



Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital

THE ULTIMATE PUPPY GUIDE

**TOP TIPS TO RAISING THE
PERFECT PUPPY**

**To deliver exceptional veterinary care with compassion
and dedication, ensuring the health and wellbeing of
every pet and their family.**

- WWVH Vision-





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WELCOME HOME!

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEWEST MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY!

Proper care and attention will help your puppy develop into a healthy adult dog, providing you with many years of loving companionship.

Welcoming a new puppy into your home is an exciting and joyful experience. This guide is designed to introduce you to the essential aspects of caring for your new puppy, including their diet, desexing, and key preventative health measures such as parasite control and vaccinations. Your puppy is now fully dependent on you for their health and well-being, so it's an ideal time to choose a trusted veterinarian to partner with on their care.

To give your puppy the best start in life, it's important to remember that dogs are not little humans. While they are cherished members of our families and share many emotional traits with us, dogs are unique creatures with distinct needs and ways of communicating. Understanding the world from their perspective can help prevent misunderstandings and strengthen your bond. This guide includes information on dog behavior to assist in improving communication between you and your new pet.

While this guide covers the general principles of raising a puppy, it's important to keep in mind that every dog is an individual, and some rules may need to be adjusted based on your particular situation. If you ever have any concerns about your puppy, don't hesitate to reach out to Wagga Vet for advice and support!



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IMPORTANT MILESTONES

Most dogs are considered puppies during their first year, and while growth rates can vary by breed, there are several key milestones you can generally expect during this time.

0 - 2 MONTHS

Most puppies enter their new home at around eight weeks of age, so by the time you bring them home, they have likely already passed this early milestone. However, the first eight weeks of a puppy's life are crucial for their development. During this period, they begin to learn how to function as independent beings. Initially, they rely on their mother for nourishment, gradually weaning off her around the six-week mark. They also start to develop essential skills, such as seeing, hearing, walking, and playing, all of which help shape their early experiences and socialization.



2 MONTHS



Vaccinations are crucial for your new puppy's health and protection. The vaccination schedule typically begins at 6-8 weeks of age. It's also a good idea to discuss ongoing parasite control with your veterinarian to ensure your puppy stays healthy and protected from common parasites.

2 - 5 MONTHS

During this stage, your puppy's personality will begin to emerge, and their bond with your family will grow stronger. It's a crucial time for building trust and establishing a sense of security, including defining their core territory—where they feel safest. Many veterinary clinics including Wagga Vet offer puppy school programs or can recommend a good one nearby. These classes are an excellent way to help your puppy socialize and learn basic skills.

This is also when more vaccinations are due, and toilet training will begin. Keep in mind that some puppies may not have full bladder control until they are 5-6 months old. As their adult teeth come in, your puppy will likely start chewing, so be prepared with chew toys to avoid losing your favourite sneakers!

If your puppy hasn't already been microchipped, this is a great time to discuss with your veterinarian when the procedure should be done to ensure they are safely identifiable.



6 - 9 MONTHS



At this age, you may already have your pup desexed. If not and you are unsure of what may be best for your pup, it's a good idea to speak to your veterinarian about the procedure. They can answer any questions you may have and help you understand what the benefits are for desexing your fur friend.

By now, you've likely completed puppy school, so it's a great time to think about continuing your puppy's education with reward-based training through a reputable dog trainer. As your puppy grows, the chewing instinct may intensify, so be sure to have plenty of appropriate chew toys on hand to help protect your shoes and furniture.

9 - 12 MONTHS

Remember, your puppy is still learning, so it's important to continue their training regularly. For larger breeds, maturity may take up to 18 months, so be patient as they grow. Keep up with the training, maintain the fun, and don't forget the cuddles!





RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP CHECKLIST



FEEDING

Proper nutrition forms the foundation for a healthy life. It's crucial that your puppy gets the right amount of the right food, with their feeding plan adjusted as they grow.



VACCINATIONS

Ensuring your dog receives the right vaccinations at the correct times is vital for protecting them from several key infectious diseases.



MICROCHIPPING

Microchipping is the most reliable method of identifying your pet and is mandatory in most of Australia. Your puppy may already be microchipped when you get them, but be sure to update details like new owner information or address changes promptly.



EXTERNAL PARASITE CONTROL

Your puppy must be protected year-round from fleas, dangerous ticks, and mites using parasite control treatments like chewables, tablets, or spot-on pipette products.



INTERNAL PARASITE CONTROL

Protect your puppy from heartworm and intestinal worms by treating with regular internal parasite control. This is important for the safety of you and your pets.



