

# DRIVING HOME WITH YOUR PUPPY

*Making the trip home easier for you  
and your new puppy!*



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**A**s breeders, we love the feelings of sending a litter of beautiful pups off to their new homes. Those days are filled with excitement and joy—for us and the families who have been anxiously awaiting their new puppy. However, we also have a bit of worry about how the pup will handle the transition to its new home, starting with the trip home since the trip can be stressful for all concerned, especially the puppy.

Having sent home hundreds of puppies over the last 35 years we've learned many things that can help make those trips easier, whether new owners are driving to the next town or flying across the continent. We are delighted to share what we have learned with you in this ebook so you can make your puppies' transitions to their new homes a good experience for everyone.



*Heading home*

We have broken this ebook down into three parts:

- Preparing Puppies for the Trip Home—things breeders can do before sending pups home
- Driving Home with Your Puppy—things puppy owners can do to make that drive go smoothly
- Flying Home with Your Puppy—things puppy owners can do to ensure an uneventful flight home

We've also created resource lists in each section to help you gather the items you will need.

# Driving Home With Your Puppy!

The Scouts' motto, "Be Prepared" holds true for being successful with most things in life. Knowing what to expect and how to handle what happens as you travel home with your puppy will help make your pup's first trip with you the best experience possible.

We have gathered our own lessons learned as well as those of our puppy buyers and put them together in this hand-out. Our goal is to help make your trip home with your new puppy as easy as possible for both of you. Knowing what to bring, how to prepare in advance and what to do while traveling will go a long way in making the trip a good one.



*It always helps to be prepared*

## *Gather Your Gear Ahead of Time*

You don't need a lot of gear but your trip home with your new puppy will be easier and safer if you have a few items with you. You can borrow some from dog-loving friends, buy them online via the links we've given you here, or get them at your local pet store. We've put in bold those items we think are essential that you have not only for your trip but for your first weeks with your puppy.

- Someone to hold the puppy on the trip home or a **puppy-sized crate**
- **Collar** and **leash**, be sure the collar fits the puppy snugly so you can't lose your puppy on the trip home
- **Water** and **water bowl**
- **Treats**, small, healthy goodies
- **Paper towels**
- **Snuggle Puppy** or other large, soft toy for puppy to snuggle with
- **Chews**, such as **stuffed Kongs**, **bully straps**, **pig's ears** and **marrow bones**
- **Baggies for potty cleanup**

If you are bringing your puppy home in a crate:

- **Crate pad**—get an inexpensive, washable crate pad that is the correct size for the crate.
- A **bed sheet** large enough to fully cover the crate

If you are staying in a hotel on the trip home:

- **Enzymatic cleaner**, such as **Nature's Miracle** or **Simple Solution**
- **Wee wee pads**

## Setting the car up for success!

You can help your puppy relax and fall asleep in the car by creating a comfortable environment. If you are traveling with someone else for a short distance, it is all right to have your passenger hold the puppy on his or her lap. However some puppies don't like to be restrained for long periods of time so would be happier in a crate even for a short trip. Best to be prepared for both and then you can choose which will work best. For traveling longer distances you definitely should have a crate set up in the car.

## Locating the crate

- If you are traveling alone, secure the crate on the front passenger's seat with a seatbelt. Face the door of the crate toward you so the puppy can easily see you and you can talk to her.
- If you are traveling with someone, secure the crate in the middle of the back seat so your passenger can reach around and stick a finger into the crate to comfort her if needed. (Now is not the time to train the puppy to be quiet in her crate.)
- If your puppy cannot see you from the back seat, one person should sit in the back to be near the puppy.



*Crate on in back seat ready for pup*

**CAUTION:** A common error people make is putting the puppy's crate in the back of the car for the trip home. Since this is the first time your puppy is by herself in your car, the puppy is likely to feel abandoned and alone all the way in the back. The puppy will start howling, barking and crying.

This crying is not necessarily about being in a crate but instead is the puppy doing the "lost puppy" cry so that her mom or littermate can find her. This is very stressful for the puppy and can contribute to car sickness and fear of cars. In addition, it can be pretty loud. To avoid this stress on both you and your puppy be sure the puppy is close to you when you are traveling home.

## *Motion*

Many puppies have a difficult time settling into a crate in the car as the world whizzes by them! Your pup will likely settle more easily if you place the crate low in the car so she cannot see things moving or you can cover the sides of her crate with a sheet. Be sure to fold back the sheet on the side of the crate that faces you so she does not feel isolated from you.



## *Temperature of the vehicle*

When puppies are hot you will know it because they cry, move around and cannot get comfortable. And puppies are often hot when the temperature is comfortable for us. Even if you are traveling in the dead of winter, be prepared to keep the car cool. Bring something warm to wear for each non-doggie passenger in the car and keep the temperature in the car cooler than you would probably like in order to allow your pup to be comfortable. If your puppy is crying during the trip, and you know she does not have to potty, she likely is hot.



