for a new dog owner with access to the internet. First hand advice from friends and family who already own your selected breed of dog, and from specialists such as vets, will have no doubt also aided your decision.

You are now ready to move forward on your exciting journey. Read on to learn how to give your adorable puppy the best start possible.

Early Development

Whether you are adopting, rehoming or buying a new puppy, he is likely to be around eight weeks old or more when you are able to take him home. Hopefully the previous owner or breeder has invested some time in a few important tasks for the long-term wellbeing of your puppy.

It will not surprise you to know that at the time of his birth, your puppy will have been completely reliant on his mother.

It will have taken a couple of weeks before he was able to properly use his senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch, and this will have coincided with him becoming strong enough to walk.

Between three and four weeks of age, the breeder should have started to introduce your puppy to solid food as he began learning how to eat without suckling. From this point in time he will have been extremely impressionable and receptive. The greater the number of introductions into new situations and people he has had, the more prepared he will be to start his new life with you.

This education will have been supported by increased handling of your puppy by the breeder, in order to prepare him for life without his mother.

Hopefully your chosen breeder will give you an information sheet outlining all the socialisation activities that your puppy has already been introduced to, but also try and remember to ask questions about this.

Preparing Your Puppy for Home



If you have not yet had the chance to 'puppy-proof' your home, you should do everything you can to make it a safe environment as soon as you arrive home with your new puppy. Your puppy will want to learn all about his new home so will be naturally inquisitive.

An unsafe or dirty environment can be a dangerous start for your puppy and ultimately cost you a lot of money in vet bills. Much of this is common sense, and may be no different to what you would do with young children in the house. A few small changes can significantly reduce the chances of damage to both your puppy and belongings.

Simple tips to follow:

- Remove breakable items to a safe place. Remember that a wagging tail can cause a lot of damage!
- The ever-growing number of electrical cords in our homes are all tempting for a young puppy to chew, so hide or cover them in the first instance
- Any poisonous products (e.g. bottles of bleach under the sink) should be locked away as an inquisitive puppy may want to taste anything new he finds
- Don't leave small toys or other items on the floor, or in easy reach of your puppy, as they can be easily swallowed
- Research any plants you have that may be dangerous to dogs and restrict access to them. The list is quite surprising and includes common household plants such as azaleas, poinsettias and rhododendrons
- Have a good stock of washing powder in, so you can wash any dirty bedding immediately as it occurs

Getting your puppy comfortable in your home

As well as excitement, it is quite likely that your puppy may also be frightened when first introduced to his new home and family. Remember that he is not used to lots of different places so will need plenty of love and attention at first, whilst he learns to build trust in you and his surroundings.

Puppies, like human babies, are very gentle at this stage and must be carefully scooped up and supported in your arms. To help your puppy explore whilst staying safe you may like to use a light leash on him, so you can keep a close eye on him. In these early days, it is fine to take your puppy to busy places but you must remember to carry him so he avoids contact with the ground until he is fully vaccinated.

Sleeping

You must ensure your puppy has adequate dog bedding for him to be able to comfortably settle in. Some thought should go in to where your puppy will sleep. He needs to remain in the circle of family life and not be left in a drafty corner. Keep a blanket on hand in case the weather turns cold.

Eating

Similar to sleeping arrangements, you must carefully choose where he is going to eat, ensuring there is enough room and ready access to his food. It is important to ensure fresh clean water is always available too.

Naming

Choose a short name. Make sure all family members are clear on the name, and all say the same one, to avoid confusion. (You may wish to consider a slightly unusual name, so when you call your dog, you do not have several others with the same name running to you!)



Choose a veterinarian

It is worth asking around for recommendations of a good vet in your area, or use a vet finder tool on the internet. Visit several to see which you are most comfortable using. Do not be afraid to ask the vet and the staff any questions you may have.

Once you have made your choice, take your puppy for an early visit. This will give the vet an opportunity to give your puppy an all-over check. You should then take this opportunity to plan the vaccination schedule for your puppy.