DESEXING

Desexing your puppy can lower the risk of certain serious health issues later in life and prevent unwanted litters. Talk to your veterinarian about the timing and benefits of desexing.

PARASITES LOVE PUPPIES!

Safe Licking, Sniffing, Chewing & Playing

Allowing your puppy to explore their world is crucial for developing their senses and personality. They need to become less dependent on you and more confident in handling new experiences, including socialising with other dogs. This will help prevent them from becoming a dog that others avoid—one that is overly aggressive, fearful, or constantly anxious.



Parasites Want to Socialise With Your Puppy Too

Your puppy needs protection from harmful parasites they may encounter while outside or interacting with other animals. Parasite control is just as important as vaccinations as your puppy grows. Since their immune system is still developing, these unwanted parasites can cause serious health issues. Puppies are naturally curious and love to sniff, lick, and chew everything in sight, including dirt, trash, and unfortunately, poo. This makes it easy for them to accidentally ingest worm eggs or larvae from contaminated soil or environments. Puppies can also be born with intestinal worms passed on from their mother during pregnancy or through her milk. Additionally, heartworm, another serious parasite, is transmitted by mosquitoes. As you can see, there are many ways puppies can become infested with worms. Some of these worms are zoonotic, meaning they can be transmitted from your puppy to you or your family.

External parasites like fleas and ticks can also be picked up as your puppy explores their new surroundings. Fleas and ticks not only cause discomfort but can also transmit diseases to both dogs and humans. Keep reading to learn more about the key parasites that can affect your puppy.



FLEAS

'Ctenocephalides Felis'



Fleas are tiny, wingless insects famous for their remarkable jumping ability, capable of leaping up to 1,000 times their own height. The most common flea species affecting dogs in Australia is the cat flea, *Ctenocephalides felis*.

Fleas are more than just a nuisance; they can lead to health issues in your pet, including itching, allergies, and skin infections. Severe flea infestations can cause more serious conditions, such as anaemia, especially in puppies. Additionally, fleas can transmit diseases to both pets and humans. This section will give you valuable information about fleas and how to ensure your pet receives the best protection.

Important Information About Fleas

The flea life cycle has four stages: eggs, larvae, pupae, and adults. Of these, only the adult fleas live on your pet, while the other stages are found in the environment where your pet lives and sleeps.

Adult fleas feed on blood, reproduce, and lay eggs on your pet's coat. Pets can pick up fleas from environments where other flea-infested animals have been, such as your home, backyard, or local parks. It's rare for adult fleas to jump directly from one animal to another.

While you can't completely prevent new adult fleas from jumping onto your pet, you can take steps to ensure they don't settle in and infest your home. Using external parasite control will quickly kill adult fleas before they have a chance to lay eggs, helping protect both your puppy and your home.

ADULT FLEAS 5%

PUPAE 10%

LARVAE 35%

EGGS 50%

Immature flea stages in the environment represent 95% of the total flea population

A single female flea can lay up to 50 eggs per day, which then fall off into the environment to develop into larvae, then pupae, and finally emerge as new adult fleas. This process can take anywhere from 3 weeks to 6 months, depending on temperature and humidity. It is these newly emerged adult fleas that can re-infest your pet. In fact, the environmental stages of the flea life cycle account for 95% of the problem—the adult fleas you see on your pet are just the tip of the iceberg.

TICKS



BROWN DOG TICKS

- Brown dog ticks can cause skin irritation, and heavy infestations may lead to anemia due to excessive blood loss.
- These ticks can also carry harmful pathogens like *Babesia canis* and *Ehrlichia canis*, which can be transmitted to your dog, causing severe and potentially fatal diseases.
- While brown dog ticks are found throughout Australia, they are most common in northern and inland regions.



BUSH TICKS

- Found along parts of the east and west coasts of Australia.
- These ticks cause skin irritation in dogs.
- They can also transmit *Babesia canis*, a parasite that causes anemia in dogs, which can be fatal.



PARALYSIS TICKS

One of the most dangerous parasites affecting pets, paralysis ticks produce toxins that can cause paralysis and even death. There are two species of paralysis ticks that can infest dogs in Australia:

- **The eastern paralysis tick** is the primary cause of tick paralysis and is found along the east coast, from north Queensland to Victoria.
- **The southern paralysis tick** is found in Tasmania, southern Victoria, and south-east New South Wales.





TICK TOXICITY

Signs of Tick Toxicity

If your dog lives in or visits a high-risk paralysis tick area, it is important to look out for signs of toxicity.

