**PAWS FOR LOVE EXPECTING FEMALE FOSTERING**

**HELPFUL TIPS FOR OUR HELPFUL FRIENDS**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO MAKE THIS THE BEST EXPERIENCE**

**FOR YOU, YOUR DOG, AND YOUR PUPPIES!**

**PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY!**

**IMPORTANT! ANY DOGS YOU HAVE OF YOUR OWN MUST BE VACCINATED. AVOID BRINGING NEW DOGS INTO YOUR HOUSE OR YARD WHILE YOU FOSTER THE PUPPIES OR DOGS AS INFECTIOUS DISEASES SUCH AS PARVO ARE VERY CONTAGIOUS AND CAN KILL A PUPPY! IF YOU HAVE TO DOG OR PUPPY SIT, INSIST THAT ALL PAPERWORK IS PROVIDED TO PROVE THE DOG OR PUPPY HAS BEEN DOUBLE VACCINATED. NO PAPERWORK, THEN THE DOG OR PUPPY CANNOT STAY! NO EXCEPTIONS!**

**Supplies provided**

Basically, everything you need to keep an expecting dog happy and comfortable is provided: bedding (such as quilts, blankets and rugs), newspapers, toys, dry food, puppy food, frozen raw meat, bowls, de-wormer, scale, dog collar and leash, swimming pool if possible, and a puppy pen.

**Keeping track**

Feel free to download the PUPPY ADOPTION FORM, DOG ADOPTION FORM, and PUPPY AND MOTHER DEWORMING SCHEDULE on the Fosters Page on the website to help keep track of important dates, appointments and information.

**Feeding/Water**

Keep the food bowl on the floor, full of dog food all the time until bedtime. This reduces food aggression while your dog learns that food is always available. Frozen raw meat should be given 3 times a day to build up the mother’s milk. Taking the food away at bedtime will decrease the chances of her having to go to the bathroom at night. Clean water should be provided all the time, day and night.

**Bedding**

You may wish to place a rug on the floor for padding and then put a quilt on top to make your momma dog comfortable. The quilts can be washed in your washing machine, however, if they become too soiled you may throw them out and more quilts can be provided. Her “nest” should be in a separate room, away from other dogs.

**Exercise**

When taking your pregnant momma outside, always keep her on a leash for fear of bolting. Even after they have had their pups, momma dogs may fear for their pups’ safety and roam in search of a place where they can hide them.

Keep her on a leash until you are sure she will always stay with you. One foster mentioned that while out for a walk her nursing momma made a bee-line to the neighbour’s deck and started digging to prepare a spot for her pups. The neighbour was not impressed.

**Stages in Pregnancy**

Closer to delivery you will notice your dog’s hair falling out by her teats. She will want her own bed, and may growl at other dogs to defend it.

**Delivery**

When delivery occurs, you shouldn’t have to sweat it. Your dog will know what to do. Just watch and enjoy the wonders of birth and the love of a momma dog and her pups. After a few puppies are born you may notice that the momma is becoming tired so you can bring a newly born puppy to the momma if she doesn’t reach around to retrieve her pup. You may wipe the puppies with a towel to stimulate it and place them on the teats to start nursing.

The momma will naturally pull off the placenta and chew off the umbilical cord and eat it but you may dispose of some placentas if you think she has eaten too much. If she doesn’t remove the placenta, you must do it yourself or the puppy will die. Then use sterile scissors to cut the umbilical cord about an inch from the pup’s belly, and tie the cord off with the thread or dental floss 1/4 to 1/2 inch from the puppy’s body. When cutting, it’s better to crush the cord rather than make a clean cut; this will reduce bleeding. After you’ve tied it off, dip the end in a shallow dish with either iodine or antiseptic solution.

The umbilical cord shouldn’t bleed excessively. If by chance the momma has bitten it off too close to the pup’s belly and it continues to bleed, tie it with a piece of dental floss to prevent further bleeding. During delivery you can give chicken broth to the momma to keep up her strength.