Vaccination information

Your vet will discuss with you distemper, parainfluenza, canine hepatitis, parvovirus and leptospirosis. Depending on the risks to your particular dog in your locality, the vet may discuss other specific vaccinations too. Depending on the age you have collected your puppy, he may have started his vaccination course with the breeder. Make sure that you check whether this is the case and obtain any documentation.

Worming considerations

There are different intestinal and other worms that can affect your puppy's health. The breeder of your puppy should have provided you with information on their worming schedule so far. Your vet may recommend further de-worming for routine parasites like roundworms immediately. This is quite simple and involves giving your dog a regular course of tablets, liquid or granules. Many parasites that infect your puppy can be passed to humans and cause health problems, so de-worming is important not only for your puppy's health, but also for your own and your family's.

You and your family should take extra precautions to prevent exposure to worm eggs. Children should always be encouraged to wash their hands after playing outside or with dogs. If your puppy has an accident, clean it up quickly. Although it seems adorable, stop your puppy licking children's faces, and ensure your children wear shoes when playing outside in areas where it is possible that dogs may defecate.

Should I get my puppy neutered?

Your vet should offer you advice on having your puppy spayed or castrated, particularly in relation to the optimum timing of surgery. Considerations will include the breed and weight of your dog. There are also health advantages to spaying female dogs before their first heat cycle as this can significantly reduce the risk of other diseases.

Fleas

If you notice your puppy scratching or biting himself, or suffering from hair loss, these are indicators that he has fleas. Fleas thrive in a warm and humid environment. Female fleas can lay many eggs each day and they often fall from the dog's coat into the bedding, carpets and furniture. With optimal conditions, they can end up infesting your home and biting humans too.

This means you must then tackle not only the fleas on your dog, but also those in your home. You may need to use a flea spray for your house when you notice fleas on your dog. You must also stop fleas from producing viable eggs so you need to use an appropriate flea protection treatment on a monthly basis. Regular cleaning of your home and washing of your dog's bedding will also assist.

Microchipping

This is a very quick, painless, permanent and simple procedure carried out by your vet. The microchip is no bigger than a grain of rice and is placed under the skin, at the base of the neck and above the shoulders. Once microchipped, your details are recorded on a national database, so your dog can be identified for life. A vet or an animal shelter will be able to scan the chip, so if your dog is lost they can call and reunite you with him. It has been a legal requirement since April 2016 for all dogs to be microchipped. It is also compulsory for contact details to be kept up to date.



For your puppy to be as comfortable as possible in your home it is best if children do not get too excited around him. A calm environment should encourage your puppy to peacefully settle in. Having familiar items around your puppy will also help him to feel at home.

Metal (stainless steel) bowls

Buy two bowls so your puppy has one for food and one for water. Stainless steel are best as they do not chip and are easiest to keep clean. Plastic bowls are likely to turn into chewable toys and once full of teeth marks will gather bacteria. A heavy bowl will also be harder to knock over. If you have other pets, make sure each one has their own food and water bowls to avoid fighting over food, and to make sure each pet gets the nutrition it needs.

Collar

There is a wide range of choice for you when deciding on a collar for your puppy; a variety of styles, colours and widths. It must be a comfortable fit, which allows you to slide two fingers between your dog's neck and collar. Although, remember a puppy will be growing so this should be regularly checked to ensure it does not become too tight and begin to restrict breathing or cause coughing. The collar should ride high on the neck and not slip down on to the shoulders. Remember that every collar should have a nametag attached, showing the owner's name and address. You can order a tag from a pet shop or over the internet.

Lead

A lead can support your training and recall, whilst also ensuring your puppy is by your side and safe. Leads are available in many sizes, lengths and materials. Where you are walking your puppy and how busy it is may be a factor in determining the most suitable length of lead.

Toys

There is an amazing selection of toys available for puppies, that you will find in a pet shop and on the internet. Give your puppy plenty of toys, including both chew toys and soft toys. However, make sure they are not too tough for puppy teeth. Also, carefully consider the size and robustness of the toys, as you must avoid those that could be a choking hazard or something that could splinter in the mouth.