Signs of Paralysis Tick Poisoning in Pets

Pets may show one or more of the following signs, in any order:

- Loss of coordination in the hind legs (wobbly or unable to stand).
- Change in voice or bark.
- Retching, coughing, or vomiting.
- Loss of appetite.
- Progressive paralysis starting in the hind legs and moving to the forelegs.
- Difficulty to breath or rapid breathing.

What to Do If Your Pet Shows These Signs

- Seek veterinary attention immediately.
- Check for ticks and remove them as soon as possible.
- Do not offer food or water, as paralysis ticks can cause difficulty swallowing, which could result in food or water entering the lungs and leading to pneumonia and breathing difficulties.

How to Remove a Tick from Your Pet

- Remove the tick promptly using a tick removal device, tweezers, or your fingernails. Your veterinarian can show you the best method.
- After removing the tick, seek veterinary advice to determine if your pet requires treatment.
- If no signs of tick paralysis are visible, it is still advised to consult your vet, as symptoms may develop even after tick removal.

How to Protect Your Pet from Paralysis Ticks

- Use a tick control product year-round. Not all flea control products protect against paralysis ticks, so make sure you're using a product specifically for tick control. Some products need to be reapplied more frequently to be effective.
- While tick control products can manage most ticks your pet may encounter, it only takes one tick to cause paralysis. Perform daily tick checks on your pet if you live in, or are visiting, tick-prone areas. Use your fingertips to feel through your pet's coat, as ticks or tick craters may feel like lumps on the skin.
- Reduce exposure to ticks in your environment. Paralysis ticks spend a significant portion of their life cycle in the environment and can easily be brought onto your property by wildlife. Keeping your yard tidy—removing leaf litter and regularly mowing the grass—can help make your garden less inviting to ticks.

MITES

Infestation with mites can cause severe irritation to the skin and ears of your dog. This condition, known as mange, can significantly impact your dog's quality of life.

There are 3 different types of mites that affect dogs: *Demodex mites*, *Sarcoptes mites* and *ears mites*.



Demodex Mites



A normal resident of a dog's skin, the mite can cause disease if the immune system is unable to keep the population in check, such as in young or malnourished dogs.

Signs: Hair loss, skin thickening and skin infections.



Sarcoptes Mites



Mites can easily pass from an infested dog to other dogs that come into contact with them. They can also be transmitted from dogs to humans, causing a condition known as scabies.

Signs: Intense itching, hair loss and skin infections.



Ear Mites



Mites live in the ear canals and surrounding skin, and their presence can lead to secondary bacterial or yeast infections in your dog's ears.

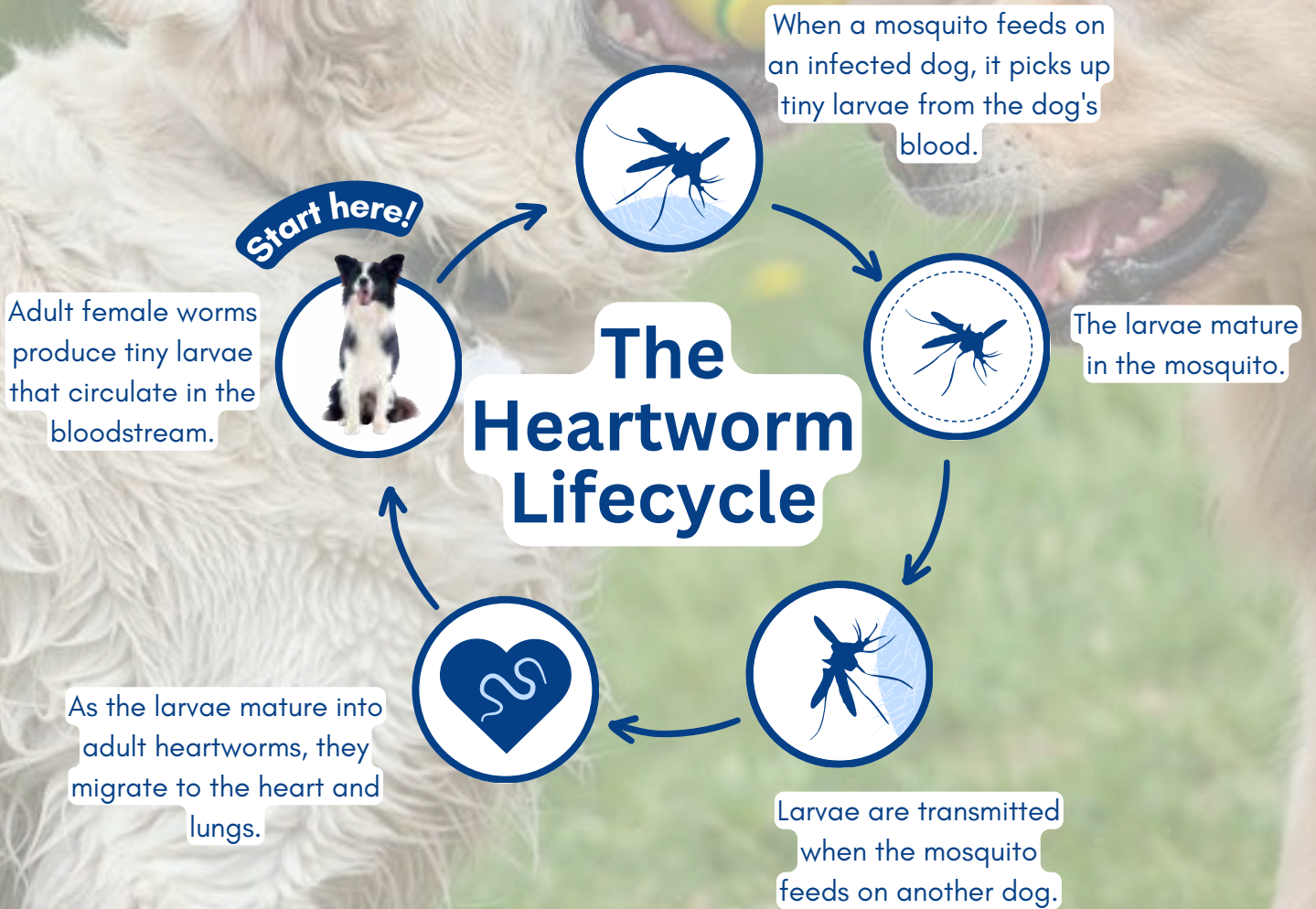
Signs: Scratching head and ears, head shaking, dark discharge and odour from ears.