If by chance there are some difficulties, contact Kim immediately. The information on Cesar’s Way website is helpful.

<https://www.cesarsway.com/quick-tips-for-delivering-puppies/>

You can keep your dog and her pups in a kiddy pool, however as they grow and need more space you can set up partitions using 2 x 6’s to keep the puppies inside a safe place while the mother can get away for some rest once in a while. As the puppies grow you can remove the partition and let them have full run of a small room if it’s available.

**De-worming – Mother**

Do not de-worm your dog during pregnancy as the risks far outweigh the benefits. Once the mom has given birth, it is important to worm both her and her puppies. Mommas can be dewormed at 3 weeks after birth. Paws for Love will provide you with deworming medication in a pill form for your momma dog. You can add canned pure pumpkin to her feed if she has diarrhea, but only for 2 to 3 days. If the diarrhea continues, talk to Kim.

**De-worming - Puppies**

De-worm the puppies when they are 3 weeks and again at 5 weeks. You will be provided with a scale to weigh each puppy, liquid Drontal and a syringe. Weigh each puppy, measure the appropriate amount of Drontal and syringe into their mouths. It is banana flavoured so most puppies enjoy it. Look in their feces for discharged worms. Don’t be alarmed if it is full of worms. This is “normal” for rescue dogs. After the second de-worming there will be less worms. If the feces is still runny after the second de-worming, you can deworm again, but only under a vet’s advisement. It is important to de-worm as the worms can invade the pup’s lungs and cause severe damage. You can also give 1 Tablespoon canned pure pumpkin with meals for 2 to 3 days if the diarrhea continues. If the diarrhea continues talk to Kim.

Download the PUPPY AND MOTHER DEWORMING SCHEDULE on the foster page of the website and use to keep track of the puppies’ weight and deworming dates.

**Vaccinations**

An appointment with a vet will be arranged for you to bring your mother dog and puppies in to be vaccinated 6 weeks after your female has delivered her pups. An appointment for her spay will also be arranged for after she has weaned her pups and her milk has gone down. This dry-up time takes approximately one week. If she is returning to her owner, then she will not be microchipped at this time. If she is going up for adoption she will be microchipped during the operation. Whether she is up for adoption or not, she will receive her booster vaccination at this time.

**Microchipping**

Kim will arrange a time for her to come to your place and microchip your puppies. The process is usually quick and painless.

**Spay**

On the night before the spay, give your dog her food around 8 pm and then DO NOT give ANY food after 9pm. This includes treats. Water may be left down overnight, but should be removed first thing in the morning.

You will bring your dog to the clinic early in the morning around 8:00, leave your dog and then pick her up at approximately 3:00.

After your dog’s spay, the clinic will provide you with pain medication to administer. Please keep your dog’s exercise to a minimum for the first 10 days and follow all instructions provided from the clinic for your dog’s post-op care.

**CARE OF PUPPIES**

**Feeding/Water**

Soak dry puppy food in water for a couple hours and feed this to puppies when they are 3 weeks. Gradually decrease the length of time the food is soaked as they grow. Puppies should start eating mash at around 3 weeks to help mom - if needed. As soon as their teeth start coming in around 4 weeks add a bit of dry kibble to their mash. At 5 weeks they should be eating strictly dry food and soaking the food is no longer required.

Provide food until the dishes are empty and they aren’t interested in eating anymore. Feed 3 times a day - or leave the food down – your choice - and stop feeding after 6:00 in the evening to reduce the surprise of finding an extremely poop covered floor when you get up in the morning. Several sturdy pie plates put out on a towel can reduce waste and make for a speedier clean up.

Put water out all the time. They should start to drink at 3 or 4 weeks.

**Paper Training**

Cover area with newspapers and decrease area of newspapers as the puppies grow and learn to use the paper. Some puppies are amazing and will paper train themselves! Some take longer but most do not want to have a soiled sleep area and will eliminate away from their bedding on the newspaper that is provided.

