

# A LIFETIME OF CANINE WELLNESS

With proper preventative care, your pet can enjoy a long and healthy life as a part of your family. This handout lists what you can expect at each appointment here at Animal Hospital of Ovilla.

## 6 weeks of age

- Comprehensive physical exam
- Possible vaccinations based on risk assessment:
  - DHPP (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, and Parvo virus) (1<sup>st</sup> of 4)
- Intestinal parasite exam
- Precautionary intestinal parasite treatment (1<sup>st</sup> of 3)
- Initiate flea/tick preventative
- Initiate heartworm preventative

## 9 weeks of age

- Pediatric development consultation
- Possible vaccinations based on risk assessment:
  - DHPP (2<sup>nd</sup> of 4)
  - Bordetella (respiratory disease) vaccine
- Precautionary intestinal parasite treatment (2<sup>nd</sup> of 3)

## 12 weeks of age

- Pediatric development consultation
- Possible vaccinations based on risk assessment:
  - DHPP (3<sup>rd</sup> of 4)
  - Leptospirosis (1<sup>st</sup> of 2)
  - Canine influenza (1<sup>st</sup> of 2)
  - Rabies
- Intestinal parasite exam
- Precautionary intestinal parasite treatment (3<sup>rd</sup> of 3)
- Insert microchip for identification

## 16 weeks of age

- Pediatric development consultation
- Possible vaccinations based on risk assessment:
  - DHPP (4<sup>th</sup> of 4)
  - Canine influenza (2<sup>nd</sup> of 2)
  - Leptospirosis (2<sup>nd</sup> of 2)

## months of age

- Pre-anesthesia bloodwork
- Spay or neuter

## 10 months of age

- Comprehensive physical exam
- Intestinal parasite exam
- Intestinal parasite treatment if warranted

## Beginning at 15-16 months of age

### First semi-annual visit

- Comprehensive physical exam
- Intestinal parasite exam
- Intestinal parasite treatment if warranted
- Heartworm/blood parasite detection test
- Possible vaccinations based on risk assessment:
  - DHPP
  - Bordetella
  - Leptospirosis
  - Canine influenza
  - Rabies
- Refill flea/tick preventative
- Refill heartworm preventative
- Professional dental cleaning

### Second semi-annual visit

- Comprehensive physical exam
- Intestinal parasite exam
- Intestinal parasite treatment if warranted
- Blood screening test
- Refill preventatives (if purchasing six months at a time)

4-6



# Getting Your Puppy Started Off Right

When you bring a new puppy into your home there will inevitably be a period of adjustment. Your goals are to help your puppy to quickly bond to its new family, and to minimize the stress associated with leaving its mother, littermates, and former home. If there are already dogs in the new home the transition may be a little easier, as the puppy is able to identify with its own kind. Another option for easing the transition would be to get two puppies together. However, most puppies, especially those obtained before 12 weeks of age, will form attachments almost immediately to the people and other pets in the new home, provided that there are no unpleasant consequences associated with each new person and experience.

**"When a puppy enters our home, the family becomes the new social group."**

Dogs are a highly social "grouping-living" species that in the wild is often referred to as a pack. Packs have a leader that the other members follow and look to for "direction." In fact, each individual in the pack generally develops a relationship with each other pack member. When a puppy enters our home, the family becomes the new social group. Therefore it is essential for the puppy to learn its limits, including which behaviors earn rewards and which behaviors have undesirable consequences. Allowing behaviors that are pushy, disobedient or inappropriate may lead to problems that will become increasingly difficult to correct. Control must be achieved at the outset by the proper use and timing of rewards and by directing the puppy to display appropriate responses, rather than using punishment or physical techniques that can lead to fear and anxiety.

### **When is the best time to begin training my puppy?**

Formal dog training has traditionally been delayed until 6 months of age. In reality, this is a poor time to begin training. The dog is beginning to solidify adult behavioral patterns, challenge behavior is emerging, and behaviors that they have learned in puppyhood may need to be changed.

**"It is best to begin training a puppy as soon as you bring him into your home."**

It is best to begin training a puppy as soon as you bring him into your home. One important task to begin early is to establish your role as the leader. This can be done by rewarding desirable responses, training the dog to obey commands, avoiding the reinforcement of behaviors that are initiated by your dog and training the dog to accept some simple body handling techniques. Puppy training classes that begin as early as 8 to 9 weeks of age will ensure both early socialization and early learning.

### **Are physical techniques necessary for gaining control?**

Although there are many physical techniques that have been advocated for gaining control, not all of them are correct. It is the owners' attitudes, actions, and responses to the new puppy (along with the puppy's genetics) that are the most important determinants in the puppy becoming well-mannered and responsive, or becoming assertive, stubborn, disobedient and "domineering".

**"Training should focus on teaching the dog what you want, rather than disciplining what you don't want."**

Dog training literature has often discussed using scruff shakes and rollover techniques to discipline puppies. However, these physical techniques do not mimic how dogs would communicate with each other and such handling by a human could lead to fear, anxiety and even retaliation. Training should focus on teaching the dog what you want, rather than disciplining what you don't want. This makes a positive learning environment for the puppy to grow up in. There may be a number of advantages to teaching your puppy to assume subordinate postures (on their side, on their back, hands on neck, hand stroking the top of the head, hand grasping muzzle) but this does not mean that they teach your dog to be subordinate in its relationship to you. Having an obedient, well behaved, dog that enjoys handling and accepts restraint should be a focus of puppy training, but needs to be accomplished through reward based training, avoiding punishment or confrontational based training techniques and gradually accustoming your dog to enjoy handling. (See our handouts on 'Puppy - Handling and Food Bowl Exercises').

## **How can I gain control without physical techniques?**

The best way to gain control is to teach your puppy that each reward must be earned. This is also the best way to ensure that undesirable puppy behaviors are not inadvertently reinforced. The puppy should learn to display subordinate, deferential postures through reward training, rather than through any type of force. Begin with some basic obedience training, teaching the puppy to 'sit', 'stay' and 'lie down' for rewards. Practice short sessions, multiple times each day. Whenever the puppy is to receive anything of value (affection, attention, food, play and walks) the puppy should first earn its reward by performing a simple obedience task such as 'sit' or 'stay'.

**"Teach the puppy that rewards of any sort will never be given on demand."**

Teach the puppy that rewards of any sort will never be given on demand (see our handout on 'Training Dogs - Learn to Earn and Predictable Rewards'). Also known as 'nothing in life is free', a term coined by veterinary behaviorist, Victoria Voith, or "learn to earn" as described by William Campbell, the puppy must be taught that vocalization, nipping, mouthing, and overly rambunctious or demanding behaviors of any sort will never earn rewards. In fact, these behaviors should be met by inattention, by confining the puppy for a few minutes until it settles down, or with training devices and commands that get the puppy to exhibit the desired response. One such option is to immediately control and calm the puppy with a head collar (See our handout on Puppy play biting and head halter training for details). Rewards should be given as soon as the puppy is performing an appropriate response (See handout on 'Puppy - Training Sit, Down, Stand and Stay'). Each member of the family must follow the same guidelines.

Set limits on the puppy so that it does not learn that it can control you. Having the puppy sleep in its own bed or own cage rather than on your bed or couch helps to prevent the dog from gaining control or becoming possessive of your resources. When the puppy is taken for walks it should be taught to follow. This should begin at the front door where the puppy should be taught to sit, wait, and follow, and never allowed to lead or pull you through the doorway.

## **How do I prevent my puppy from doing damage or getting into mischief?**

The first step is to establish a daily routine that answers all your puppy's needs such as walks and exercise, play and training, feeding, and sleeping. For more information see our handout on 'Training Dogs - Enrichment, Predictability and Scheduling'. The rule of thumb for dog training is "set the dog up for success". Supervise the puppy at all times until it has learned what it is allowed to chew, and where it is supposed to eliminate. Keeping the puppy on a 10-foot remote leash is an excellent way to keep it in sight, and to train it not to wander off. This is particularly helpful with a highly investigative puppy or for a very busy household.