Cleaning equipment

When following the house-training tips later in this booklet, messy accidents should hopefully be avoided. However, as your puppy learns, a few mistakes are inevitable. As we have already mentioned, soiled bedding should be removed immediately and you will need a ready supply of cleaning fluids in the early days. A vacuum cleaner to remove hair that will now be shed across your home will also be useful.

Brushing

This can be an opportunity to bond with your puppy and you should start immediately so he is not afraid of the brush. Different coats will need different brushes but your breeder or local pet shop will be able to advise you. Use a soft brush and only groom for short periods of time. Not only will brushing keep your puppy looking tidy but it is also an opportunity for you to check his skin and fur. Brush your puppy all over, including his belly and hind legs, but do not brush the face and legs with anything that could cause pain.

Trimming

You must learn the proper technique for cutting your puppy's nails, as you can easily hurt your puppy if you cut into the quick of his nail. A veterinary nurse will be able to advise you and may offer a free appointment. It is a good routine to plan cutting your puppy's nails each week, but you may wish to begin by only trimming a few at a time, until your puppy gets used to it. If nails get too long, they can strain your dog's wrists whilst also damaging furniture and accidentally scratching people.

Teeth and Gums

Just like a baby, a puppy will want to chew things when he is teething. He will have temporary teeth until he is about six months old. Provide your dog with chew toys to help him through this phase. In order to keep teeth healthy, get your puppy used to having his teeth brushed with a toothbrush, and use a toothpaste made specifically for dogs. You are aiming to prepare your puppy for daily brushing of his teeth once he reaches adulthood.

Ears

You should also check your puppy's ears regularly and this must be maintained throughout his life. It is easy for parasites and bacteria to hide and thrive in the warm and moist environment of the ear. You should quickly get advice from your vet if you notice your puppy continually scratching one or both of his ears or frustratingly shaking his head. There may be other visible signs too including discharge from the ear, redness, inflammation or swelling.

Eyes

Your puppy's eyes should be bright and free of discharge. However, if you notice them starting to become red or inflamed, not opening properly or having swollen eyelids, you should take him to the vets straight away as any time delay could result in lasting eye damage.

Bathing

Gradually introduce your puppy to water and the overall bathing process, but only wash him when he needs to be. Too much bathing can be detrimental to your puppy's skin. To minimize damage to the skin, make sure you use gentle shampoo designed for dogs.

Car rides

It is useful to get your puppy comfortable travelling in the car with you otherwise an unusual car ride can cause anxiety. There are ways to manage carsickness for dogs and your vet will be able to offer you advice.





To give your puppy the best start in life, you need to feed him a quality diet, specifically tailored to his early development.

VetSpec Puppy & Junior Formula contains highly specific supplements to ensure optimum growth and development of young dogs through to 12 months when they can be successfully transferred to VetSpec Healthy Dog Adult Formula. (See below)

VetSpec Puppy & Junior Formula is a Veterinary Specification, CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE, Super Premium dry dog food including 60% Chicken with added vegetables and herbs. It is a completely balanced dog food suitable for all puppies and junior dogs from four weeks of age.

It supports correct limb and bone development, as well as the development of healthy muscles, and is also ideal for puppies with sensitive stomachs.

The most important elements of VetSpec Puppy & Junior Formula are:



Protein and Amino Acids

Amino acids, like lysine and methionine, are the building blocks of proteins, which form the structure of muscle, organs and many parts of the dog's body. About half of the twenty or so amino acids are "essential" i.e. the dog's body is unable to make them itself. Young dogs require protein to build the structures within the body and adults need it to maintain the function and maintenance of all their tissues. The "quality" of protein is important in dog food and meat, like chicken, is an excellent source of high quality protein with good amino acid profiles. If protein is deficient in the diet, or of poor quality, adult dogs will lose lean body tissue and immature dogs will exhibit decreased weight gain and impaired growth and development.

