So you have a puppy!

Bringing your puppy home will be lots of fun for you as they are a new member of your family and you are looking forward to bonding with your new puppy. Initially that may not be the same reaction that the puppy has to this change in his/her life. Remember that the puppy has been with his pack since birth and leaving the pack will be a very big change for the puppy. You can expect the puppy to be frightened or unsure for a bit. Everything they will experience with you will be new to them. The goal is to introduce them to things in a positive manner and make it fun and exciting and a learning experience for the puppy.

It is important to keep the puppy on a schedule so that they become accustomed to you and their new home. Some things to keep consistent:

1. Leave their crate in the same spot. You can move the crate to your room in the evening and back to a different spot during the day, but make sure it is in the same spot in each location.
2. Take them outside using the same door each time. They will learn to go to the door when they need to go to the bathroom. Keep watch and whenever they go near the door, let them out. That reinforces that if they go to the door, they will get to go out.
3. Feed them around the same time each day. Feed them in their crate, this will give them confidence that their food is not going to be taken if you have other animals in the house or kids that are near their food when they eat.
4. Crate them around the same time each day.
	1. This includes the weekends. On the weekends you don’t need to keep them in their crates as much. But put them in their crates for a couple of hours so they can nap and you can get some things done around the house.
	2. Don’t make the mistake of leaving them out of their crate all weekend and then expect them to be happy on Monday morning when you put them in the crate to go to work. Training has to be consistent or the puppy will forget.
	3. See the crate training articles provided.

Puppies are closer to the ground and if it is dusty or they run in tall grass often they will be gobbers in their eyes. That is the eye doing it’s job to keep the eye healthy. Wipe off the gobbers and keep the eye area clean.

Puppies could get diarrhea when you take them home due to the stress of leaving their pack and changes in water, etc. It isn’t something to be concerned about unless it lasts more than 2-3 days.

Puppies also eat a lot of junk in the yard. Watch that they are not eating a lot or eat things that they will have trouble digesting (plastic, rocks, etc). Keep them from eating too much as they will get used to eating anything and everything and that could cause problems down the road.

Watch that they don’t destroy their toys. If they start to de-stuff any toys, get rid of the stuffing so that they don’t ingest it and cause a blockage in their intestines. Any toys that are damaged or that have parts or sections that could be ingested should be discarded or repaired.

Puppy socializing –

The web site [www.ultimatepuppy.com](http://www.ultimatepuppy.com) is a great resource that has free information that you will find of interest.  Check it out.

it is important to socialize you puppy for the next year. Taking the puppy for a walk so they can see bikers, skate boarders, kids on bikes, people playing throw football, etc are all new experiences for the puppy. Whenever you introduce a puppy to something new, but sure to keep the puppy safe and under control. If you are near a bike path, keep the puppy on a lead and close to you so that they don’t get in front of a bike and injured. Same with people playing ball or skate boarding.

Part of your goal will be to socialize the puppy as much as possible. A good opportunity for socializing is to take them to a puppy class, sometimes called ‘puppy kindergarten’. These types of classes are held at dog training schools for 4-6 weeks in a row and help you with training your puppy basic manners. There is usually a puppy play time where similar aged puppies play for a bit and get exposure to other puppies. The other part of the class is walking with the puppy on a lead, leading the puppy around an obstacle course to get them used to walking around unusual things. They also have a question/answer section where you can bring up issues or questions you have about your pups behavior and they are able to explain why it is happening and some things to do to help the puppy along.

Food – the puppy can be moved from puppy food to adult food after 6-9 months. As your puppy grows you will need to increase the amount of food that they get. After their metabolism changes when they are older, you may need to reduce the food. The amount of food given is relation to their activity level. If you have a very busy dog and they are always on the go, they will need food (energy) to stay healthy. If you dog is more laid back and not as busy, they won’t need as much food.

Puppies will lose their baby teeth around 4 months and they will get their adult teeth. During this time the puppies gums will bleed and they will want to chew on things as their gums hurt. You may find teeth on the floor, but many time you won’t see them as the puppy drops them or eats them.

 A puppy has lots of energy, but can’t sustain that energy and they get tired a lot quicker than an adult dog. They will be running around and the next minute they will sit and the next minute they are sleeping. Make sure the puppy gets naps when they need it. You can time the naps to help you with your schedule. If you need to run to the grocery store at noon, play with the puppy from 10am to 11:30am so that they are tired when you crate them and will sleep when you are gone.

Puppies at public events - avoid walking puppies in parades or other types of events until they are leash broken and have some obedience training. Remember that even a 75 degree day with a little sun will be hot for your puppy. Hot pavement is painful to their pads. Taking puppies to baseball games, soccer, etc will be a good experience, but anything with lots of noise that you can’t control (fireworks, loud music, etc) could be hard for the puppy to take in at one time. You don’t want to over stimulate them and cause them to be noise sensitive.

Running – avoid running long distances with your puppy until they are 1 year of age. Their bone plates don’t close till 1 year and long distances of running in a straight line pounding on pavement is not good for their bones. They can run for hours in the back yard, weaving around and chasing a ball, etc. that is fine, it is the straight line running on a hard surface for miles that you should avoid.

Toenails - It is important to start trimming the puppies nails regularly as a puppy. This will they are used to having their nails trimmed. Trimming nails is very important as dogs that have long nails will have feet issues as the long nails will cause their toes to not be in the best position for movement. I use a Dremel, others use a guillotine type nail trimmer. Which ever you use, start out doing them often and just for a few sessons that are very short. You don’t need to do all of the nails in 1 sitting. You can do 1 foot each day for 4 days and then do the same every week. The puppy may struggle and not be happy, but over time they will get used to it. Do not stop because the pup doesn’t like it. Make it fun and give them lots of rewards when they are calm when you are doing the mails. Do not reward them for struggling. They will eventually get used to it and you will be glad you started out as a puppy and built a nice foundation.

Micro-chipping your puppy - I would highly recommend getting your puppy micro-chipped by your vet.  They insert a rice size chip under the skin between the shoulders.  The chip has info on it that a shelter or the animal control folks can scan with a wand.  You register the chip with a company and they keep your contact info on file. If your dog is lost and a shelter scans the puppy, they can then contact a 1 800 number and the chip company will call you about your found dog.  It is a great backup plan in the event the dog gets away without his collar.  There is a one-time fee for the life of the dog. There is an option to pay an annual fee from some additional benefits, but you only have to pay the initial fee one-time for them to register your dog for life in their records.