**"Housing the puppy in isolated areas where there is minimal human contact, such as in a laundry room or basement, should be avoided."**

At any time that the puppy cannot be supervised, such as during the night or when you need to go out, house it in a secure area. An escape-proof crate, a dog run, or a collapsible pen is simple, highly effective, and, most important, safe. The puppy could also be confined to a room that has been carefully dog-proofed. When selecting your dog's confinement area it is useful to consider a number of factors. The dog will adapt fastest to the new area if it is associated with rewards. Have the puppy enter the area for all its treats, toys, and perhaps food and water. The area should have some warm, dry, comfortable bedding, and should never be used for punishment (although it can, and should, be used to prevent problems). Housing the puppy in isolated areas where there is minimal human contact, such as in a laundry room or basement, should be avoided. In fact, often the best area is a kitchen (so that this can also be the dog's feeding area) or a bedroom (so that it becomes the dog's sleeping area). Each time the puppy needs to be confined, it should first be well exercised and given an opportunity to eliminate. Another consideration in selecting the type of confinement area is how long you may need to leave the dog alone. You must provide an area for elimination anytime the puppy will be left alone for longer than it can control its elimination. A room or collapsible pen with a paper-covered area would be needed if the puppy is being left alone for prolonged periods. A cage or crate could be used for owners that do not have to leave their puppies confined for longer than 2 or 3 hours (See our handout for instructions on 'Crate Training in Dogs – Tips for Crate Training').

### **What is the best way to punish my puppy for misbehavior?**

Every effort should be made to avoid punishment for new puppies as it is generally unnecessary and can lead to avoidance of family members at a time when bonding and attachment is critical. By preventing problems through confinement or supervision, providing for all of the puppy's needs, and setting up the environment for success, little or no punishment should ever be required. If a reprimand is needed, a verbal "no" or a loud noise is usually sufficient to distract a puppy so that you can then redirect the puppy to the correct behavior. Puppies that are supervised with a remote leash can be immediately interrupted with a pull on the leash. (See our handout on 'Behavior Modification - Using Punishment Effectively' for further details).

### **What should I do if my puppy misbehaves?**

Undesirable misbehavior must be prevented, or corrected in the act. Allowing the puppy, even once, to perform an undesirable behavior such as entering a restricted room, jumping up, mounting or jumping onto the couch will serve to reward and encourage the repetition of the behavior.

**"We want young puppies to look toward a human hand as something pleasant that brings comfort, food and affection."**

There will be times when your new puppy misbehaves. How you respond to the puppy will often influence later interactions. Young puppies are very impressionable. Harsh physical reprimands are contraindicated. They only serve to frighten the puppy and perhaps make them hand shy. Unfortunately, animals can learn in one trial if something is aversive enough. We want young puppies to look toward a human hand as something pleasant that brings comfort, food and affection. Most puppies can be easily interrupted with vocal intonation and loud noises. What is equally important is to redirect the puppy to the correct behavior after you interrupt what you do not like. **Remember that punishment must take place while the behavior is occurring, not after.**

**"Reprimands need to occur while the behavior is happening, preferably just as it begins, and never after."**

If you catch your puppy misbehaving, try a loud noise such as clapping your hands or a loud "uh-uh". Remember, reprimands need to occur while the behavior is happening, preferably just as it begins, and never after. Often puppies will be startled when they hear these noises and temporarily stop the behavior. At that time you should redirect the puppy to a more appropriate task and reinforce with an immediate and positive 'good dog'.

Another way to interrupt your puppy is with various types of noise devices. One such device is a "shake can". You can make an inexpensive shake can by putting a few pennies into an empty soda can and taping it shut. When given a vigorous shake it makes a loud noise, which will interrupt the puppy's behavior. Ultrasonic and sonic dog-training devices are also available (See our handout on 'Behavior Management Products').

The most important thing that you can do to avoid undesirable behavior is to supervise your puppy. Unsupervised puppies will chew and destroy objects as part of their natural curiosity and play. Rather than finding yourself with the need to reprimand your puppy, keep your puppy on a leash to avoid bad behaviors. Always provide suitable play objects designed to entertain your puppy so that it will not want to destroy your possessions (See our handout on 'Destructive Behavior in Dogs – Chewing' for ideas).

**"If you find something that your puppy has destroyed but you did not catch him in the act, just clean it up and vow to supervise your puppy better in the future."**

Most importantly, if you find something that your puppy has destroyed but you did not catch him in the act, just clean it up and vow to supervise your puppy better in the future. Do not go get your puppy and bring him over to the mess and yell and physically discipline him. Remember that you need to punish the behavior you wish to change at the time it occurs. If you did not see your puppy chew up the object, all you are doing is disciplining your puppy for being present when there is a mess on the floor. Since that makes no sense to your puppy, your reprimands could create fear and anxiety, which could lead to aggression and owner avoidance.

### **How can I prevent problems?**

Supervise the puppy at all times that it is not confined to ensure that the puppy does not get itself into mischief, or cause damage to itself or the home. Leaving a remote leash attached is all that is usually needed to prevent or interrupt inappropriate behavior such as garbage raiding, chewing on household items, house-soiling, or wandering off into rooms or areas that are out of bounds. If the leash is attached to a head halter you can quickly correct other problems that might arise, such as nipping, play biting, and jumping up. When the puppy cannot be supervised, confinement (discussed above) will be necessary. See our handout on 'Puppy – House Training' for guidance in training your puppy to eliminate in the proper location.

### **What can be done for the particularly stubborn, disobedient, or headstrong puppy?**

Puppies that are particularly headstrong and stubborn might need some fairly stringent rules. Tug-of-war games should only be allowed if the owner initiates the game, and can successfully call an end to the game, with an 'out', or 'give' command when it is time to call it quits (See our handout on 'Training Dogs – Teaching Give and Drop'). Rough play must not escalate to uncontrollable play biting that cannot be controlled by the owner.

One of the best management tools for gaining safe and effective control at all times is a head collar. The puppy can be supervised and controlled from a distance by leaving a long line or leash attached to the head halter. The principle of halter training is to gain control over the dog with as much natural communication as possible and without the use of punishment. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage proper behavior. A pull on the leash is used to disrupt misbehavior. Since the halter is attached to the dog's muzzle, common behavior problems (nipping, barking, jumping up, pulling, stealing food, etc.) can immediately be interrupted without fear or pain by pulling on the leash. The halter places pressure around the muzzle and behind the neck. This simulates the muzzle and neck restraint that a leader or mother dog might apply to a subordinate, and therefore is a highly effective and natural form of control (See our handout on 'Behavior Management Products').

### **What must I do to provide for my puppy's needs?**

Chewing, play, exercise, exploration, feeding, social contact and elimination are basic requirements for all puppies. By providing appropriate outlets for each of these needs, few problems are likely to emerge. Puppies should be given chew toys that interest them and occupy their time. When supervised, the owner can allow the puppy to investigate and explore its new environment and can direct the puppy to the appropriate chew toys (and away from inappropriate areas). Play, exercise, affection, training, and handling must all be part of the daily routine. New tasks, new routines, new people and new forms of handling can be associated with rewards to ensure success. And, of course, the puppy will need to be provided with an acceptable area for elimination, and will need guidance until it learns to use this area. (Also see our handouts on 'Training Dogs – Enrichment, Predictability and Scheduling', 'Behavior Resources' and 'Behavior Modification – Working for Food – Dogs and Cats').



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# House Training Your Puppy

## How long will it take to houstrain my puppy?

All it requires are a few basic rules to house-train puppies within a short amount of time, sometimes as little as a few days to a few weeks. This does not mean

that the puppy will be able to be trusted to wander throughout the home without eliminating. What the puppy should quickly learn is where it should eliminate, and the consequences of eliminating indoors when the owner is supervising. However, anytime your puppy is unsupervised and eliminates indoors, this can further delay successful houstraining since the puppy will have learned that there are alternate indoor elimination areas that can be used without untoward consequence.

"The goal of houstraining is to encourage and reinforce desirable elimination."