Minerals

Minerals are inorganic elements, e.g. calcium and phosphorus, which are essential for the body's metabolic processes. Only about 4% of a dog's total body weight comprises of mineral matter; however, like the vitamins the presence of these elements in dog food is essential for life. Not only do they provide skeletal support but they are also involved in a whole array of essential functions like nerve transmission and muscle function. To make matters even more complicated each mineral interrelates with the others in absorption, metabolism and function. When

puppies and young dogs are growing rapidly it is therefore absolutely essential that this balance of minerals is correct for early bone and tissue development and organ function.

Vitamins

Vitamins are organic molecules that are needed in minute amounts but are essential for the body's metabolic processes and therefore they must be provided in the dog's food. They are divided into two groups – the fat soluble vitamins e.g. Vitamin A, and the water soluble vitamins e.g. Vitamin C.

VetSpec Puppy & Junior Formula provides all the protein, vitamins and minerals that young dogs need for optimum development.

Puppies should be fed 3-4 times per day and fresh drinking water should always be available.

Transitioning to adult dog food

The transition time for your dog is not precise. It depends on the size of the breed but is generally around the time when your dog reaches twelve months of age. You should make the transition a gradual process over about four days.

VetSpec Healthy Dog Adult Formula is an outstanding Veterinary Specification Healthy Dog Adult supplement in a CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE Super Premium dog food including 60% Chicken with added vegetables and herbs. It is formulated to ensure that the transition from puppy/junior food to adult food is as seamless as possible. This reduces the possibility of upset stomachs and any checks in development that may occur with dramatic changes in type of food.

Adult dogs should be fed twice per day. Fresh drinking water should always be available.



Early training of your puppy will have begun with his breeder. This should be built upon as soon as you get home, so whatever he does, you must react properly or he will learn the wrong things. Training should be fun for both you and your dog. It will exercise his brain whilst cementing a relationship between the two of you.

Establish a routine

Consistency is reassuring for puppies, so establish a daily routine as soon as possible. This includes:

- The name you will be calling him each day
- Careful consideration of where food and water bowls are placed
- What time food will be placed down
- Where his bed is and what it is made up of each day
- What time he should settle in bed and get up again
- Where he does his toileting
- Where his toys are kept

Unless you establish these rules, your dog will start to dictate the rules to you and you will find yourself having to fit into his life.

At 2-3 months of age, you should ensure you have trained your puppy to understand a couple of basic words. These may be "Good" and "No". These words can be used for praise and correction. It is too much to expect your puppy to understand a long sentence when you are telling him to do something but consistent use of simple words will work well.

Positive rewards are one of the best ways to get results whilst training your puppy, so if you reward your dog with something he wants as soon as he does what you ask, he is likely to do the same next time you ask. Each dog may be driven by different rewards but toys, treats and praise can all be used. Treats should be healthy, small and easily chewed or swallowed, as you don't want to wait a long time for your puppy to finish eating before continuing your training. However, treats should be used with a degree of caution. Whilst they are very successful in getting your dog to recognise good behaviour, and undoubtedly great motivators, you must be careful not to let it develop into your dog only doing what you ask when he is hungry enough to want a treat!

You should never punish your dog whilst training as this will teach him to be scared of you and may encourage him to be aggressive. Ultimately, it could lead to a breakdown in the relationship between the two of you.

You can gradually increase your training time but it is important to remember that whilst your puppy's body is still growing you must balance his training time so as not to cause any lasting damage to bones or joints.

House Training Your Puppy

As your puppy grows, he is eating food and burning energy, but will not yet have developed the bowel and bladder control of adult dogs. No matter how good your house training programme is, you can still expect there to be little mistakes until your puppy reaches about 6-months old.

Most puppies will need to relieve their bowels or bladder every 30-45 minutes, however, this is somewhat dependent on when they last ate or drank water. Therefore, one of the contributing factors in this is quickly establishing a feeding routine so you can then predict the toilet routine.