**Care**

Some fosters prefer to care for their puppies for the full 8 weeks, and some like to let the puppies go to secondary fosters at 6 weeks. The mother is often done nursing by then and it may reduce the stress on the puppies when they have to leave to their forever homes as they are paired up with a brother and sister when they go to their secondary foster home. We do recommend that the pups stay with their mom for as long as possible.

Puppies should not be taken out of your home or yard and into public places for fear of them contacting parvo.

**Parvo** is a highly contagious virus. It causes an infectious gastrointestinal (GI) illness in puppies and young dogs, and without treatment, it is potentially deadly.

Part of what makes the virus so dangerous is the ease with which it is spread through the canine population. The virus spreads either by direct contact with an infected dog, or through feces, and an infected dog can begin shedding the virus four-to-five days after exposure — often before the dog starts exhibiting any clinical signs of infection. The dog will continue to shed the virus while she is sick and for up to 10 days after she has recovered. This means that accurate diagnosis and quarantine are essential for the health of your dog and of other dogs, as well. The virus can be spread on people’s shoes so please ask new comers to remove their shoes before entering the puppy area.

The most common symptoms of parvo are: Severe, bloody [diarrhea](https://www.akc.org/learn/dog-health/doggie-diarrhea/), lethargy, anorexia, [fever,](https://www.akc.org/learn/family-dog/dog-fever-and-temperature/) [vomiting](https://www.akc.org/learn/dog-health/dog-vomiting/), weight loss, weakness, depression, and dehydration.

If you puppy(ies) has bloody diarrhea, contact Kim immediately.

**Distemper**

(The following was taken from the American Kennel Club website:)

Distemper is one of the most serious diseases your [dog](https://www.akc.org/) can get. It is also one of the most preventable. Here are the facts, symptoms, treatment options, and prevention methods that every dog owner needs to know about distemper.

What Is Canine Distemper?

[Canine distemper](http://www.merckvetmanual.com/mvm/generalized_conditions/canine_distemper/overview_of_canine_distemper.html) should sound familiar to you if your dog is up-to-date on his [vaccinations](https://www.akc.org/content/health/articles/puppy-shots-complete-guide/). Veterinarians consider the distemper vaccine to be a [core vaccination](http://www.akcchf.org/canine-health/your-dogs-health/vaccines-and-vaccination.html), along with the parvovirus, canine adenovirus, and rabies vaccines.

The disease is highly contagious and potentially lethal. A paramyxovirus causes distemper in dogs, and it is closely related to the measles and rinderpest viruses. It causes severe illness in the host by attacking multiple body systems, resulting in a widespread infection that is difficult to treat.

How Is Canine Distemper Spread?

There are three ways dogs can get canine distemper:

1. Through direct contact with an infected animal or object
2. Through airborne exposure
3. Through the placenta

Canine distemper is spread through direct contact or airborne exposure, rather like the common cold in humans. When an infected dog or wild animal coughs, sneezes, or barks, he releases aerosol droplets into the environment, infecting nearby animals and surfaces, like food and water bowls.

The good news is that the virus does not last long in the environment and can be destroyed by most disinfectants. The bad news is that distemper-infected dogs can shed the virus for up to several months, putting dogs around them at risk.

Dogs are not the only animals that can get distemper. Wild animals like raccoons, foxes, wolves, coyotes, skunks, ferrets, and mink can also get distemper. This means that an outbreak of distemper in the local wildlife population can put dogs at risk for catching the disease even if they do not come into contact with other dogs.

What Are the Symptoms of Canine Distemper?

Distemper dogs experience a wide range of symptoms depending on how advanced the disease is in their bodies. Once a dog becomes infected, the virus initially replicates in the lymphatic tissue of the respiratory tract before moving on to infect the rest of the dog’s lymphatic tissue, the respiratory tract, the GI tract, the urogenital epithelium, the central nervous system, and optic nerves. This results in two stages of symptoms.