The goal of houstraining is to encourage and reinforce desirable elimination. Do not focus on trying to teach your puppy where it is not allowed to eliminate, as there are literally hundreds of locations in your home where your puppy might have to be deterred.

## What site should I choose?

It is advisable to select a site that has an easy and direct access to the outdoors. Puppies may more easily learn where to eliminate if a single location is used. Over time, the location, the substrate (surface underfoot) and the small amounts of residual odor help to establish a more regular habit of returning to the area. If you do not have immediate access to the outdoors (e.g. high rise living) or if your schedule requires that you leave your pet longer than it can control itself, you might need to train your pet to an indoor litter area. If this is your best option, you can follow the same procedures outlined below, but will instead take your pet to its litter area, rather than to the outdoors. Paper training, discussed below, is another option. However, it may be more difficult to train your pet to eliminate at one site (e.g. indoor litter) and also expect it to eliminate in other sites (e.g. outdoors).

## How do I houstrain my puppy?



To houstrain a puppy quickly and efficiently, follow the steps below:

A. Puppies have a strong urge to eliminate after sleeping, playing, feeding and drinking. Take your puppy to its selected elimination area within 30 minutes of each of these activities.

"...most puppies need to eliminate every 3 to 4 hours during the daytime."

In addition, although some puppies can control themselves through the entire night, most puppies need to eliminate every 3 to 4 hours during the daytime. With each passing month, you can expect your puppy to control itself a little longer between elimination times. The puppy should be taken to its

elimination area, given a word or two of verbal encouragement (e.g. 'Hurry up') and as soon as elimination is completed, lavishly praised and patted. A few tasty food treats can also be given the first few times the puppy eliminates in the right spot, and then intermittently thereafter. This teaches the puppy the proper place to eliminate, and that elimination in that location is associated with rewards. Some puppies may learn to eliminate when they hear the cue words ('Hurry up').

B. If you take your puppy to the elimination site and your puppy is only interested in playing and investigating the environment, take the puppy indoors after about 10 minutes and strictly supervise him until you can try again, approximately each half hour. Always accompany your puppy outdoors so that you can be certain that it has eliminated. When you first start house training, be certain to reward elimination immediately upon completion and not when the puppy comes back indoors.

C. When indoors, your puppy must be supervised so that you can see when it needs to eliminate and immediately take it outdoors to its elimination area. One of the best techniques is to leave a remote lead attached. Should pre-elimination signs (circling, squatting, sneaking-off, heading to the door) occur, immediately take the dog to its elimination site, give the cue words, and reward the puppy when it eliminates. If the puppy begins to eliminate indoors you must be supervising so that you can immediately interrupt the behavior, such as with a verbal reprimand or shaker can.

"...the goal is to train the puppy where to eliminate through supervision and rewards."

Then take the puppy outdoors to complete elimination at the proper site. Rather than use punishment to deter undesirable elimination, the goal is to train the puppy where to eliminate through supervision and rewards. Watch the puppy closely for signs it needs to eliminate and soon the puppy will learn to exhibit these signs to get your attention that it needs to go outdoors.

D. When you are not available to supervise, the puppy should be confined to its confinement area (see our handout on 'Crate Training in Dogs'). Be certain that your puppy has eliminated, and has had sufficient play and exercise before any lengthy confinement. Establish a daily routine that helps your puppy learn when it is time to play, eat, exercise, sleep, and eliminate (see our handout on 'Training Dogs – Enrichment, Predictability and Scheduling'). If the confinement area is small enough, such as a pen or crate, many puppies will have sufficient control to keep this area clean. This means that when you come to release the puppy from confinement, it must be taken directly to its elimination area. Puppies will generally avoid soiling their crate if they use their crates as a sleeping or play area. However, puppies that are anxious or distressed about being confined to the crate are likely to soil. In addition, if the area is too large the puppy may soil in a portion of the confinement area. If the puppy needs to be left for longer than it can control itself, it should be confined to a small room or pen where paper is spread over the floor for elimination except for a corner that contains the puppy's bed and feeding area. Once the puppy starts to limit its elimination to some selected areas of the paper, unused areas can be taken up. For owners that intend to continue to use paper for training, the puppy should be supervised when released from confinement, and returned to the paper (and reinforced) for elimination.

### **Why does my puppy refuse to eliminate in my presence, even when outdoors?**

Puppies that are disciplined and punished for indoor elimination rather than reinforced for outdoor elimination may soon begin to fear to eliminate whenever you are present, regardless of the location. These puppies do not associate the punishment with indoor elimination; they associate the punishment with the presence of the owners. For some puppies, standing quietly off to the side may allow them time to eliminate. It is best if you can be close by, but each puppy is an individual and some may need more space than others before feeling comfortable enough to eliminate.

### **What do I do if I find some stool or urine in an inappropriate spot?**

There is no point in punishing or even pointing out the problem to the puppy. Only if the puppy is in the act of elimination will it understand the consequences (rewards or punishment). In fact, it is not the puppy that has erred; **it is the owner who has erred by not properly supervising**. Put the puppy elsewhere, clean up the mess and vow to supervise the puppy more closely in the future.

### **How can I teach my puppy to signal that it needs to go out to eliminate?**

By regularly taking the dog outdoors, through the same door, to the same site, and providing rewards for proper elimination, the puppy should soon learn to head for the door each time it has to eliminate. If you recognize the signs of impending elimination and praise the puppy whenever it heads for the doorway, the behavior can be further encouraged. Puppies that have been interrupted or reprimanded on one or more occasions as they begin to eliminate indoors, may begin to try to sneak away, whine or show some form of anxiety when they feel the urge to eliminate but cannot escape from the owner's sight. If you can pick up on these cues, and take the puppy directly to the outdoors for elimination and reward, the puppy may consistently begin to show these signals when he or she needs to eliminate, and may even begin to take you to the exit door.

"Some puppies can be taught to ring a bell or bark to let you know it needs to go outside."

Further into the process, some puppies can be taught to ring a bell or bark to let you know it needs to go outside to eliminate. For either of these to be effective, you first must constantly supervise your puppy so you can see the signs of a full bladder or bowel (restlessness, agitation) and quickly take them to the exit location, ring the bell or get them to bark and go outside. Over time the puppy should learn that the signal would get the door open. However, do not rely on signaling until it reliably happens or the puppy will end up eliminating indoors instead.

### **When will I be able to trust my puppy to wander loose throughout the home?**

Generally you will want your dog to have been error free around the house for about a month before you can begin to decrease your confinement and supervision. The first time you leave the puppy unsupervised should be just after taking the dog outdoors for elimination. Gradually increase the length of time that your dog is allowed to roam through the home without supervision while you are home. If the dog has been able to go unsupervised for a couple of hours without an "accident", it might then be possible to begin going out for short periods of time. Of course, if the dog still investigates and chews, then confinement and supervision may still be necessary.

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# Puppy Behavior and Training – Socialization and Fear Prevention

## What is socialization?

This is the period in a puppy's life where it develops relationships with other living beings and also learns how to behave and act in new experiences.

While socialization takes place throughout the first year of life, the first 3 months seem to be the most important time for young puppies to learn about their environment. This critical period is when the puppy develops social relationships with other dogs and with other species, including humans. Therefore, this is not only the optimal time for the puppy to spend time learning to communicate and play with other dogs, but is also the most important time to have human contact (as well as exposure to other species with which it might live, such as cats). The balance between socialization with other dogs and with humans can perhaps be best met by having the puppy stay with its littermates and mother in a home where there is also human contact up until about 7 to 8 weeks. Then, it can be adopted into the new human household, where it can hopefully continue its socialization with other dogs (i.e., if there are dogs in the family or through puppy classes).

"The first 12 to 16 weeks seem to be the most important time for young puppies to learn about their environment."

Two other important aspects of a pup's development are "habituation" and "localization."

## What is habituation?

As all animals develop there are numerous stimuli (sounds, smells, sights and events) that, when unfamiliar, can lead to fear and anxiety. Habituation is the process whereby dogs get used to repeated stimuli, and stop reacting to them, provided that there are no untoward consequences. For habituation to occur, the owner should avoid reinforcing any undesirable responses such as fear.