HEARTWORM



Heartworm disease, caused by heartworms, can be life-threatening if not diagnosed and treated. Even when detected, treatment carries certain risks. This makes preventing heartworm disease in your puppy crucial.



How Could My Dog Contract Heartworm?

Heartworm disease is widespread across mainland Australia and can affect both dogs and cats, although dogs are more commonly and severely affected. Heartworm is transmitted through mosquitoes. While heartworm infestations are most common in areas with higher mosquito populations, cases have been reported in nearly all parts of Australia, including regions where mosquitoes are less prevalent, such as the Riverina in NSW.

Heartworm Can Cause Serious Disease

Heartworms reside in the heart and blood vessels of the lungs, where they interfere with circulation and damage tissues. Over time, this can lead to heart failure, and if left untreated, it can ultimately be fatal for your pet.

What Are the Signs of Heartworm?

In the early stages, dogs with heartworm typically show no symptoms. However, as the infestation progresses, signs of illness may develop. The severity of these symptoms depends on factors such as the number of worms present and the dog's overall health, size, and activity level.

Common signs of heartworm disease include:

- Coughing
- Lack of energy
- Reluctance to exercise
- Weight loss



Protect your puppy against heartworm EARLY

Young puppies can be bitten by mosquitoes so it is important to start heartworm prevention early.

Heartworm prevention can come in the form of a monthly chewable or an annual injection, and can begin prevention as early as 8 weeks of age.



INTESTINAL WORMS



Intestinal worms are common in puppies and can be passed from mothers before birth, through milk, or from the environment. These worms can cause growth issues, anaemia, diarrhoea, and vomiting. Regular deworming is crucial for your puppy's health, as well as the well-being of other dogs and humans, since some worms can also affect people.

Roundworms

Puppies often get roundworms from their mother, either in the womb or through her milk. They can also ingest eggs from the environment or consume infected rodents or birds. Signs of roundworm infestation include a pot-bellied appearance, stunted growth, diarrhoea, and lung damage. Roundworm eggs are tough and can survive for years in the environment, leading to repeated infections.

Hookworms

Hookworms have biting mouthparts that attach to the intestinal lining and feed on blood, causing anaemia and diarrhoea. Severe infestations can be fatal in puppies. Due to their short life cycle, regular deworming is essential. Hookworms can also infect humans by penetrating the skin.

Whipworms

Whipworms, parasites of the large intestine, can cause diarrhoea (sometimes bloody), and in severe infestations, lead to anaemia, weight loss, and even death.