Stage One:

The first symptom of distemper in dogs is usually watery to pus-like discharge from his eyes, followed by [fever](https://www.akc.org/content/health/articles/dog-fever-and-temperature/), loss of appetite, and clear nasal discharge. Most dogs develop a fever approximately 3-to-6 days after being infected, but the initial symptoms depend on the severity of the case and how the patient reacts to it. In general, the symptoms associated with distemper in dogs during the first stages of infection are:

* Fever
* Clear nasal discharge
* Purulent eye discharge
* Lethargy
* Anorexia
* Coughing
* [Vomiting](https://www.akc.org/content/health/articles/dog-vomiting/)
* [Diarrhea](https://www.akc.org/content/health/articles/doggie-diarrhea/)
* Pustular dermatitis (rarely)
* Inflammation of the brain and spinal cord

If a dog infected with distemper survives the acute stage of the illness, he may also develop hyperkeratosis of the paw pads and nose, which gives distemper the nickname “hard pad disease.” This distemper symptom causes the pads of a dog’s feet to harden and enlarge and is uncomfortable.

One of the other risks associated with distemper in dogs is a secondary bacterial infection that attacks when a dog’s immune system is compromised by the distemper virus. Secondary bacterial infections can cause respiratory and GI symptoms, including:

* Vomiting
* Diarrhea
* Difficulty breathing
* Change in respiratory rate
* Pneumonia

Stage Two:

Some dogs develop neurological signs as the disease progresses and attacks the central nervous system. These signs are particularly disturbing for owners.

* Head tilt
* Circling
* Partial or full paralysis
* [Seizures](https://www.akc.org/content/health/articles/seizures-in-dogs/)
* Nystagmus (repetitive eye movements)
* Muscle twitching
* Convulsions with increased salivation and chewing motions
* Death

Distemper in dogs presents with some or all of these symptoms, depending on the severity of the case. According to the [American Veterinary Medical Association](https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/Canine-Distemper.aspx) (AVMA), “distemper is often fatal, and dogs that survive usually have permanent, irreparable nervous system damage.”

What Dogs Are Most at Risk for Distemper?

Distemper is a risk to all dogs, but unvaccinated dogs and [puppies](https://www.akc.org/puppies/) under four months old are particularly susceptible to canine distemper. If your puppy shows any symptoms of distemper, call Kim immediately.

How to Treat Canine Distemper

There is no cure for canine distemper. Veterinarians diagnose distemper through a combination of clinical signs and diagnostic tests, or through a post-mortem necropsy. Once diagnosed, care is purely supportive. Veterinarians treat the diarrhea, vomiting, and neurological symptoms, prevent dehydration, and try to prevent secondary infections. Most vets recommend that dogs be hospitalized and separated from other dogs to prevent the spread of infection.

The survival rate and length of infection depend on the strain of the virus and on the strength of the dog’s immune system. Some cases resolve as quickly as 10 days. Other cases may exhibit neurological symptoms for weeks and even months afterward.

Preventing Canine Distemper

Canine distemper is entirely preventable. There are several things you can do to prevent distemper in dogs:

* Make sure your puppy gets the full series of distemper vaccinations
* Keep distemper vaccinations up-to-date throughout your dog’s life and avoid any gaps in vaccinations
* Keep your dog away from infected animals and wildlife

**As the puppies grow:**

If you’ve never raised a litter of puppies, you’ll be surprised how fast they grow. The following excerpt about puppy development is from the American Kennel Club website:

**A Puppy’s Beginning: Newborn to Four Weeks Old**

* For the first three weeks or so, a puppy’s senses haven’t started working. They don’t see hear, or smell yet and spend most of their time asleep.
* A lot starts to happen between two and four weeks. Puppies begin to interact with their littermates and their mother. Their eyes open, they can see, and their other senses develop.
* By four weeks, a puppy can walk and may even start to bark and wag his tail. Prior to four weeks, puppies need stimulation from their mother to eliminate; around the four-week mark, they can do this by themselves. And, as anyone who’s raised a puppy knows, this is also the time those razor-sharp puppy teeth emerge.