## What is localization?

Localization is the process by which the puppy develops attachment to particular places.

## Why are these processes important?

To reduce the possibility of fearful responses as a puppy grows and matures, it is essential to expose young puppies to many stimuli (people, places, and things) when they can most effectively socialize, localize, and habituate to these stimuli. Early handling and events that occur during the first 2 to 4 months of life are critical factors in the social development of the dog. Dogs that receive insufficient exposure to people, other animals and new environments during this time may develop irreversible fears, leading to timidity and/or aggression.

## What can I do to improve my chances of having a social, nonfearful dog?



### **Puppy selection**

The genetics of the breed and of the parents in particular, play an important role in how sociable, playful, fearful, excitable, or domineering a puppy becomes. Choose a breed and parents (both male and female) that have the type of behavior that you would like the puppy to have. Of course, there is a great deal of variability between individuals, so that breed and parental behavior will not always be indicative of what the puppy will be like. If the parents have been previously bred together, the behavior and health of these siblings from previous litters may provide additional insight into how your dog might grow and develop.

### **Puppy assessment**

Although you should avoid selecting puppies that are shy, withdrawn, or fearful, selecting a friendly and nonfearful puppy does not ensure that this behavior will persist into adulthood.

"Little or no predictive value has been found in assessing puppies under 3 months of age."

In fact, little or no predictive value has been found in assessing puppies under 3 months of age, since these puppies are still developing their social skills and many problem behaviors do not begin to emerge until sexual or social maturity. However, as puppies age, these criteria do begin to become more reliable.

### **Early handling**

Puppies that are stimulated and handled from birth to five weeks of age are more confident, social, exploratory, faster maturing and better able to handle stress as they develop. Puppies obtained from a breeder or home where they have had frequent contact and interaction with people are likely to be more social and less fearful as they develop. Puppies that have spent a large amount of time in pet stores or confined in cages may not have had the environmental stimulation needed to easily transition to a new home.

### **Primary socialization**

There is a sensitive period in the development of most species when they develop social attachments with their own and other species, independent of punishment and rewards. In fact, both positive and negative events seem to accelerate socialization. The events that occur during this socialization period determine the puppy's future social partners, as well as the species with which it feels comfortable. By recognizing the critical time frame in which canine socialization develops, you can help to ensure a healthy social attachment to people and other animals, including other dogs.

The primary socialization period for dogs begins at 3 weeks of age and is already diminishing by 12 weeks. Peak sensitivity is at 6 – 8 weeks. Fears begin to emerge around 8 weeks of age, so that beyond 12 weeks of age, fearfulness may surpass sociability. Although there is a great deal of variability between breeds and individuals, dogs should be socialized to as many people, animals and situations as possible before the sensitive socialization period begins to wane. However, regular social interactions should continue through adulthood so that puppies do not regress and become more fearful as they grow and develop. The 6 – 8 month period appears to be another important time where social contact should be maintained, or social skills may diminish and fear may escalate.

To help develop a healthy social relationship with other dogs throughout life, dogs should maintain their social contacts with their mother and littermates until 6 to 8 weeks of age.

### **What is the best age to obtain my new puppy?**

Since it is critical for the puppy's development to interact, observe, play and learn with members of its own species, the puppy should remain with its mother and littermates until about 7 weeks of age. Then when placed in the new home, social contacts can be expanded to new people and species while still in their primary socialization period. Also by this time puppies will begin to develop preferences for elimination sites, so that this is a good age at which to begin house training.

### **What can I do to assist my puppy in its social development?**

Generally, there should be little problem with a puppy that is less than 12 weeks of age developing healthy and lasting attachments to the people, sights and sounds in its new home.

Your puppy is most likely to become fearful of stimuli that are not found in its day-to-day routine. Make a conscious effort to identify those people and situations to which the puppy is not regularly exposed. For example, if there are no children in the home, you might arrange regular play sessions with children. If you live in the country, make a few trips into the city, so that the puppy can be taken for walks on city streets, or through neighborhood plazas. Conversely, a puppy that grows up in the city might become fearful or aggressive toward farm animals that it was not exposed to during its early development.

**"Your puppy is most likely to become fearful of stimuli that are not found in its day-to-day routine."**

Introduce your puppy to as many new people and situations as possible. People in uniforms, babies, toddlers, the elderly, and the physically challenged are just a few examples that might lead to fear and anxiety unless there is sufficient early exposure. Similarly, car rides, elevators, stairs, or the noises associated with traffic, trains, airplanes, or hot air balloons are some examples of events and experiences to which the puppy might be habituated.

One way to facilitate the introduction of the puppy to new situations and people is to provide a reward such as a favorite toy or biscuit each time it is exposed to a new stimulus. Having a stranger offer a biscuit to the puppy will teach it to look forward to meeting people and discourage hand-shyness, since the puppy will learn to associate new friends and an outstretched hand with something positive. Once the puppy has learned to "sit" on command, have each new friend ask it to "sit" before giving the biscuit. This teaches a proper greeting and will make the puppy less likely to jump up on people.

Be certain that the puppy has the opportunity to meet and receive treats from a wide variety of people of all ages, races, appearances and both sexes during the formative months and well into the first year of life. There will of course, be times when your puppy is in a new situation and you do not have treats. At those times, use a happy tone of voice and praise your puppy for appropriate responses.

If your puppy seems to panic, back off a little and try again later, rather than aggravating the fear. Be sure to identify any emerging fear and work to revisit the situation slowly and gradually using favored rewards to turn the situation into one that is positive.

### **Is it healthy to take my puppy out in public at such a young age?**

There is always a concern about the risks of taking the puppy out of its home before it is fully vaccinated because it may be exposed to an infectious disease before the protective immunity has developed. However, the benefits gained from these early public experiences can be enormous, and without them the risk of the puppy developing permanent fears or anxiety is a serious concern.

One solution is to have people and healthy vaccinated animals visit the puppy in its own home, until it has completed its primary puppy vaccination series. A compromise is to take the puppy out to meet people and other pets in low risk environments. As long as you are following your veterinarian's recommended vaccination schedule, taking the puppy for walks along the sidewalk and avoiding neighborhood parks where stools and urine might accumulate is generally safe.

**"Enroll the puppy in puppy socialization classes."**

Another valuable aid is to enroll the puppy in puppy socialization classes. If these classes are held indoors in a room that can be cleaned and disinfected, and all puppies are screened for vaccination and good health prior to each class, then these classes provide good exposure to people and other dogs in a low risk environment. In addition to ensuring that vaccines are up-to-date and each puppy is parasite free, requiring that all puppies in the class have been in their new home and appear pretty healthy for at least 10 days before enrolling will help reduce the risks of disease transmission. This time period is longer than the incubation period for most of the serious contagious canine diseases. Not only do these classes offer an opportunity for play and socialization with a variety of people and dogs, they also help guide the owners into proper training techniques from the outset. Recent studies showed that taking puppies to puppy socialization classes decreases the chances of relinquishing puppies and increases long-term socialization, thereby providing your puppy with better tools to cope with future situations.

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# Using Reinforcement and Rewards to Train Your Pet

The best way to train your pet is through the proper use of positive reinforcement and rewards while simultaneously avoiding punishment. The goal of training is to “learn” the proper task and/or behavior. First, you must be able to get the pet to perform the desired behavior reliably. Then, add a cue or command prior to the behavior, so that it can be initiated by the command or cue alone. Of course, rewards can and should be given for any behaviors that are desirable, not just those associated with commands. Generally, the most difficult aspect of training is to find techniques that immediately get the desired response after each command. Before effective training can take place, you must first understand how pets learn and how to use rewards effectively to achieve desirable behaviors.