Tapeworms

Dipylidium caninum, or flea tapeworm, is the most common tapeworm in puppies. Since fleas are its intermediate host, effective flea control can prevent infestation. Another type, the hydatid tapeworm, is found in rural areas in dogs that eat raw offal or scavenge native wildlife, like kangaroos or wallabies. Hydatid tapeworms form cysts in humans that contain immature worms and can cause serious illness, sometimes requiring surgery. Consult your vet to assess your dog's risk.

How to Reduce the Risk of Human Exposure to Dog Intestinal Worms



Dispose of dog faeces on an every day basis.



Keep children from swallowing soil or other substances that could be contaminated with dog faeces.



Practice good hygiene by washing hands after handling dogs and before eating.



Keep dogs away from playgrounds and cover sandpits.



Deworm your dog as frequently as instructed on the product packaging.

Why Deworm Your Dog?

Intestinal worms can affect dogs of all ages, and when present in large numbers, they can cause gastrointestinal issues, malnutrition, and anaemia. Some of these worms can also infect humans and cause diseases.

Protect Your Family

Many worms in dogs are zoonotic, meaning they can spread to humans. Different worms cause different diseases, each with its own symptoms. Roundworm eggs can be found in soil where dogs have defecated. If accidentally ingested, roundworm larvae can migrate to internal organs, including muscles, eyes, and the brain. Young children are especially at risk due to their habits of playing in contaminated areas, putting objects in their mouths, and having less than ideal hand hygiene.

Hookworm larvae can be picked up from walking barefoot on contaminated sand or soil. The larvae can penetrate the skin and cause skin or intestinal disease in humans.



VACCINATIONS

GIVING YOUR PUPPY THE BEST START

Your new puppy may have received some vaccinations before coming home, but they might not have completed their full vaccination course. While socializing your puppy, be cautious about exposing them to infectious diseases until they've finished their vaccinations.

Your vet can advise you on the remaining vaccinations your puppy needs and how to manage socialization during this period. The vet will recommend a vaccination schedule based on your puppy's lifestyle and local disease risks. Some vaccines may be combined in one shot, while others may be given in separate sites on the same day. Certain vaccines, like for canine kennel cough, may be given orally or nasally.

When Should Puppies be Vaccinated?

Vaccination stimulates the immune system to protect against diseases.

Young puppies are initially protected by maternal antibodies passed through their mother's milk.

As these antibodies naturally decrease, puppies need a vaccination series (usually starting at 6-8 weeks) to trigger their own immune response. After the initial series, your vet will advise when booster shots are needed.





VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE FOR SEVERAL IMPORTANT INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Canine Parvovirus

A severe and often fatal cause of gastroenteritis, parvovirus is more common and dangerous in young puppies but can infect unvaccinated dogs of any age.

Canine Distemper Virus

A highly contagious and potentially fatal disease, distemper can cause symptoms such as fever, coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhoea, and seizures in infected dogs.

Infectious Canine Hepatitis

A potentially fatal viral disease, symptoms include fever, depression, loss of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhoea. In severe cases, death can occur within 24–48 hours.

Canine Cough / Kennel Cough

A highly contagious respiratory disease, kennel cough spreads easily wherever dogs gather. Symptoms include a dry, hacking cough that may last for several weeks.

Leptospirosis

A bacterial disease typically spread by rats, leptospirosis can affect various species, including dogs and humans. Infected dogs may develop liver disease, kidney problems, and bleeding disorders.

Canine Enteric Coronavirus

A highly contagious virus, it can cause lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, and dehydration. The disease is typically more severe in young dogs than in adults.



After Vaccination Care

Vaccines are safe, effective, and essential for your pet's health. However, like all medications, they may cause mild side effects such as lethargy, decreased appetite, or tenderness at the injection site, typically lasting no more than a few days. If you notice any concerning symptoms after vaccination, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Why is it Necessary to Have Repeat Vaccinations?

Many pet owners believe that vaccinating their pets as puppies provides lifelong immunity.

Unfortunately, this is not true. To maintain protection, adult dogs require regular booster vaccinations. These re-vaccinations stimulate the immune system, extending the duration of protection. Without these boosters, your dog's immune system may not be able to defend against serious, often fatal diseases. Your veterinarian will recommend the necessary booster shots to ensure your pet receives the best possible protection throughout their life.

It's No Vacation Without Vaccination

Dogs and cats are at higher risk of infectious diseases when staying in boarding facilities, so it's important to ensure they are properly vaccinated. Before booking a stay, check that your pet's vaccinations are up to date. Don't wait until the last minute, as building immunity takes time. If you have concerns or questions about vaccinations and boarding, consult your veterinarian.





