

Bringing Puppy Home

by Marcia Albert

December is a popular month for adopting puppies. It's a month filled with holidays, excitement, parties, guests and food. Add a wiggly, joyful bundle of fur to the mixture and you could have a bit of confusion on your hands. Hopefully, the following will help to make everyone's adjustment a bit easier.

Before bringing your pup home you'll need to buy:

- water and food dishes
- flat nylon collar
- 6 foot leash
- crate
It must be large enough so the dog can stand, turn around and lay down on his side with his legs extended. If the crate is larger than this use something like a plastic milk crate inside to limit the pup's space. Dogs generally won't eliminate near their sleeping area. Too much space will encourage the dog to eliminate in one corner and sleep in an opposite corner.
- soft bedding
- a few toys
- a good quality, dry kibble for puppies
If you know what he's been eating, use the same kind. Should you decide to change to a different brand, check with your vet for the best way to introduce a new food.

Make certain to:

- get a record of any vaccines that the dog has received
- make a vet appointment so the pup visits your vet within 24-48 hours. If possible, bring the pup to the vet on the way home.
- until your vet appointment do not let your dog's interact with unfamiliar dogs

Handling introductions:

- one person at a time handles the puppy
- everyone needs soft voices and gentle hands
- adults should be present when children are with the dog
- if there are other pets introduce one pet at a time

Next:

- decide on a name, and use the name often to call your pup
- have a family meeting and decide upon the rules that everyone will follow
- expect housetraining accidents

Did you say housetraining????

- Schedule food and water. Feed the dog at a certain time, offer water and then remove both. You will need to give the dog additional water about every three hours during the day.
- Supervise your dog 100% of the time. Confine him with gates or x-pens, put him in his crate or put his leash on and take him wherever you go.

- Take him out several times during the day.
- Always use the same door to go out and return.
- Put his leash on before you open the door. Say "Let's go potty" or some phrase that signals this is a bathroom trip, not a walk or playtime
- Take him to the same spot. You may want to take paper towels that you used to clean up an accident in the house and place them in this spot to give him an incentive.
- Say "Get busy" or "Go piddle", etc.
- If he eliminates, wait until he's finished, then immediately praise him and offer a treat.
- Return to the house using the same door. Don't play or romp at this point. You want him to associate the trip outside with elimination.
- If you've been outside and he is not doing anything go inside and either confine or supervise.
- Make a trip outdoors every 5-10 minutes until he is successful.
- Even after eliminating watch him carefully

HELP—for you and your puppy:

New puppies bring so much joy, but along with the fun and excitement come questions and concerns. At American Canine at Manypaws we offer Puppy I classes where you'll learn how to teach your dog simple obedience exercises and basic household manners. During our classes the pups have time to play with each other and to visit with other owners. Your questions will be answered and you'll get individualized attention for your specific concerns. Call today and register.