

# Shall we get a puppy?

## Preparations before you bring the new pup to your house

The day you bring your puppy home is maybe a big day for you and your family but is a complete overhaul for your puppy. Just imagine a totally new and imposing surrounding and no one to fall back on except that "silly thing"

ooing and aahing at you all the time. Here are some pointers to make the transition smooth and to minimize stress for you but more importantly for the puppy.



## What to buy before your puppy arrives?

- **Puppy food**

Use the same food the puppy got when still in the litter or in the pet-shop. Even if it is poor quality food, a sudden food change is worse! After a few days of settling in you can start mixing the old food with the food you have been recommended by the vet you have chosen for him/her.

Please do this gradually because your puppy's intestines are very sensitive and an abrupt food change can cause your puppy to be seriously sick.

- **Food- and water bowl**

It is important to choose this carefully. If it is too large the water will sit too long and this is unhygienic with all the drooling your puppy will do in it while learning to drink from a bowl rather than with the mother, if it is too small you will need to refill often and it might scare your puppy if he has to put his nose in something narrow. Plastic is fun to try your teeth on and if broken can be ingested. Ceramic is fragile and can break, metal is easy to clean, therefore hygienic but can be easily tipped over. Choose a bowl with a wide base so it stand solidly and make sure it is heavy enough even when empty so it can not be pushed all over your floor.

- **Worming medication and anti-parasite treatment**

Puppies need de-worming on a regular basis from 3 weeks of age. If this is not done regularly or incorrectly using the wrong product the pup will not develop as per the expectation, showing a harsh coat, poor muscle development and an enlarged belly. It is therefore advisable to take your new puppy to see your vet for a general health check and for de-worming medication. At the same moment your vet can advise you with regards to needed other parasite treatment as fleas, ticks, mites and lice e.g.

- **Dog bed /mattress**

Choose a sturdy material for your puppies first bed as he will surely sink his teeth in it. It is therefore also advisable not to spend too much on this one in order to prevent running into high costs. The inside of the bed is just as important as the outside and should be made of low risk material if ingested. Check the bed cover to be easily removable in order to wash regularly and to be able to withstand all sorts of fluids.

Ask the people from whom you will get your puppy for a piece of cloth from his litter-time or hand them a week before your puppy arrives an old towel to be placed in his bed and take it with you again when you collect your puppy. The familiar smell will help your puppy settle easier.

- **Bench or Crate**

We have very positive experience using a bench or crate for puppies. Besides functioning as your puppy's safe place for the night it is also a place that helps house training your puppy. As a puppy's instinct is not to soil his nest, he will try to do everything to avoid soiling in the bench/crate and therefore this is an excellent way to houstrain your pup. As soon as you take the puppy out of the bench/crate take him outside and encourage and wait till he has done his business. Than praise him extensively. Your puppy will learn very quickly what is expected.

We don't advise to use the bench/crate for punishment since this will coincide with the safe-haven feeling you are trying to establish.

- **Grooming materials**

Grooming is important to directly get your pup used to being handled and groomed so he will not resist this when older. It is also a good tool for bonding with the little one and establishing an understanding of hierarchy besides this it will give you a regular update on the health of the pup's skin in particular. There are multiple brushes and combs available and depending on your puppy's breed you will be advised to use specific brushes or book regular grooming appointments to maintain coat health and breed specific appearance. Dental care is very important and should be taught at an early age in order to be allowed later on in your dog's life. You can choose between normal toothbrushes, specific pet brushes, finger brushes or special dental toys and treats to keep his teeth in good health from early on and also divert his teething problems to safe toys rather than your shoes. Shampoos need some extra attention too as you don't want to interrupt the fine balance the skin has established with the environment in the short period the pup is in this world. Some shampoos are heavily perfumed and contain harsh ingredients leading to irritation, allergy and itching flaky skin. This can be prevented if a mild special formula is sought which is used not too frequently (max. 1 weekly if no problems are seen). It is advisable to ask your vet to recommend a shampoo.

- **Collar and lead**

Depending on the age of your pup you can start walking them on a lead. In the beginning the pup will not understand how to walk on a lead but with gentle encouragement, treats and perseverance most dogs will learn to walk next to you. Certain breeds are better off using a harness (Pug, Bulldog and snub nosed breeds with wide chest entrance) rather than a collar but bear in mind that a 40 kg German Shepherd in a harness might act like a horse and carriage pulling you all over the street. Old school training institutes used slip collars to train the dogs but this can cause severe neck injuries if used incorrectly.

In the UAE certain breeds are required to use a muzzle at all times and if you buy a muzzle you should check that your dog is able to pant while wearing a muzzle, basket muzzles are therefore the best for daily use in the UAE.

- **Toys**

Dog toys are specifically designed for pets and therefore have the correct strength to withstand a puppies/dog bite and will not easily tear. They also do not contain any small parts that can come loose and give intestinal obstruction once ingested, nor is the inside

of dangerous content. Special puppy toys are available which are often safer for a puppy than toys used for adult dogs. Some puppy toys help your puppy with teething.



## Preparing you home

- Decide where in the house your puppy will eat and drink, look for a place in a calm part of your house where he will not be disturbed by slamming doors, people walking around, other dogs/pets trying to steal the food or other.
- Decide where in the house your puppy will sleep and prepare his bed and bench/crate (if used) there. Make sure that the cold air of the air conditioning does not fall directly above his bench/crate and place a blanket over the bench to create a safe spot for him. The ideal place is a quiet spot, away from the buzz but close enough to you to keep the puppy comforted. Also place a few toys at the sleeping place to keep your puppy occupied when he is awake (works like a pacifier).
- A hot water bottle and/or an alarm clock in a sock can help fight loneliness since the water bottle is a substitute for his mother's warmth and the ticking of the alarm clock mimics his mother's heartbeat.
- Instruct your family members on how to behave when the puppy arrives, especially children. Children immediately want to play with the puppy upon arrival but this should be discouraged for the first day and closely monitored at all other times. Give the puppy time to get used to all the new stimuli and allow it to rest. It is furthermore important that you understand that the huge success of the squealing toys lies in the high pitched noise they make, similar to the sound your child makes when being squeezed between the razor sharp puppy teeth. If this is not corrected in the right way the child will be scared away from the puppy!
- If you have stairs in the house get a stair gate. At this age your puppy may not have mastered walking stairs and can easily fall down and hurt himself. Besides the risk of falling, his skeleton is not strong enough to carry his weight up and down stairs and this can lead to all sorts of joint problems.
- Puppies discover the world by mouth; what is this, can I eat this, something to play with? You therefore need to put away everything your puppy can get its teeth in and destroy (shoes, carpets, electrical wire, medicines, cloths, books and magazines, children's toys etc). Just look around the house and think about what a puppy can get.

## Preparing your garden and yard

- Check your garden/yard fence for any holes from which your puppy can escape
- Check your garden/yard for any sharp objects (glass, thorns) or any other objects that might harm your puppy and remove them

- If you have a swimming pool, make provision that your puppy can't fall in, an alarm is advisable but even better is a locked fence.

## Various

- Make an appointment with your veterinarian in advance. Your puppy needs a health check within 72 hours of his arrival at your place. This is to secure as much as possible that no inborn defects which could be seen at this age are overlooked, trying to avoid heartbreak in the future. This is also the time to check if the puppy is vaccinated, de-wormed and micro-chipped properly. Ask your vet how you can register your puppy in the UAE database in case he gets lost.
- If you have friends or relatives that would like to visit your new puppy make sure they don't do this during the first few days of your puppy's arrival. Give him time to get used to his new family. All these new faces from friends and relatives will only confuse the little one.