NUTRITION

FOR A HEALTHY START TO LIFE

Food is essential for both our health and the well-being of our pets. Recent advancements in canine nutrition have led to the development of commercial foods that provide balanced, complete diets tailored to the specific needs of dogs of various sizes and life stages. The first year of your puppy's life is particularly critical for growth and development. Proper nutrition during this time supports strong bone and muscle formation, as well as eye and brain development—factors that will be important as your puppy matures and begins training.

A puppy's nutritional needs can vary based on breed and size, and it's important to remember that both excess and deficiency in nutrition can be harmful. As your puppy transitions into adulthood, their dietary needs will shift from supporting growth to maintaining health. These needs can also differ depending on your dog's breed and lifestyle. Your veterinarian can offer guidance on the best nutrition for your puppy, helping you monitor their weight as they grow. Lastly, always ensure your puppy has access to fresh, cool water.



Commercial Diets

Many veterinarians recommend "premium" dog foods, which are often higher in quality than standard brands. While these premium products may come at a higher cost, the benefits for your dog's overall health, skin, and coat are noticeable. The price difference is typically due to the superior quality of ingredients, particularly the proteins and fats used in these foods. In most cases, premium foods are more nutrient-dense, meaning you'll need to feed your dog smaller portions compared to lower-quality brands. This can lead to additional benefits, such as producing less waste—meaning fewer feces to clean up!



However, it's important to introduce any changes to your puppy's diet gradually. Sudden shifts in food can upset their digestive system, leading to discomfort or other gastrointestinal issues. Always consult your veterinarian for advice on the best nutrition for your puppy, including their recommendations for the most appropriate food based on your dog's breed, size, and individual needs.



Home Cooking

Some pet owners choose to prepare their pet's meals at home. However, it's crucial to ensure that the food contains all the necessary proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals in the right amounts and proportions. Balancing these nutrients correctly can be challenging, so it's important to consult with your veterinarian before deciding to cook for your pet. They can offer expert advice on the benefits and potential drawbacks of home-cooked meals, helping you make an informed decision that supports your pet's health and nutritional needs.

Meal Time Routine

Adult dogs typically do best with two meals a day, while puppies usually start with four meals daily, which are gradually reduced as they grow. The packaging of puppy food often includes a recommended feeding guide, but it's important to keep an eye on your puppy's weight and adjust the portion sizes as needed to ensure they are growing at a healthy rate. Regular monitoring is key. For personalized advice, including recommendations on feeding frequency, ideal body weight, and specific nutritional needs, consult your veterinarian. They can help you make any necessary adjustments to ensure your puppy's diet supports their growth and long-term health.



Beware of Too Many Treats



We love to spoil our pets with treats, especially whilst training them. If you give treats, then definitely do not give human lollies or sweets. Suitable dog treats are an important part of training and sometimes novel food sources can be given in appropriate situations. Ask your veterinarian what the most appropriate treat for your dog would be. It is important to remember that there are some human foods that are toxic to dogs and can make them very sick, such as chocolate, onion, grapes, raisins, garlic and some artificial sweeteners (e.g. xylitol). Ensure these are always kept away from your dog and are not fed to them in any circumstance. If toxic foods are consumed, seek veterinary advice immediately.

Raw Diets

Raw diets for dogs can carry certain risks, both for your pet and your family. Raw meat may be contaminated with harmful bacteria, such as Salmonella, or parasites, which can be transmitted to humans. Additionally, bones or other solid materials in raw food pose a choking hazard or the potential for internal blockages in your dog. Before considering a raw diet, it's essential to consult with your veterinarian to discuss the safest and most appropriate food options for your dog, taking into account their health, lifestyle, and nutritional needs. Your vet can provide guidance on minimizing risks while ensuring your pet receives a balanced diet.



**NUTRITION IS
IMPORTANT!**

TRAINING TIPS

Settling In At Home

Bringing a puppy into your home is a big transition for both you and the pup, as their entire physical and social environment is changing. For many puppies, this may be their first time being separated from their mother and littermates. The process of weaning and moving to a new home can be stressful, and the level of anxiety experienced will vary depending on the puppy's temperament and how their journey went. Some puppies may travel long distances and arrive exhausted, while others may simply be adjusting to the change.

It's important to recognize that puppies need time to rest and acclimate to their new surroundings. While it's natural to feel excited, it's crucial to create a calm, safe environment for them. During the first few hours and days, avoid overwhelming or over-stimulating your puppy. Puppies need plenty of sleep—often more than 16 hours a day—and lack of rest can lead to agitation or hyperactivity. Over-tired puppies may struggle to self-soothe, especially in an unfamiliar and potentially stressful environment.