In the early days, you should lay old newspaper or training pads on a floor that can be easily cleaned, so probably a kitchen with tiles or a garage that can be readily accessed. Leave your puppy on the paper when you think he may need the toilet. As the days progress, reduce the amount of newspaper then move the newspaper outside. If your puppy is going to be left alone for long periods, you may wish to try this process in a crate and only put newspaper in one corner of it. When you finally reach the stage of your puppy understanding that it is right to toilet outside, take your puppy outside after every meal or drink of water. It is also worthwhile doing so as soon as he wakes up or if he is getting over excited.

Basic Command Training

The key to successful training is keeping the training sessions short (about five to ten minutes). At the beginning, your puppy will see everything as a game, but will soon lose interest so you need to keep him stimulated by changing what he's learning.

Basic commands should be short and simple, such as "sit", "down" and "stay". Use the commands in lots of different places, in different rooms in the house, outside in the garden or when on a walk. Your puppy will learn very quickly and this will help to cement the bond between the two of you.

However, do not train your puppy in a busy area until he knows the commands well as he will be easily distracted. You may consider using hand signals with your verbal commands, as some dogs may find it easier to recognise these. Stick to one new command per training session at first to avoid confusing your puppy.

Learning to walk on a lead

As a new owner, you will be looking forward to taking your dog out for a walk, but if the dog pulls on his lead all the way, it will be very tempting to shorten the walk. To stop this from happening, you should get your puppy used to walking on a loose lead as soon as possible. This is not the same as a perfectly trained dog walking by your side, but it should mean that by the end of the walk, you do not feel as if your dog has pulled you around the circuit.

To do this properly, your puppy should be wearing a flat collar or fixed harness and a standard lead. Quite simply, if at any time your dog pulls on the lead, stand still and wait until the puppy has settled down before starting the walk again.

Only let your dog off his lead in a public place when you are confident he will follow your commands, recognise his name and most importantly, return to you when you call him.

Puppy training classes

Once your puppy is fully vaccinated, puppy training classes are a great way to socialize him and get to meet other dog owners like yourself. They will encourage and motivate you to teach and train your puppy, whilst getting him used to playing with others.

Classes should take you through all the obedience basics giving you a good foundation for any further training you wish to carry out yourself. Make sure the class is held in a room that is safe for both you and your puppy and has adequate space in it. Ensure the class is small enough so the trainer can safely supervise all the dogs. However, if your puppy is anxious or fearful around other dogs, consider a one-to-one training session with a trainer in the first instance.



FAQs

Q: When can I increase my puppy's exercise?

A: You can increase distance and frequency of walks once your puppy's bones and joints are developed sufficiently. It is important to remember that 50% of all fractures occur in puppies under the age of one year as bones and soft tissue are still developing. So, until he's about 18 months old, do not be taking him for long walks or hikes.

Q: How long will it take before my puppy gets his permanent teeth?

A: By seven months, milk teeth will be lost and permanent teeth in place.

Q: How often should I play with my puppy?

A: About three times a day, but only for short periods of 10-15 minutes at a time.

Q: Are different breeds classed as starting adolescence at different times?

A: Yes. Generally, small breeds start adolescence around five months old whereas large breeds enter adolescence at around nine months and giant breeds are even later than this.

Q: How do I prepare my puppy for being left alone in the house?

A: Start by leaving him alone for short periods in one part of the house when you are nearby in another part, then progress to going outside for a few minutes whilst your puppy remains inside. Gradually increase the time you do this and before too long, you should both feel comfortable with it.

Q: Will my puppy sleep a lot when he is young?

A: Your puppy will need lots of sleep to help his development. Where possible, you should encourage your puppy to sleep, perhaps by placing him in his bed. It is quite normal for your puppy to have short bursts of energy followed by long naps.



*Veterinary Specification Supplements
in CEREAL-GRAIN-FREE
Super Premium Dog Foods*

For free nutritional advice:

Tel: 01845 565630

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www.vetspec.com

- *Wheat gluten free • Hypoallergenic*
- *No added artificial colours, flavours or preservatives*
 - *Non-GM • Includes botanicals and prebiotics*
 - *With ingredients sourced from local farms*