*Be prepared to stay warm*

## Preparing the crate for the trip

Getting the crate ready for travel is important! Add each of the following items to the crate BEFORE putting the puppy in:

- An inexpensive crate pad or blanket placed on the bottom of the crate so the puppy won't slide around.
- A larger stuffed toy that has the scent of familiar dogs/puppies on it. The beating heart and warm pack in a Snuggle Puppie make it a great choice for traveling. Let the puppies play with your Snuggle Puppie and rub it on the puppy's mother to pick up their scents.
- One or two things for the pup to chew on.
  - Pigs' ears or bully straps are a good size and weight
  - The chewy should be easy for your puppy to chew, so now is not the time for a giant smoked knuckle bone. You want the puppy to be able to pick up the chewy and move to the other side of the crate with it.
- A few small toys for the puppy to play with.
  - A soft toy
  - A small ball or rubber squeaky toy
- Toss in a few treats that they can find on their own when you put them in the crate.
  - If you use fresh treats toss them in just before you place the puppy in the crates they don't spoil.
- Do not put water in the crate itself. During this trip you need to monitor how much water your puppy is drinking so you won't have to stop too frequently. Be sure she has had access to water before you leave and then offer her some water every few hours, without letting her drink too much water at one time.



*Crate—Paige in car*

## Documentation

You may need health and bill of sale documentation from the breeder on your trip, depending upon your destination. At a minimum, be sure you have a health certificate from your breeder's veterinarian. Typically a certificate issued within 10 days of travel is acceptable for most travel but you should check with your airline to confirm this. Keep the documents in an easily-accessible place—do not pack it with your luggage because you may need to produce it on the trip.

If you are crossing an international border check with your breeder to be sure you have the appropriate importation documents. (And be sure your passport is up to date!)

## When to get on the road

I learned a lot from my sister-in-law as I watched her do an amazing job raising five young children. What struck a chord for me was you do things when the timing is right for the kids, not for you. The same is true for puppies, so be ready to leave when the time is right for the puppy! Ideally you want to get on the road when:

- The puppy has had lots of exercise, running and playing with her littermates or you, and is ready to crash! Remember tired puppies make the best travel companions!
- The puppy has gone to the bathroom recently. Don't assume because you have been outside sitting in the grass enjoying the litter and chatting with the breeder that your puppy has gone to the bathroom recently. Keep an eye on her and be aware of the last time she pottied.
- The puppy has preferably not eaten a meal in the last hour or two, if possible, to avoid any carsickness.
- The car is completely packed—all you have to do is put the puppy in the car and drive away! If the puppy is settled and quiet, avoid long goodbyes and get moving right away!

It is not always possible to time the above list perfectly, but keep these things in mind to enable you and your breeder to get you off on your trip at the right time.



## Meals

If you are traveling for more than three hours, prepare individual meals in easy-to-use, disposable containers so you can feed your puppy on the trip. If you feed raw, package the food in throw-away containers so you don't have to deal with messy food bowls.

Keep the bag with the pup's things easily accessible as you pack the car. It's amazing how often the bag you need most winds up at the bottom of the pile if you don't plan your packing in advance.



*Raw food ready to travel and water dish*

## Potting the puppy

Your puppy should be able to go about two hours between potty breaks, if she pottied just before you left. If you are traveling longer than that we've put together a few tips to help you and your pup have success with safely pottying your pup while traveling:

- When your puppy wakes up she will need most likely need to potty very quickly so look for a rest area after she's been asleep for 45-60 minutes.
- If your puppy is screaming in the car and you are not sure if she needs to go, believe her! She likely has to potty.
- Try to find a place away from traffic to set her down. Be sure she is on leash!
- If you must stop on the side of the road be SURE your puppy cannot slip out of her collar no matter how hard she pulls on it! This is good advice at any time but is critical when your puppy is in a brand new place with people she barely knows!



*Office parks are safe places to potty your puppy*

- Do your best to get off the highway at either an exit or rest stop. If you have to go to a rest stop **DO NOT** take her to the “dog walk” areas. She has not been fully vaccinated and must be kept away from areas where unknown dogs go to the bathroom. Instead find an out-of-the way grassy area to set your puppy down. Avoid any dog feces you see no matter where you are walking her.
- The safest place to potty your puppy is at an office or industrial park. Find some grass in an area that would not likely have had other dogs around and set her down on leash.
- Once she has gone, praise her and give her some treats.
- Be sure to clean up after your puppy!



**G**etting a puppy is such an exciting time! We hope this information will make that first step of bringing your pup home easier for you and your puppy!

Be sure to download our Free ebook **97 Ways To Create Great Puppies!** to find out the many things you can do to bring out the very best in your puppy!

Have a safe trip!

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