**Lots of Changes in Your Pup’s Life: Four to Eight Weeks**

* This is a busy time for a young pup. The mother begins weaning her pups and teaching them how to behave.
* A puppy at this stage plays with his siblings, which is the equivalent of learning the rules of the playground.
* This is also the time when young puppies begin to explore and have a high fear threshold and can be gently and gradually exposed to everyday stimuli in the environment.
* The eight-week mark can be an important time in a puppy’s life because this is often when he goes to his permanent home. He’s matured enough to adjust to a new environment and still has a high fear threshold.

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During the first few weeks it is recommended that you keep the puppies in an enclosed area such as a plastic child’s pool or a boarded in area. This keeps the pups from wiggling or crawling off and is less stressful on the mom. When the pups start crawling out of the enclosure, remove it and give them more space to wander.

The mother usually starts weaning the pups between 6 and 8 weeks. During this time the puppy’s teeth are coming in and they may unintentionally bite the nipples. The mother may nip at them to warn them, and if they don’t stop, she may choose to stop feeding them. Some mothers will hang onto the end and feed the puppies up until they leave at 8 weeks. In any case, please provide your mother dog with a place where she can rest away from her puppies while still keeping a careful eye on them. An old armchair placed in the puppy room works great for this.

If your mother dog’s nipples are still full of milk after the puppies have been adopted you may try covering her teats with cabbage leaves and wrapping the leaves in place with narrow strips from a torn sheet. The coolness provides some comfort and vets recommend it as a way to dry up the milk. The teats should get smaller and reduce swelling in about a week but it will take several weeks until they are back to normal size.

If your mother dog is returning to her original home, Paws will arrange a date for her to be spayed about 2 weeks after the puppies have left. Please keep Kim up to date on the progress of the mother’s nipples. If they are still swollen after 2 weeks the spay may have to be postponed.

If your mother dog is being adopted, then the spay may be the responsibility of the new owner.

**Adoption Procedures**

Download the PUPPY ADOPTION FORM to keep track of each puppy’s adoption process. It will help you keep all of your information in one place for easy reference.

When your rescue puppies are ready for adoption, please send Kim (via Facebook messenger) a photo of each puppy. If possible, please put the name of the puppy (in pink lettering for girls and blue lettering for boys) on the photo to make easier for our website designer to add to the website. The less background in the photo the better, and please try to get as much of the puppy in the photo if possible. New owners want to know everything about the puppy, whether it has short or long legs, general size, the size of the mother and father (if possible) etc. The photos and information may be put up on the Paws for Love Facebook page, or our website – paws4love.ca. or, in some cases, kijiji Thunder Bay, Timmins, North Bay, etc.

Kim will send you the completed application forms as they arrive. If you have friends and family who are interested in adopting, ask them to fill out the application on the website, making sure that they specify the puppy is from your litter and the name of the puppy they may be interested in.

Your job is to call the applicant and invite them to meet the puppy. During Covid restrictions, please meet your applicants outside and wear your mask. During the winter, when this is not possible, ensure they have a private room to meet the puppy, and do not risk any exposure. Remember to tell visitors to remove their shoes before they enter the puppy area to reduce risk of spreading any infectious diseases such as parvo.

When the applicant chooses a puppy, a home visit must be conducted to ensure the puppy’s safety and well being. Home visits will be done by yourself or another volunteer. Please contact Kim to confirm who is going to do this important job. When the home visit is completed, the new owner can take the puppy home after the puppy has received its first set of vaccinations. People who already have a dog through Paws for Love can take a puppy without a home visit. There is no 2-week trial period when adopting a puppy.

