

## New Dog Checklist



### Food :

**Dry food.** Dry food is great to allow your dog to graze throughout the day. The type of dry will depend on your dog's age, dental health, and overall health. For example, diabetic dogs need a high protein, low carb dry food. Kidney disease dogs need low protein, low phosphorous foods. Dogs with GI issues will need a Sensitive Stomach food (usually Salmon based; stay away from high fat dry foods like lamb and beef). Dogs with skin issues will need a Sensitive Skin food (usually Turkey or Salmon based). Older dogs may need smaller kibbles due to lack of teeth or tooth sensitivity (or they may have to switch to wet food entirely). You may need to try several different foods so buy the smallest bag first. Some dogs only like fish flavors, others only poultry. If you have multiple dogs, you may need to buy more than 1 dry food.

**Wet food.** Wet food is great for treats or for sick or elderly dogs. It is also helpful for older dogs that need more moisture to prevent dehydration. It is also often the best food for kidney disease because of the low phosphorous and high moisture. Like with dry food, give a less fatty or rich wet food to avoid GI issues, or smaller portions of wet food (versus a whole can at once) mixed with their dry food. Like dry food, different dogs prefer different flavors and textures (gravy versus pate). A sample pack is a great way to start.

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## **Food & Food Bowls:**

**Dry food Bowls.** Use at least 2 bowls with a large enough opening they can get their head in there to scoop up kibbles as the food gets low in the bowl. Even if you only have 1 dog, 2 bowls allows on in the dishwasher while the other is in use. The bowls should be emptied and washed once a week. If you have multiple dogs, place bowls a few feet apart or even in separate rooms to avoid fighting or bullying. You may have to feed each separately.

**Wet food Bowls.** If wet food is given separately as treats, get a stack of heavier bowls to avoid the bowl moving around the room as they try to lick up all the wet food. Wet food is essential for sick or older dogs that need hydration and may not drink enough water on their own. It's especially good for dogs with Diabetes or Kidney disease.

**Note on Automatic Feeders:** NEVER leave a dog or dog unattended for over 12 hours with no one to check on them, even if you have a put out potty pads and extra food. The feeder could get stuck, tipped over, or if it's outside another animal could eat all the food.

**Note on Keeping Dogs from eating cat food:** If you have a dog that likes to eat the cat food, you can put the cat food up on a table or high bench.

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### Water bowls:

- Stainless Steel – Stainless steel is always best but any kind that can hold a large supply without tipping over works. Buy low and wide, versus tall and narrow to avoid ones that your dog could tip over especially if they like to paw the water (see Tips for Splashers below for more advice on that).
- Ceramic – I like ceramic bowls because they are so heavy and can't be tipped over.
- Fountains - I use the “Sparkletts” style fountains versus the plug-in type so I don't have to worry about it tipping over and the pump burning out when I may not be home for hours. It's just safer. I do have a fountain for when I am home, but I've found they still prefer the sink!

Water bowls should be emptied and refilled once a day because dogs sometimes dribble food into the water bowl. Sick and elderly dogs tend to get dehydrated and fresh water often with a few ice cubes really encourages drinking.

Tips for Splashers: Place a large sized potty pad under the water bowls if you have a dog that likes to splash with their paw or is a sloppy drinker. Towels absorb the water and hold the wetness against the carpet or wood floor, while the potty pad absorbs, but has a plastic backing so the moisture is not against the flooring for hours.

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## Play-Rest

- **Toys.** Dogs love chew toys, and it keeps them busy and less stressed (and away from your shoes!). Be careful with rawhide toys, these can cause stomach or intestinal blockages, or vomiting. There are options such as nyla bones and more digestible versions of rawhides at your local pet store or online.
- **Interactive:** Tennis balls are a great cheap way to burn off energy in the backyard. Take them away at the end of the play session so they don't swallow them and end up in the ER! (This can happen with the rubber balls too).
- See the next page for Harnesses and Leashes
- **Beds.**
  - If you have an elderly or arthritic dog there are many beds now specifically designed for support and warmth. It really helps. Never leave a heating pad plugged in when you are not home. There are self warming beds.
  - For summer-time there are cooling pads to lay on, and raised beds to allow air flow underneath.
  - If the dog has incontinence issues (and Proin doesn't help), place potty pads underneath the beds to avoid urine soaking into furniture or flooring.

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## Walking and Running

**Leashes.** For your safety and for your dog's safety, keep them on a leash when not in your backyard. This avoids car accidents, dog fights, and dog bite scenarios. To avoid collar slips, use a harness along with the leash. Fixed leashes, retractable leashes, and y-leashes (for walking 2 dogs on 1 leash) are all available. Be sure the leash has enough lead they can be a few paces ahead/length to approach a tree to urinate. On the retractable leashes, those come in different lengths and all have a locking button if you want to limit how far they can range out.

**Harnesses:** They are "s" shape harnesses which slip over their head, then buckle around their chest, and double buckle or snap styles so around the throat and chest can be adjusted. Be sure to measure your dog before purchasing as depending on the style, a medium may be too small – or too large for example. You can also take your dog to the pet supplies store to try them on but you'll need to ensure they do not collar slip while in the store as other dogs will be around and they could dart out the store's main door into a busy parking lot.

**Note on Pace:** Smaller dogs and your "puppy" that has now aged to a senior can't keep up with fast paced walking/running/biking without being pulled off their feet or choked. Get your workout in and take them for a walk at their pace where they get exercise and can enjoy sniffing trees and bushes.

**Note on Heat Stroke and Hot Pavement:** Any age dog can get heat stroke – even if you feel OK; older dogs or dogs with medical issues are even more susceptible. Do walks early morning or late night. Also, dog foot pads can get burns requiring veterinary care from hot asphalt. Remember, you have shoes on – they don't!

**Note on Snow and Ice:** Like extreme heat, extreme cold can be a problem especially for older dogs. There are a variety of booties and parkas for dogs of all sizes to prevent frostbite or ice "burns" on foot pads, and prevent arthritis pain from cold.

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### Potty Time Tips:

- Keep potty pads by the door the dogs normally goes out to use the outdoor facilities, for when you can't be home for a few hours. Remember, as dogs get older they can't hold it as long as when they were young, and constant straining even for a young dog will cause problems like bladder infections.
- To avoid skunks at night if you don't have a fenced yard:
  - Take them out on leash even in the backyard, or
  - Build a gated area off the back door with chicken wire or tight mesh screening so the skunk can't get in and the dog can use that area after dark. You can even put a cover over that type of area for when it's raining so the dog doesn't come back in the house covered in mud and wet!
- When training always go in and out the same door to the yard; in this way the dog associates that door with potty time, and will go stand by that door when the dog needs to go out (or will go there to use the potty pads).
- Proin may be an effective option for dogs suffering from incontinence. Discuss with your Veterinarian. Diabetes, kidney issues, steroids like Prednisone, and heart medications (especially diuretics) cause more frequent urination. Keep that in mind when scheduling potty breaks.

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### Identification

**Collar.** Dogs need a collar with your mobile phone on it AND your Veterinarian's and/or dog sitter's number. Most people won't bother to pick up your dog and take them to a Vet clinic or Shelter where there is a microchip scanner, but they WILL call if your number is handy. Some areas may also require you to display the rabies tag on the collar. This should be *in addition to* a tag with the numbers mentioned above.

**Microchip:** Collars sometimes come off, so microchips are imperative. Every Vet clinic and shelter has a microchip scanner. UPDATE your information anytime your number changes or your address. Include your Veterinarian and dog sitter's phone numbers too.