

The New Puppy Checklist

Bringing home a new puppy is an exciting time for any family.

Here are a few tips on making the transition easy.

- ✓ **Puppy Food** The first year is critical to your puppy's development. During this time, your puppy needs special nutrition to promote strong bones and teeth, proper development of body systems and a thick, lustrous coat. At certain times during this period of growth and development, your puppy will need up to twice the amount of food per pound of body weight compared to an adult dog. Start your puppy on the right track with a complete and balanced puppy food.
- ✓ **Training Treats** Purchase treats that are low in calories and are a small size to reinforce a puppy's good behavior during training. And, a good rule to live by is the "10% rule." Treats should not exceed 10% of your puppy's daily calorie intake.
- ✓ **Collar and Leash** Your puppy's first collar and leash should be made of lightweight nylon or leather. For collar size, measure his neck and add two inches. Check his collar frequently to be sure he hasn't outgrown it. When he is older or if you have adopted an adult dog, you will need to buy a webbed-cotton or leather leash with a secure clasp. Six feet is the best length for training and walking.
- ✓ **Identification Tag** An identification tag permanently attached to the collar should give your new dog's name, and your name, address and phone number. Another identification option is available: placing a microchip under your pet's skin. Consult your veterinarian for more information about this method of identification.
- ✓ **Crate** The crate will become your dog's safe place, and his special place to go to sleep and feel secure. Put it near or in the family hub of activity, so your dog feels like part of the family. This is his home, too, and he should feel comfortable here. The key to successful use of the crate is to always use it in a positive manner — never as a punishment.
- ✓ **Grooming Tools** The proper grooming tools will differ depending on your puppy's hair coat. For short-haired breeds, use a brush with natural bristles, a rubber curry comb or grooming hand mitt. A sturdy wide-tooth metal comb and perhaps a slicker brush are needed for long-haired breeds. Establish your dog's grooming program as soon as possible so he'll get used to being groomed.
- ✓ **Toys** Safe toys are an important part of your pet equipment. They can help your dog exercise and provide a safe way to satisfy your puppy's need to chew. Rubber toys that can be filled with treats, nylon chews and hard rubber balls are fun and usually safe. If your dog can fit a toy in his mouth, the toy is too small and could be unsafe. Avoid sponge toys or items with squeakers, whistles or other attached parts that your dog could swallow.
- ✓ **Notebook** Keep all of your puppy's photos, vet records, and vital statistics in one place. This will be especially helpful if your puppy/dog gets lost.
- ✓ **And Don't Forget the Basics** Make sure to grab things like food and water bowls, a dog bed, pet shampoo, a pooper scooper, carpet stain remover, and puppy training materials.

Good luck to you and your new puppy!

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