## How does learning take place?

Learning occurs by establishing the relationship between behavior and consequences. There can be different possible outcomes of behavior, and consequences can be positive or negative. When there is a positive relationship between behavior and consequences, the more your pet performs a certain behavior, the more of the consequence it receives. If there is a negative relationship between behavior and outcome, then the more of the behavior the pet does, the less of the consequence it receives. When we increase a behavior by giving something positive, this is known as positive reinforcement. When we remove a stimulus to increase the behavior, this is known as negative reinforcement. A great deal of what a pet learns can be through negative reinforcement. For example, when a dog barks at an intruder (such as a mail carrier) the barking has been reinforced because the stimulus was removed (that is, the mail carrier left the property – the dog does not know that the mail carrier would have left anyway). Similarly, if growling or aggression leads to retreat of a person or another animal, then the growling or aggression has been reinforced. Negative reinforcement can also be used for training when a pull on a head halter or a spray of citronella is terminated as soon as the desirable behavior is observed.

## What is positive reinforcement?

Positive reinforcement is anything that is added that increases the likelihood that a behavior will be repeated. There is a positive relationship between behavior and consequence. The more the pet does a behavior, the more consequence it receives and what it gets is good. This makes that behavior increase.

## What kinds of things will a dog consider positive reinforcement?

This may differ from dog to dog and may vary with the time of day and between individuals. For some it may be a pat on the head, a play session, a fun toy, a walk, or a food treat. The key is to select the reward that motivates your dog. Petting and affection can be an excellent reward when the dog is in the mood for these interactions, but can be a punishment or source of fear and anxiety if the dog is not in the mood, or if the affection is being given by someone from whom the dog does not want attention.

**"Cats can be trained with petting, play toys and food if we withhold these until such time as the pet is motivated."**

To increase the motivation of a particular reward, it can be useful to wait until the dog appears to be in the mood for the reward, and can be further enhanced by withholding the reward. For example, if you feed your dog only one or two scheduled meals, then training sessions with food and treats should become most successful as the dog gets increasingly hungry and as meal time approaches. Most puppies can be motivated with pieces of food when hungry, but a different food or treat is often more appealing because of its novelty. In the same way, toys, play sessions and affection can be withheld until training time, so that the dog is “hungrier” for these rewards, and so that the dog learns what behaviors will be followed by rewards.

Similarly, cats can be trained with petting, play toys and food if we withhold these until such time as the cat is motivated.

The more predictable the rewards, the more likely it is that the pet will continue the behavior (see Using Predictable Rewards to Train Your Dog). On the other hand, if rewards are unpredictable (e.g., affection) the pet will not learn the desired response.

By the way, if there is no good reason to give your pet a treat, don't give one – it gives extra calories and accomplishes nothing. Consider that if these tidbits and biscuits were used as training rewards, you could motivate and train your pet to exhibit behaviors that you want him to learn by saving these rewards for the training you wish to accomplish. In fact, whenever you are giving your pet anything of value, make certain that it is preceded by a behavior that you wish to reinforce. Pets that are difficult to motivate may be hardest to train. Often these pets do better with small morsels of special treats such as hot dog or cheese, or with pieces of dog food sprinkled with flavoring such as powdered cheese.

## How do I properly use positive reinforcement?



The proper use of positive reinforcement is more than just giving a treat or a pat on the head.

The timing of the reinforcement is very important. Remember, your pet is engaging in behaviors all the time. So, you need to be sure to reinforce the behavior that you want and not some other behavior. Therefore, closely associate the reinforcement with the behavior that you wish to increase. Reinforcement must immediately follow the behavior. If there is any delay, you run the risk of the pet engaging in another behavior while you are administering the reinforcement. One example is when you teach a dog to sit. You tell your dog to “sit,” and manipulate it into the position. If you are saying ‘good dog’ and giving a food treat as the dog stands up or begins to bark, you

will not have rewarded the sit. Instead, you may have rewarded the stand up, the bark or the sequence of sit-stand-bark. Another example is when you are house training your dog. You send your dog outdoors to eliminate and as soon as the dog is finished, you call the dog back into the house, dry her feet and give her a reward. What happened this time? You just rewarded your dog for coming back into the house and having her feet dried!

## Should I reward my pet every time?

The frequency of reinforcement is important. The rate at which behavior is reinforced is called the “schedule.” There are several different schedules of reinforcement.

A. Continuous reinforcement: Every time your pet engages in a behavior, it is reinforced with a reward. While this may sound like a good idea, it is actually less than ideal. If you reward a behavior continuously, once you cease rewarding the behavior, it will often stop. Continuous reinforcement is useful when first teaching a new task, so that the animal learns the task that leads to a good outcome. In fact, for new tasks favored rewards, small reward jackpots or clicker training (see Clicker and Target Training) can be given the first few times, so that the pet quickly learns that these are very desirable behaviors.

B. Ratio or variable rate of reinforcement: The reinforcement does not come after each performance of the behavior but intermittently. This may mean that instead of a reward every time, the pet gets a reward every third time, then perhaps two in a row, then maybe not until the pet has performed the behavior five more times. What happens if you reward this way? Behavior tends to be stronger and last longer. This type of reinforcement is best instituted once the pet reliably knows the task you wish to teach and helps keep the pet responding at a high rate.

## What type of reinforcement schedule works best for training?

Start training new commands or tasks with continuous reinforcement but switch to intermittent, variable rates as soon as your pet is responding consistently. When training pets, we often use favored rewards (or even clicker training - see Clicker and Target Training) continuously to achieve the behaviors that we want to train, and when the behavior is learned, we often switch to lesser rewards such as petting or praise, and only give a more favored reward intermittently.

## What if my rewards are not working?

First, you may not be reinforcing the correct task. Remember the example of “sit” and “stand up.” Be sure that the timing of your reinforcement is correct (i.e., immediately after the behavior you wish to increase). Second, you may be phasing out your reinforcement before your pet has adequately learned the new behavior. Go back to basics and be sure your pet understands what you want it to do.

Until your dog consistently responds to the command when it is given the first time, it can be valuable to leave a leash attached so that you can immediately and gently show him what you want him to do. It is also possible that you may be repeating commands several times or in different ways, and thus confusing your pet. Another common problem occurs when you use food or toy lures to help achieve the initial behaviors. If you do not substitute a closed hand cue or move to a command, then the pet will respond to seeing the reward cue rather than the hand signal or the word.

## **What type of rewards should I use?**

Rewards do not always have to be food. In fact, there are two forms of rewards. The first are the rewards that will motivate your dog, such as food, toys or treats, and the second are the times during the day when your dog solicits affection, attention, play, a walk or going outdoors.

"Rewards do not always have to be food."

For many dogs, owner attention, a walk in the park, or a game of fetch can be a reward. In fact, any time your dog is in the mood for some social interaction, and any time you are giving a toy, food or treat, you have the perfect opportunity to first train your dog to a command. If you do not keep track of when and where you give rewards, you may actually be reinforcing undesirable behavior (see below). What is important is that it be appropriate and motivating for your dog. Remember, you need not give a “special” reward such as food each time your dog performs a task, but always acknowledge good behavior, even if only with praise or affection.

If you use rewards other than food, you can both train your dog and ensure that you are not giving any extra calories. However, if you do use food for a reward, this is not a problem as long as you count the number of calories in your rewards, and reduce the food by an equal number of calories. Working for food is a form of social interaction as well as enrichment for your dog, so may actually be preferable to feeding all food out of a bowl (see Working for Food and Using Predictable Rewards to Train Your Dog).

## **Is there a wrong way to reward my dog?**

Yes. We may reinforce behaviors that we do not want. Remember that positive reinforcement makes behavior increase.

There may be times when we are inadvertently giving reinforcement when the dog is exhibiting a behavior that is undesirable. Giving any form of attention to a barking dog, a dog that is jumping up, or a dog scratching at the back door only serves to reward the behavior. Sometimes people even give a bit of food, pat the dog, or play with it in an attempt to calm it down. What they are really doing however is reinforcing the problem behavior. Similarly, you may think that you are punishing your dog when you are indeed reinforcing behaviors. Examples include scolding your dog with an insufficiently harsh tone of voice, or gently pushing the dog away when it is play-biting. What is worse is that, when these behaviors are rewarded occasionally or intermittently, the behavior becomes stronger and lasts longer (see above). A reward should never be given unless it is earned.

