

Frequently Asked Questions: Dogs/Puppies

Question: This is my first puppy/dog. What will I need to get?

Answer: You will need to get a collar, leash, ID tags, puppy/dog food, food and water dishes, dog bed with clean blanket or towel, and chew toys (nylon or sterilized bones.) You will also need a crate for training purposes.

Question: Should I adopt a puppy or an adult dog?

Answer: Adult dogs are often a good choice because they don't need as much of your time as a puppy would. It is also easier to tell what the dog will be like if it is already an adult. There are fewer surprises with an adult dog. *However, you need to consider which fits best with your family, your other pets, and your lifestyle.*

Question: Does temperament vary between breeds of dogs?

Answer: Yes. Just as dogs develop a characteristic appearance, they also develop variations in temperament.

Question: Is a female dog a better companion than a male dog?

Answer: Both will make great pets. Regardless of sex, it is important to have your dog spayed or neutered.

Question: When should my dog/puppy be spayed/neutered? Can the shelter recommend a veterinarian that participates in the State low-cost spay/neuter program? When is this offered and what will it cost?

Answer: A puppy should be spayed/neutered between 4-6 months of age. Adult dogs should be spayed/neutered at the earliest opportunity. The shelter can provide a pamphlet that lists all veterinarians that participate in the State low-cost spay/neuter program. Funds for the program are issued on a quarterly basis (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1) and the charge for the spay/neuter procedure is \$20.00. Proof of a rabies shot is required. It is advised that you schedule the spay/neuter early in the quarter so that funds are still available.

Question: When was he/she born?

Answer: If the dog was surrendered, there should be a record of its age. When a dog is found as a stray, it is hard to judge its exact age, and the shelter will make an estimate. Your veterinarian should be able to approximate the dog's age upon examination.

Question: How big will he/she get?

Answer: The size will depend on the breed of the dog. Puppies of different breeds grow at different rates. The guide often given is to look at the puppy's feet. Big feet denote that it is going to grow into a big dog. By the time the dog is ten months old, he or she has done 80% of its growing.

Question: How old should a puppy be when it is first vaccinated?

Answer: Puppies usually lose all maternal antibodies at around six weeks old, so this is a good time to start vaccinations. Your veterinarian will advise you on which vaccinations are necessary.

Question: What are the most common parasites that dogs get?

Answer: Fleas, ticks, ear mites, roundworms, and tapeworms.

Question: We want a second dog. Will he/she get along with the existing pet(s) in our house?

Answer: It depends on each dog's temperament. It is also best to add a dog of the opposite sex, as the existing dog is more likely to get along with a dog of the opposite gender. A good idea is to bring your dog to the shelter to see how they interact before you bring the new dog home. Most older dogs will adjust to a puppy, although temporary problems can occur. The owner can avoid conflict by giving more affection to the resident and dominant dog, thereby confirming hierarchy and stabilizing the relationship. When an older dog is introduced where another adult dog is already present, order of dominance has to be determined. There may be some initial fights over territory, food, and toys. It may be settled in a single encounter, or it may last awhile before being resolved.

Introduction of a dog where there is a cat present may result in behavioral problems on the part of the cat. If affection is lavished on the cat, and the two pets are fed separately, they will in most instances come to tolerate each other. It is important that the cat be provided with a safe place to retreat to from which it can access its food and litter box without being harassed by the dog.

Question: Will he/she be friendly and easy to introduce to my children?

Answer: A child under 9 years old should not be left alone with a dog. A child should always have their face higher than a dog's. Do not approach head-on; approach from the side so the dog has a chance to check you out first. Don't let your children tease the dog, and encourage your children to close their hands into a fist so that the dog can sniff the back of their hand (palm down.) It is a good idea to see how your child and the dog interact at the shelter before you bring the dog home.

In general there are no problems between dogs and babies because the dog accepts the new baby as a member of the pack. To avoid any instances of jealousy, it is important that the dog continue to receive attention and affection, particularly when the baby is present.

Question: How do I housebreak him/her?

Answer: Crate training is recommended. Make sure you buy the right size crate. The dog is placed in a cage just large enough to be a bed (dogs don't like to soil their beds.) Too large a crate can often cause long-term problems, as the dog/puppy will go to one corner of the cage to urinate or defecate. One suggestion is to purchase a crate that comes with a divider panel as an accessory. This allows you to adjust the position of the space available. The last thing you do before you put the dog in the crate is to take him outside to his favorite spot. When you take him out of the crate, the first thing should be

another trip outside. No food or water should be placed in the crate, just a blanket and a chew toy. However, if the dog is in the crate all day, water must be provided.

Question: Is it okay to keep my dog outside all day?

Answer: No. Dogs by nature are social animals and are fond of company. Young dogs in particular become extremely lonely and bored when left alone for long periods of time. A dog may resort to destructive behavior when not given enough attention.

Question: What should I feed my new dog/puppy?

Answer: You should feed your dog a good quality puppy/dog food.