The puppy’s adoption must take place within a reasonable time frame – within 2 to 4 days – after they turn 8 weeks, or after their first vaccination if it occurs at 8 weeks. It is not fair to the puppy if he or she stays at your place for too long and becomes attached to you, only to leave you later for his or her new home. Also, during this time his or her siblings are leaving, and possibly, the mother, and it is best if the stress is minimal. If a new owner requests that you keep the puppy for a longer period of time (more than 4 days after the first vaccination) due to travel, other commitments, etc., then talk to Kim. Kim may suggest they wait for another puppy from another litter. The puppy’s well being is Paws greatest concern.

During this time, you may want to create a Facebook group for your puppies’ new owners. One foster mom identifies each group after the mother dog, i.e. “Fannie’s Puppies”, “Meeshu’s Puppies”, etc. Invite the new owners to join the group and start putting posts up of the puppies. It’s a great way to keep in touch. Once the puppies have gone to their new homes, the new owners can post photos, ask questions, and set play dates for the pups to get together. Some groups may want to set a one-year anniversary and get together for a reunion.

Once the decision has been made to adopt, a down payment of $100 must be made via cash, cheque payable to Paws for Love, or e-transfer to pawsforlovethunderbay@gmail.com. Before the puppy is taken to his or her furever home, the remaining $175 must be paid. This covers costs for spay/neuter, vaccinations, and microchipping. A $100 refund is given when proof of spay/neuter is provided. Puppies should only be spayed or neutered after 6 months. Any earlier and it interferes with their normal growth and development. Most adopters rarely ask for the $100 return and give it as a donation to Paws for Love.

In order to adopt a puppy, the adoptee must have proof they have a veterinarian by booking the dog or puppy’s booster vaccination. It they are unable to, we can’t allow them to adopt.

No one is allowed to adopt more than one puppy at the same time. Studies have shown that the puppies will bond with each other instead of bonding with the human. It is in the best interest of the puppy that he gets the undivided attention of his new friend.

Before the puppies leave, rip an old bath towel into pieces so each of the puppies, and the mother, can have one to take with them to their new home. Put the pieces into the puppy room a couple days before they are to leave and the scent of the puppies and the mother will be on it when you give a piece to each new owner. Some new owners will ask to leave a blanket or a special toy with their new puppy until they come to pick them up. This is totally fine and recommended.

Paperwork will be provided for adopters to fill in. Once the forms are completed, give them the appropriate papers, (owners get yellow copies of Paws for Love contract, yellow copy of PEDIDCO, PETIDCO pamphlet, and proof of vaccination dog tag), and send your puppy on his way to his forever home. Return the rest of the papers to Kim so she can fill in the Microchip info online and file all the paperwork.

Remember to invite the new owners to check out the Paws for Love fundraising page on Facebook. The ongoing auction provides Paws for Love with much needed funding to cover costs of food, medicine, medical expenses etc. for our fur buddies. You can also have some “How my Rescue Dog Rescued me” books available and sell them for $20. The anthology is popular with new owners. Contact Donna White via the Facebook foster group and she’ll be happy to provide you with a few copies.

This can be a very difficult time for you as you and your rescue and the puppies have become good friends. Take comfort in knowing that you have made someone very happy and your dog and puppies are well prepared to accept a home and love from another person. Without you, this would not be possible.

**Important Information**

* If you are fostering for Paws for Love, please don’t foster dogs from another organization. This is due to the fear of spreading parvo and distemper.
* Please join our Paws for Love Dog Rescue Foster Families group on Facebook where you can post questions and get answers from experienced members group. It is also a nice page to post photos of your dog and puppies and show them off.
* If you are fostering a dog that is returning to the reserve, Kim will set up a Facebook group chat with you, the dog’s owner and her. Please use this opportunity to send photos and reassure the dog’s owner that his dog is being well cared for.

And please remember, we are extremely thankful for all that you do to help our furry friends. Without you, we wouldn’t be able to provide thousands of rescue dogs with their forever homes!

Thank you!