## **What are other ways in which rewards can be used?**

There are other situations where rewards can be most helpful. For example, it may help a puppy or even an adult dog to learn to accept new people if that greeting is always coupled with a food treat. This will help the dog learn that new people bring something good. In other cases, rewards can be used to encourage desirable behavior. Food-enhanced toys may encourage a dog to chew on them instead of the household possessions. Removal of a reward as soon as the dog exhibits undesirable behavior is another training tool known as negative punishment (e.g., stopping play when the dog bites too hard). In this example, withdrawal of the reward is used as a punishment and play biting should be reduced or cease since it leads to the reward being removed.

## **What type of rewards would I use for my cat?**

Cats respond to training like dogs, however, they seem to need reinforcement at a higher rate than dogs to maintain performance. Food is often the best reinforcement for cats, but many will enjoy play sessions with favorite toys as well.

**"Think of toys and snacks as rewards, not as treats."**

Like dogs, small tidbits of human food or special cat treats with high appeal may be more motivating than regular food. Train your cat with these treats before meals, not after, and feed your cat on a meal schedule rather than free choice so that he is hungry at training times. Remember to think of toys and snacks as rewards, not as treats. It can be an extremely useful and fun exercise to train your cat to a few simple commands (come, sit, meal time). All it takes is to encourage the behavior (e.g., with a toy or food lure), reward the behavior, and once the cat will respond reliably, add a command. A leash and harness can also help to prompt the cat to get the desired response. These commands can come in very useful when you need to interact with your cat.

### **What is clicker training and how does it work?**

A clicker or an audible tone (found on some remote collars) can be paired with a food reward by consistently sounding it just prior to giving the food, until it becomes a conditioned stimulus for food. The value of a clicker is that it can then be used as a reward to immediately mark correct responses in a convenient and precise manner, with the food being given shortly afterwards. Clickers then become the highest level of rewards for most dogs (see Clicker and Target Training).

### **What is target training and how does it work?**

One common question is how to get a pet to display the behavior that we want to train (and reward). Target training can be a reliable method of achieving desirable outcomes. When an animal is trained to pay attention to a target, they will follow that target, allowing the handler to easily lure them into certain positions (e.g., sit) and to redirect their attention away from competing attractions.

### **How do I train commands?**



Many people yell commands repeatedly at their pets in order to achieve compliance. In all pets, but especially those with behavioral problems, yelling or loud voices can increase arousal levels and/or aggravate anxiety – both of these consequences are counterproductive when you are trying to teach a pet to respond in a tranquil manner. Before giving a command, get the pet's attention by saying their name; then the command should be given in a gentle voice and there should be a pause to allow the pet to respond. Responses are rewarded. Non-response or undesirable behavior is not rewarded. If a dog has a head halter on, you may be able to gain compliance with some gentle pressure; if this is not possible, the situation needs to be changed so the pet can be compliant.

A dog that has anxiety or a competing undesirable response needs constant direction. When exposed to the provocative stimulus, the dog should stay engaged with the handler via a constant dialogue. For example, the handler can say "Sophie ... sit ... watch me ... stay ... watch me ... stay ... watch me." Success is unlikely if the dog is given a single verbal command such as "stay" and expected to hold that command for a prolonged period with the distraction present especially if such behavior has not been taught before.

### **How do I use rewards to train new behaviors?**

As mentioned, when you are first establishing a new behavior, valuable rewards should be given every time for success.

When the new behavior is firmly established, the rewards can be intermittent. For pets that have particularly challenging behaviors and you are trying to change their response, consistent fabulous rewards or a handful of treats (jackpots) will need to be used for significant periods before moving to an intermittent reward schedule. Rewards should be given immediately after the task is completed. Praise should always be part of the reward package in addition to other rewards such as food treats. Always try to end a training session with success. If the pet performs the behavior perfectly, you can either stop training for the day or move on to some other form of training.

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# Why to Crate Train Your Dog

## Why might my dog need to be confined?

Dogs are highly social animals that make wonderful pets. They can be effective as watchdogs, are excellent companions for play and exercise, and are sources of affection and comfort.

However, with the lifestyle and schedule of the majority of families, dogs must learn to spend a portion of the day at home, while their human family is away at school, work, shopping, or engaging in recreational activities. During those times when you are away and unavailable to supervise, the pet may still feel the need to chew, play, explore, eat, or eliminate. These behaviors can be very distressing to owners and damaging to the home. Confining your dog to a play area with its toys is akin to putting a young child in its playpen; while teaching your dog to relax and sleep in its crate or bed would be similar to putting your baby in its crib when its time for bedtime or a nap. Crate training may also be essential for plane travel or for housing your dog when visiting friends or family or vacationing with your dog.

"With the lifestyle and schedule of the majority of families, dogs must learn to spend a portion of the day at home."

## How else can this misbehavior be prevented?

Preventing inappropriate behaviors when you are absent involves both scheduling and prevention. Scheduling means ensuring that the pet has had the opportunity to play, eat, and eliminate before you leave it in its confinement area or crate. By maintaining a regular daily routine and timing your confinement to when your pet would normally be napping or playing with its toys, there should be minimal resistance to confinement. In addition, these alone times should be scheduled for the times of day when you would normally be working or otherwise occupied. Prevention involves confining your dog to an area where it is secure, safe, and comfortable so that it can do no damage to your possessions or soil in undesirable areas.

## What are my options for confinement?

Depending on the structure of your home, it may be possible to confine your dog to a limited portion of your home, by closing a few doors or putting up some child gates or barricades. The dog can then be allowed access to the remaining areas of the house. Another option is to use avoidance devices that keep the pet away from selected areas (see Behavior Management Products). If dog-proofing is not possible when you have to leave your dog unsupervised, you might need to confine your dog to a single room, pen, or crate. This smaller confinement area provides safety for the dog and protection of the home from damage. It also provides a means of teaching where and what to chew (i.e., it can only chew what you provide in the crate) as long as you properly supervise when out of confinement. Finally, it helps teach the dog where and when to eliminate, since most dogs will not soil their crates and you can teach them the appropriate places to eliminate when you are available to supervise. Training should always focus on setting up to ensure and reward success rather than trying to punish behaviors such as exploration, scavenging and elimination that might be normal but undesirable, behaviors.

## Isn't crate training cruel?

Crate training is neither cruel nor unfair. On the contrary, leaving the dog unsupervised to wander, investigate, destroy, and perhaps injure itself is far more inhumane than confinement. Ensure that the crate is large enough for your dog to stand, turn and play with its toys.

Proper timing and scheduling can help your dog to adapt. Be certain that your dog has had sufficient play, exercise, attention, and an opportunity to eliminate before confinement, and that you return before the dog next needs to eliminate. Ideally, even when you are home the pet should be placed in its crate at times of the day when it is due for a nap, or when it normally amuses itself by playing with its own toys. You should use confinement when you cannot supervise your dog. At times when you are at home, you must try to keep the pet with you (except during the pet's nap times), as this is the only way to train and reinforce desirable behavior and direct the pet away from undesirable behavior.

## What are the benefits of crate training?

Confinement training has many benefits. It keeps your pet safe and prevents damage to household possessions. The crate also provides a place of security and a comfortable retreat where the dog can relax, sleep, or chew on a favorite toy. Confining the pet to a crate or room when the owner is not available to supervise can immediately prevent behavior problems. If the puppy is crated when it is napping or playing with its own toys, the risk for overattachment and separation anxiety might be reduced. While in the crate the puppy learns to spend time away from the owners, napping or engaging in play behavior. When you are at home, you can supervise your dog, and use rewards to prevent undesirable behavior, and to teach the dog where to eliminate, what to chew, and what rooms and areas are “out of bounds.”

**"Crate training is one of the quickest and most effective ways to house train a dog."**

### **Will cage confinement help with house training?**

Crate training is one of the quickest and most effective ways to house train a dog. Since most dogs instinctively avoid eliminating in their sleeping and eating areas, dogs that use their crate as a bed or “den” will seldom eliminate inside unless they have been left in the crate for too long or they are excessively anxious when confined. Crate training can also help teach the dog to develop control over its elimination. As soon as your dog is released from its crate, take it to the designated area and reward elimination at acceptable locations. Since the crate prevents chewing, digging, and elimination on the owner’s home and property, owners of crate trained puppies may have fewer behavior concerns, the puppy receives far less discipline and punishment, and the overall relationship between pet and owner can be dramatically improved (see House Training).