To help your puppy settle in, set up a quiet, secluded resting spot away from noise and activity. Limit interactions and handling, especially from children, and give your puppy the space to relax and explore at their own pace. Show them where their food and water are, and allow them time to adjust to their new home. It can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks for a puppy to feel fully comfortable, so be patient and offer constant support, reassurance, and care during this important transition period.



Meeting Other Pets

When introducing your puppy to other animals in your home, it's important to do so carefully and in a controlled, supervised manner. Choose a spacious area where the animals can move around freely and observe each other. Keep initial interactions short and positive to avoid overwhelming any of the animals. Be mindful not to let your puppy relentlessly bother older pets, as this can lead to defensive behavior or aggression, potentially damaging the relationship. Watch closely for any signs of anxiety or tension between the animals, and be ready to intervene if necessary. If needed, separate them using physical barriers like baby gates or puppy pens to give everyone space to adjust. With patience and careful management, your pets can gradually learn to coexist peacefully.

Becoming Part of the Family

When a puppy enters your home, they need to form strong attachments with their new family members for security and confidence. As naturally social animals, puppies rely on these bonds to feel safe and begin exploring their environment. Helping them build healthy attachments and confidence is crucial for their growth into well-adjusted, resilient adult dogs. By providing support and clear guidance, you help your puppy navigate the challenges of a human-dominated world, ensuring they thrive as happy, functional pets.



It's important to create a safe and supportive environment where your pup feels secure. Never use physical force or fear-based methods to correct or train your puppy, as this can damage the trust between you and cause long-term behavioral issues. Even raising your voice or using a harsh tone can increase your puppy's anxiety and make them fearful. Instead, focus on using positive reinforcement, patience, and gentle guidance to encourage good behavior and build a strong, trusting relationship with your pup.

Puppies are simply trying to meet their needs and desires in the best way they know how.

A key concept to understand is that a puppy's most valuable resource is information. Dogs look to us for guidance and cues about how to navigate their world. It's important that we help them understand that we are a reliable source of information and support, allowing them to feel confident and secure as they learn to interact with their environment.

For Your Information...

When your puppy learns that they can rely on you for information about what's happening around them and what to do in different situations (a concept known as "deference"), they will feel more calm and confident. This sense of trust helps them develop a healthy, secure attachment to you, reducing the likelihood of anxiety. By providing consistent guidance and being a stable source of reassurance, you help your puppy feel safe in their environment, which fosters emotional stability and resilience as they grow.

Consistency is key in puppy training. All family members should be on the same page to avoid confusion and help your puppy understand what to expect. Puppies learn through consistent consequences, not abstract concepts, so it's important to ensure that their behaviors are met with clear and immediate feedback. For example, if you don't want your puppy begging at the table, no one should feed them during meals. Instead, redirect them to alternative behaviors, like resting on their mat or chewing a toy. Setting your puppy up for success is essential. Anticipate their needs, like placing them in a crate with a chew toy during meals, to prevent unwanted behaviors. Additionally, be mindful of reinforcing behaviors like jumping up. While it may seem cute in a puppy, it can become problematic as they grow. By being consistent and reinforcing good behavior, you'll help your puppy become a well-behaved, confident adult dog.



Toilet Training

Toilet training a puppy takes patience and consistency. Puppies need frequent trips outside, especially after meals, naps, drinking, and play. Use the same spot and cue words (e.g., "Go potty") to help them build associations. Reward them immediately with treats or praise when they go in the right place.

Watch for signs, like sniffing or circling, and take them out regularly. Never punish accidents indoors; instead, gently redirect them to the correct spot.

With time and consistency, your puppy will learn where and when to go, making house training easier.



Home Alone

Helping your puppy feel safe and comfortable when left alone is essential.

Create a designated safe space, like a covered crate, and encourage your puppy to use it with praise, food rewards, and enrichment toys.

Start by leaving your puppy alone for short periods, gradually increasing the time. Use a camera to monitor their behavior for signs of distress. If

your puppy shows signs of panic or separation anxiety, consult a veterinarian, as this may indicate a deeper issue requiring professional help.



Importance of Play

Play is essential for your puppy's development, providing both mental and physical stimulation. It helps them grow cognitively and socially. Offer your puppy safe toys and rotate them regularly to keep playtime interesting. Puppies should also have plenty of opportunities for social play with you. However, avoid using your hands or feet as toys unless you're comfortable with this type of play as your dog grows into an adult.

Games like hide and seek, tug of war, and chasing or retrieving balls or frisbees are great ways to exercise your puppy's mind and body.

