



HUMANE LEAGUE
OF LANCASTER COUNTY

Puppy Basics

Adopting a puppy involves some special considerations:

Puppy Proofing

- Make sure your house is a safe place for your puppy by removing from the floor and from jumping reach any items your puppy may find tempting to chew on. Puppies can find almost anything tempting, so be extra careful about removing items and blocking off access to things like electrical cords.
- Protect your belongings by finding a safe place to keep your puppy when you cannot be supervising him. You can use crate training if the puppy will be confined for short periods, or you can baby-gate the puppy in a kitchen, bathroom, or laundry room.

Schedules

- Keep your puppy on a fixed eating, sleeping, and playing schedule. This will make housetraining the puppy much easier.
- Give the puppy quiet time as well so that he gets used to being alone. Keeping the puppy with you constantly can lead to separation anxiety later on.

Socialization Periods

- Socialization is one of the most important aspects of puppy ownership and can make the difference between a long, happy life with your new dog, and one filled with painstaking attempts to modify your dog's behavior due to fearfulness or aggression.
- Get your puppy out and about as soon as you can. Take him all over – parks, pet stores, coffee shop patios, playgrounds, your friends' and relatives' homes, and so on. The more people and places your puppy experiences at an early age, the more likely they are to grow up to be confident, happy, well-adjusted dogs.
- Most veterinarians require that you keep the puppy away from other dogs until they have had their full set of DHLPP shots. However, this does not mean you have to keep your puppy totally out of sight from other dogs. You can bring them around dogs owned by friends and relatives that you know have been fully vaccinated and free of disease.
- You can also bring your puppy to places where there are dogs and let the puppy view them from a distance, without actually coming in contact with them.
- You can also bring them to puppy classes, which are a great way to socialize your puppy safely. Puppy classes are also wonderful for helping the puppy to learn bite inhibition, which can lead to less nipping behavior when the puppy begins teething.

Teething and Nipping

- All puppies teethe for several months as their baby teeth come in, fall out, and final adult teeth come in. This is a painful time for the puppy as their gums and jaw are often sore.
- Give your puppy ice cubes to chew on, which will help numb the pain in their jaws. You can also soak a rope toy in water or chicken broth, place it in a plastic bag, and then freeze it, and give the puppy the frozen rope to chew on. You can achieve the same affect with a hand towel or rag.
- Teach your puppy not to nip or mouth your hands or clothing by gently redirecting them to an appropriate chew item, or by yelping Ow! as loud a you can and getting up and leaving the puppy. The puppy should learn that the consequence for putting teeth on skin is losing all of your attention.
- **DO NOT** jam your fingers or hands down their throat to stop them from nipping, or roll them over on their backs.
- **DO NOT** play roughly with the puppy around their head and neck, as this can encourage nipping behavior.

Children and Puppies

- Teach your children how to handle the puppy properly. Children, particularly young children, tend to get very excited around puppies and the noise and running around can make puppies excitable and hyper.
- Teach your children to be calm and gentle with the puppy. Do not let them pick the puppy up like a stuffed animal. This can be annoying and even frightening for the puppy and can lead to snapping and aggressive behavior.
- Teach children to give the puppy some solitary quiet time and to not pester the puppy while it is eating and napping.

Obedience Training

- It's never too early to start teaching your puppy basic commands like sit, down, and stay. Realize that puppies learn at a slower rate and have a shorter attention span than adult dogs, but you can still lay the foundation for successful training by starting early.
- Puppy classes are a great way to learn basic commands and to socialize your puppy to other dogs and people.
- You can start your puppy in an "adult" obedience class usually as soon as they are finished with their full round of DHLPP shots, generally around four to five months of age.

For more information on pet behavior, email the Humane League of Lancaster County at behaviorhelp@humaneleague.com.

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