### **Will the crate provoke barking?**

The crate can also be a useful way to reduce or eliminate distress barking. Rather than locking the puppy up and away from the owners at nighttime or during mealtime, the puppy can be housed in its crate in the bedroom or kitchen. In this way the puppy cannot get into mischief, and is less likely to cry out or vocalize with the owners in the room. Of course, if the puppy is not napping and you are available to supervise, your puppy should be out and about with you watching closely to insure that it comes to no harm and does not get into mischief. Distress vocalization is far more likely for owners that lock their puppy out of harm’s way in a laundry or basement with no access to them. When and if the owner then goes to the puppy to quiet it down or check it out, the crying behavior is rewarded. Puppies that learn to spend time away from their owners may be less likely to develop separation anxiety.

### **Are there other benefits to caging?**



Throughout its life, whether traveling or boarding, your dog may require crate confinement for varying periods of time. Dogs that are comfortable with crating are more likely to feel secure, and far less stressed, should caging be required. By bringing along the dog’s bedding or its own crate for boarding or veterinary visits, the pet may feel even more settled and relaxed. Therefore, consider whether a crate will be required at some future date for car travel, airline travel, boarding, traveling with your pet to motels or vacation homes or when visiting friends and relatives.

Since these events in themselves might cause some anxiety, it is important to accustom your dog to its crate in advance of these events. If you do not, the anxiety of crating combined with the anxiety of the travel experience may be overwhelming. By the same token, dogs that are familiar with their crates may find them sufficiently comforting and calming to reduce the anxiety associated with travel.



# How to Crate Train Your Dog

Teaching your dog to relax in a crate is an effective way of ensuring its safety while protecting your home and possessions from damage caused by chewing or other destructive behaviors.

## CRATE TRAINING PUPPIES

### What type of crate or confinement area works best?

A metal, collapsible crate with a tray floor works well, as long as the crate is large enough for the dog to stand, turn, and stretch out. Some dogs feel more secure if a blanket is draped over the crate. A plastic traveling crate or a homemade crate can also be used. Playpens or barricades may also be successful as long as they are indestructible and escape proof.

### Where should the cage be located?

Because dogs are social animals, an ideal location for the crate is a room where the family spends time such as a kitchen, den, or in a bedroom where the dog might sleep at night.

### How can crating or confinement become a positive experience?

Most dogs quickly choose a small area, such as a corner of a room, in a dog bed, or on or under a couch, where they go to relax. If your puppy has just recently been adopted from the breeder, kennel or pet store, crate training should be relatively easy, since your puppy is likely already accustomed to sleeping in a pen or crate. The key to making the crate the dog's favorite retreat and sleeping area is to associate the crate with as many positive and relaxing experiences and stimuli as possible (treats, chew toys, bedding). Place the dog in its cage when playing with new toys, during scheduled rest and sleep periods or even during feeding.

You must plan and be aware of the dog's schedule, including its needs for exploration, play, food, and elimination, so that the dog is only placed in its cage after each of these needs is fulfilled. You must then return to the dog to release it from its cage before the next exercise, feeding or elimination period is due. A radio or television playing in the background may help to calm the dog when it is alone in its cage, especially during the daytime. These may also help to mask environmental noises that can stimulate the dog to vocalize. The crate should not be used for punishment. There is also some evidence to support the use of a pheromone spray on the dog's blanket or a pheromone diffuser in the confinement area to help the dog adapt.

### How do I crate train my new puppy?

Introduce the puppy to the crate as soon as it is brought home and as early in the day as possible. Place a variety of treats in the cage throughout the day so that the puppy is encouraged to enter voluntarily. Bedding, toys, and water can also be offered to the puppy in the open cage. Food might be placed in the pen or crate if you wish to also designate it as a feeding area.

Choose a location outdoors for the puppy to eliminate. Take the puppy to the location, wait until the puppy eliminates, and reward the puppy lavishly with praise or food. After some additional play and exercise, and when you feel its time for your puppy to take a nap (or when you see your puppy begin to settle down for nap), place the puppy in its crate with water, a toy, and a treat, and close the door.

If the puppy is tired and calm, it may take a “nap” shortly after being placed in its crate. If not, be certain to provide a few novel and stimulating toys or chews for play. In this way, the crate serves two functions – as your puppy’s bed (crib) or your puppy’s play area (playpen).

Leave the room but remain close enough to hear the puppy. Escape behavior and vocalization are to be expected when a dog is first placed into its crate. If the “complaints” are short or mild, ignore your puppy until the crying stops. Never release the puppy unless it is quiet. This teaches that quiet behavior, and not crying will be rewarded. Release the puppy after a few minutes of quiet or a short nap.

A brief disruption may be useful to deter crying if it does not subside on its own. A shaker can (a sealed can filled with coins or marbles) can be tossed at the crate when the pup barks. Other methods include water sprayers or alarms (audible or ultrasonic). The owner should remain out of sight when using these disruptions. By plugging in an alarm, tape recorder, or hair dryer beside the crate and turning it on with a remote control switch each time the dog barks, the dog can be taught that barking has unpleasant consequences whether the owner is present or not. When the barking ceases, the disruption is stopped. Bark collars and alarms that are activated by the barking are also available for persistent problems. These latter techniques must be used with caution, since it can exacerbate the vocalization problem of a very anxious pet.

Repeat the cage and release procedure a few more times during the day, at each naptime and each time your puppy is given a toy or chew with which to play. Each time, increase the time that the dog must stay in the crate before letting it out. Always give the puppy exercise and a chance to eliminate before securing it in the crate.

At bedtime, the dog should be exercised, secured in its crate, and left for the night. Do not go to the dog if it cries. Remote punishment can be used to deter crying. You might choose to leave the crate in the same place as it has been during the day, or you might move it to the bedroom (or a second crate could be used).

If the pup sleeps in one end of its crate and eliminates in the other, install a divider to keep the puppy in a smaller area, as long as you do not leave it in the crate for long periods. Never leave the puppy in its crate for longer than it can control its bowels or bladder or it may be forced to eliminate in the crate.

If the puppy must eliminate, it does not matter how small the area is; the puppy will have to eliminate.

If the pup must be left for long periods during which it might eliminate, it should be confined to a larger area such as a dog-proof room or pen, with paper left down for elimination. As the puppy gets older, its control increases and it can be left longer in its crate.

**"A crate is not an excuse to ignore the dog!"**

Although there is a great deal of individual variability, many puppies can control themselves through the night by 3 months of age. During the daytime, once the puppy has relieved itself, a 2-month-old puppy may have up to 3 hours of control, a 3-month-old puppy up to 4 hours, and a 4-month-old puppy up to 5 hours.

## CRATE TRAINING ADULT DOGS

### What is the best technique for crate training older pets and adult dogs?

For adult dogs or older puppies that have not been crate trained previously, set up the crate in the dog's feeding area with the door open for a few days. Place food, treats, and water in the crate so that the dog enters the crate on its own. Another alternative is to place the crate (or a second crate) in the dog's sleeping area with its bedding. Once the dog is regularly entering the crate freely, it is time to close the door for very short periods of time.

Using the same training techniques as for 'sit' and 'stay' training, have the dog enter its crate for short periods of time to obtain food, treats, or chew toys. Once the pet expects treats each time it enters the crate, train the dog to enter the crate on command (e.g., kennel), and have the dog remain in the kennel for progressively longer periods of time before the dog is allowed to exit. Give small rewards each time the dog enters the cage at first, and give the dog a

favorable chew toy or some food to help make the stay more enjoyable. At first, the door can remain open during these training sessions. When the dog is capable of staying comfortably and quietly in the crate begin to lock the dog in the crate at nighttime. Once the dog sleeps in the crate through the night, try leaving the pet in the crate during the daytime. Try short departures first, and gradually make them longer.