Additionally, sensory enrichment activities like long-lasting chews, food dispensers, or scent work (using their nose to find food or toys) can further engage their developing brain and provide additional stimulation.



Socialising Your Puppy

Socializing your puppy is crucial for their development and confidence. The first 12 to 16 weeks are key for exposing them to new experiences, people, animals, and environments. Keep in mind, your puppy may not be fully vaccinated, so avoid high-risk areas like dog parks and focus on safer spaces like puppy preschool or a friend's home with vaccinated dogs.

While socializing, aim for positive experiences, not overwhelming exposure. If your puppy shows fear, reassure them and remove them from the situation. For socializing with other dogs, choose calm, well-tempered dogs to ensure a safe, positive experience. Introduce new pets slowly to avoid stress or anxiety.



Walking on a Lead

Puppies don't naturally know how to walk on a lead, so introduce them to a comfortable, well-fitted collar or harness early on. Avoid choke or prong collars. Some puppies adjust quickly, while others may need a gradual introduction. Use treats to create positive associations and expect some scratching at first.

Start indoors before walking outside, and never jerk the lead. Guide your puppy with your voice, body language, and treats. Reward eye contact during walks to encourage communication and reinforce good behaviour.



Travelling With Your Puppy

Car travel is an important part of your puppy's socialization. Use a secure, well-ventilated carrier for small puppies or a car harness for larger ones to ensure safety. Never let your puppy roam loose in the car.

Praise and reward calm behavior, and consider playing calming music. Never leave your puppy in a parked car to prevent overheating.

For longer trips:

- Stop every two hours for a toilet break and exercise.
- Bring water for your puppy.
- Use a sunshade to keep them cool.



Getting Help with Teaching and Training

Training your puppy involves teaching them proper behaviour at home and in public settings. Group classes work well for social pups, but one-on-one sessions with a professional trainer can help master basic skills. Not all trainers or classes are the same, so seek advice from qualified professionals. Raising a puppy can be challenging yet rewarding. Understanding your pup's needs and behaviour strengthens your bond, leading to many happy years together. If you have concerns about their health or behaviour, consult your veterinarian.



Wagga Wagga Veterinary are pleased to let you know that we offer puppy preschool for you and your new puppy. We also offer adolescent classes for your dog as they begin to grow out of their early puppy stages and need further training.

We also offer other behavioural training programs.

For further information, please contact us today!

(02) 6926 0900



MAINTAINING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Grooming

Long or medium-haired dogs require daily brushing, while woolly or dense-coated dogs should be brushed twice a week. Short-haired dogs only need brushing when necessary. To make grooming positive, talk to your dog, offer treats, and reward them afterward.

Claws and Paws

If your dog walks mainly on carpet and grass, teach them to offer their paw for nail trimming. Your vet can guide you on safe trimming techniques. Dogs that walk on concrete need fewer trims, but it's still useful to teach this habit for occasional maintenance.

Eye Care

Gently wipe away mucus or mild watering with a clean, warm cloth. If eyes are bloodshot or watering persistently, contact your vet. Regularly check your puppy's eyes for dirt or debris, as it can cause irritation or ulcers if not removed.

Dental Care

Plaque can turn into tartar, especially in small breeds. Brush your dog's teeth regularly with dog-specific toothpaste to maintain oral health. If tartar builds up, your vet may recommend ultrasonic descaling. Dental treats or rinses can also help prevent issues.

Bathing

Use warm water and a pet shampoo to bathe your dog, then dry them with towels and a hair dryer. Avoid human shampoos—ask your vet for recommendations. If your dog has skin issues, your vet can suggest suitable products. Consult your vet on how often to bathe based on breed and skin type.

Ear Care

Check your dog's ears for scabs, discharge, or odours. If clean and odour-free, no action is needed. Some dogs may need excess hair removed—ask your vet for guidance. If you notice any changes or unusual smells, consult your vet.

Desexing

Most puppies mature between six and twelve months. Early desexing can reduce cancer risks, prevent unwanted litters, and address some behaviour issues. Consult your vet to determine the best age for desexing.

The Importance of Regular Vet Checks

Pets age five to eight times faster than humans. By age two, they're fully grown, and by four, entering middle age. Larger breeds may be seniors by age seven. Regular annual check-ups are essential to monitor their health.



**“Veterinary care with
compassion and dedication.”**

THE ULTIMATE PUPPY GUIDE

**Brought to you by
Wagga Wagga Veterinary Hospital**

**Take a look at our website or follow us
on socials!**

**Online bookings now available via
our website.**

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