### Is crate training practical for all dogs?

An occasional dog may not tolerate crate training, and may continue to show anxiety or even eliminate when confined. These dogs may adapt better to other types of confinement such as a pen, dog run, small room, or barricaded area (e.g., using a child gate). Of course, if the dog is being left alone for longer than it can control (hold in) its elimination, it will be necessary to provide an area much larger than a cage, so that the pet has a location on which to eliminate, away from its food and bedding.

Continued anxiety, destruction or vocalization when placed in the crate may indicate separation anxiety. The intervention of a behaviorist may be needed.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by: Debra Horwitz, DVM, DACVB & Gary Landsberg, DVM, DACVB, DECAWBM*

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# Microchipping your Dog

## What is a microchip?

A microchip is a tiny transponder, about the size of a grain of rice that is encoded with a unique identification number. It is used for permanent identification in pets. The technology is relatively recent, but is becoming widely available.

## How is the microchip put into my dog?

Before insertion, the sterile microchip is scanned in the package to confirm that the identification code of the transponder is the same as that shown on the package bar code label.

The needle containing the microchip is loaded into the application gun or syringe, and the pet is positioned for the injection. For dogs and cats, the standard site for microchip placement is in the subcutaneous tissue along the dorsal midline (the spine) between the pet's shoulder blades. For correct placement, the pet should be either standing or lying on the stomach. Some of the loose skin between the shoulder blades is gently pulled up, and the needle is quickly inserted. The applicator trigger is squeezed, injecting the transponder or microchip into the tissues.

After insertion, the pet is scanned to ensure that the chip is reading properly.



## Does it hurt to insert the chip?



"...appears to be relatively pain-free..."

The procedure is fast, safe, and appears to be relatively pain-free in most pets. The chips are usually inserted without incident, even in the tiniest kittens and puppies. The application needle is quite large, and some clients will choose to have the microchip implanted at the time of sterilization, so that the pet can be anesthetized for the injection. However, this is not necessary, and the microchip can be implanted at any time that is convenient.

## Is there anything else I have to do?

Once your pet is microchipped, you must register him or her with the appropriate agency. Your veterinarian will provide you with the relevant documents and contact information and will tell you if any fees are required. Failure to register your pet's microchip identification will render the entire process useless.

"If you move or change your contact information, be sure to update your pet's microchip information."

If you move or change your contact information, be sure to update your pet's microchip information. If your pet is lost and recovered, this information is necessary to reunite you with your pet.

## How is the microchip detected?

The microchip can be 'read' with a microchip scanner, which detects the specific electronic code embedded in the chip, and displays the identification number on the scanner's screen.

Since the occasional microchip may migrate, or move out of position, the microchip reader will be passed over the entire body of the pet in order to ensure that the chip will be detected if present.

"Most, if not all, humane societies and animal shelters now have universal microchip readers, and routinely scan all stray and injured animals."

Most, if not all, humane societies and animal shelters now have universal microchip readers, and routinely scan all stray and injured animals. Steps are being taken to standardize the readers and develop databases that can be readily accessed.

### **Are there any other concerns about the safety of microchips in dogs?**

In 2007, several news articles were published, implying that microchips cause cancer. The information was based on research with mice and rats that were genetically bred for their predisposition to developing cancer. No documented cases that link microchips to cancer in dogs exist, and there is no foundation in scientific fact to supports this link. Millions of dogs have microchip identification implants without any reported problems.

### **My dog always wears a collar with identification tags. Isn't this enough?**

Unfortunately, collars can break, fall off or be removed. When identification tags are new, they are easy to read. However, as they get old and worn, it can become challenging to make out all the information that is on them.

### **My dog has a tattoo already. Why should I microchip him?**

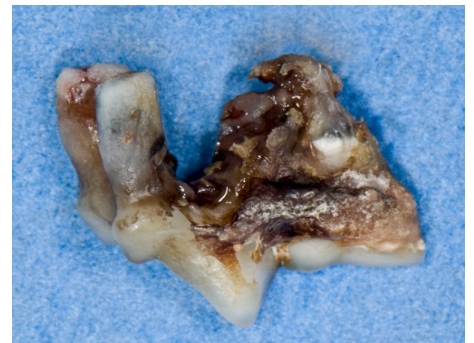
Unfortunately, tattoos can be very difficult to read. They are commonly placed in the flank area, where they can become obscured by hair. Even when they are in the ears, they can become faded over time, and the numbers and letters can become unreadable. They can also be readily altered. Even when they are readable, the information about the pet and its owner can be difficult to obtain since there are no common databases for this information.

**"Microchips cannot be misread, and the identification number is tamper-proof."**

Microchips cannot be misread, and the identification number is tamper-proof. The information about the pet and owner is usually readily retrievable from the database.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by: Ernest Ward, DVM*

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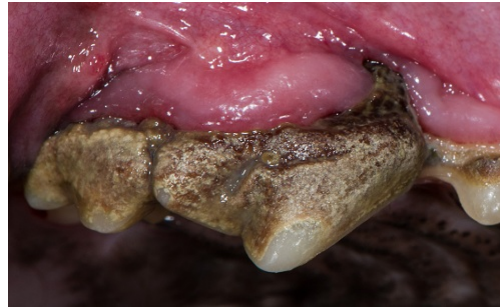


# Tartar Prevention in Dogs

## How do plaque and tartar form, and what do they do?

Plaque is a gummy substance that forms on the teeth within a few hours after a meal. Within 24 hours, plaque begins to harden by combining with salts that are present in the saliva. As the plaque continues to accumulate and mineralize, it eventually transforms into tartar.

There are two ways that tartar harms the teeth and gums. First, tartar forms a rough surface so it serves as a place for bacteria to grow and multiply in the mouth. These bacteria can cause inflammation of the gums (gingivitis), which often results in bleeding. When gingivitis worsens, it leads to periodontal disease, which leads to further inflammation, pain and tooth loss. As tartar builds up along the gum line, it pushes the gums away from the roots of the teeth. As the gums recede, they expose the sensitive, enamel-free part of the tooth which causes pain.



"As tartar builds up along the gum line, it pushes the gums away from the roots of the teeth. As the gums recede, they expose the sensitive, enamel-free part of the tooth which causes pain."

Second, the bacteria on the tartar can be absorbed into the blood stream and deposited in various organs, including the heart and the kidneys, causing infection.

## How can I prevent plaque and tartar formation on my dog's teeth?

After your dog's teeth have been professionally cleaned and polished by your veterinarian, home dental care is needed to help reduce plaque and tartar buildup. You can decrease plaque accumulation by:

- Feeding your dog a veterinary-approved dental diet which slows tartar by mechanical or chemical means. By limiting plaque as it forms, tartar development is greatly diminished.
- Brushing your dog's teeth at least twice weekly. This is one of the most effective ways to remove plaque before it turns into tartar. Do not use human toothpaste as it contains ingredients that can cause an upset stomach when swallowed.
- Using a water additive to reduce the bacterial count in the mouth, resulting in improved breath.
- Offering your dog chew toys and dental treats that are specifically designed to help reduce or remove mild tartar accumulation. Never let dogs chew on bones, horse hoofs, antlers, ice cubes, or nylon toys which may break teeth.



- Having your veterinarian perform a dental cleaning under general anesthesia every 6-12 months at the first sign of tartar buildup. Regular dental cleaning is as important in dogs as it is in people, and will go a long way to prevent irreversible damage to the gums and roots.

"Brushing your dog's teeth should be done at least twice weekly."

### How do I know if the product I'm using to prevent tartar is actually working?

The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) only accepts dental products that are safe and proven to reduce the accumulation of plaque and tartar based on strict scientific studies. A list of accepted products can be viewed at [www.VOHC.org](http://www.VOHC.org)



*This client information sheet is based on material written by: Jan Bellows, DVM, Dipl. AVDC, ABVP*

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# TRANSITIONING YOUR DOG TO A NEW FOOD

## DAYS 1-2



## DAYS 3-4



## DAYS 5-6



## DAY 7



