

Puppy Tales

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What's Happening in the Box Weaning Pen?

Oh, I slacked off! The last time I wrote, pups were still in the whelping box, and here we are with go homes scheduled in just a few days!

We moved the pups to the weaning pen when they were just under 4 weeks old, giving them much more room to move around and play, as well as room for litter boxes. Fortunately, our set up allows Tess to access the pups as she wants, and she still likes to visit them several times a day.

The mush or gruel we were offering gradually gave way to moistened kibble which they did very well with. At this point they do not need it moistened and have transitioned to dry kibble. We have been feeding 4 times a day – 6AM, 11AM, 4PM and 9PM, and are working on getting that down

to 3 times a day. Pups have done very well sleeping through the night, although they do have the litter boxes to relieve themselves.

From the weaning pen, pups were let out to explore the kitchen, they have a blast playing with toys and running like little banshees! The next step was to get them outside, a challenge this time of year, but thankfully with several warmer days and a deck that is like a giant playpen we got them out there. They do get cold after a few minutes, but I am pleased to share that as soon as they hit the snow they squat to pee. This is a huge step towards housetraining and will make that easier for you.



Weaning Pen

We do our best to expose pups to different places, different surfaces and different experiences. For spring and summer litters, we set up a large play yard up outside with a ball pit, a pool, tunnels and lots of fun. I could not let winter deter this litter from such important experiences, so I set up all (except a pool!) in our basement and pups get to play at least once a day.

Thanks to all who have visited, these pups have managed to get a fair amount of

socialization accomplished. They are bold, outgoing and playful and ready to take on the world!

Feeding

We have raised this litter on the same food our adult GSPs are on—Inukshuk. Pups get the 26/16 blend—that is 26% protein and 16% fat.

Inukshuk is manufactured by a small Canadian company and mostly sold in bulk. We order it by the pallet.

It was originally developed for

sled dogs, but folks like us with high energy sporting dogs have discovered it and it seems to be gaining in popularity. It is also available by the bag on Chewy.

In the past, we used Purina Pro Plan and had been very pleased with the food until last year when the company made some minor changes to

the formula and a couple of our dogs along with a litter of puppies had some digestive issues.

What food you choose to feed your pup is up to you. We highly recommend a premium brand as opposed to a “grocery store” brand. The cost may seem higher, but is worth it in the long run as you end up feeding less and the

quality of nutrition your pup will get is much better.

If you live near us and would like to continue using Inukshuk, we will be happy to add to our bulk order for you. We send more than enough food home with each pup to get them settled and to transition to a new food.



Puppy Pick Up

The day is almost here, I know how exciting this is. We have lots of pups to send home, so I try to provide you with as much information and paperwork ahead of time making pick up rather brief. I will email the contract and some other info later this week., if possible please print, fill out what you are able to and bring it all with you. Check, cash or Venmo is fine for final payment. PLEASE do not hesitate to ask any questions!!

Some other things to bring with you:

Crate (if room allows and you have a long drive)

Old towels and/or paper towels

Leash and Collar (I recommend the adjustable web kind of collar that starts at 10")

Water and small bowl (if long drive)

Pup's registered name if you have chosen one

Do not be surprised if your pup gets carsick, it is very common for dogs when they are not acclimated to traveling by car. If the trip is long, try to make as few stops as possible and walk pup in places where it is unlikely any dogs have recently been.

Please take pup directly home, do not go visiting, there will be plenty of time for that later on once pup has bonded with you and knows you will keep him or her safe. This is a stressful time for pup and he or she will be vulnerable both mentally and physically.

Socialization

Once pup is settled and comfortable at home, it really is important to get him or her out and socialized. This can be quite a challenge. As much as socialization is imperative, more so is keeping pup healthy and safe. Even though the initial vaccine has been given, pup is still susceptible to viruses and parasites, and none of us want an ill puppy... or anything worse.

We strive to raise our litters with socialization and enrichment in a way that gives them the best chance of developing to their fullest genetic potential. There is a premise that the experiences a puppy has in the first 12-16 weeks has a profound effect on how he/she will handle stressful situations throughout life. We have spent countless hours socializing, exposing pups to various surfaces, areas and obstacles to overcome, introducing clicker training, crating etc. It is up to you to continue this work, especially for the next couple of weeks and beyond.

Once pup settles into your home, begin to take them out to visit safe places and meet new people and friendly (healthy) dogs. Make sure these experiences are positive and fun for your pup. Avoid common areas, **NEVER** go to a dog park or walk pup down a city street. Please remember that viruses such as Parvo are easily transmitted, all pup has to do is step where there may be microscopic infected fecal particles and then lick their paws. (Never let pup lick or chew on shoes for this very reason.)

Feeding con't from pg 1

Any sudden changes to a dog's diet will most likely cause intestinal upset and diarrhea. Therefore, when changing foods or adding new ones such as treats, do it gradually. Mix the old food with the new, slowly decreasing the old while increasing the new over the course of several days.

Plan on feeding pup 3 times a day at first and eventually decreasing to 2 after several months. I would suggest offering approximately 3/4 cup of food initially and adding more if pup devours it, decrease if not finishing, and increase as pup ages and grows. Expect a full grown GSP to eat 4-6 cups of food a day, depending on the brand of dog food you use.

Whether you stick with a twice a day feeding regimen is up to you. Some folks even "free feed" leaving dry food out all the time, this method only works for dogs that do not overeat. We prefer to give our dogs 2 smaller meals a day rather than 1 large. It is believed to lessen the chances of Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus (GDV), more commonly known as bloat, an often deadly condition for dogs.

It is also very important to have clean, fresh water available. While it is not necessary for pup to have water overnight, it may be tempting to limit a pup's water during the day to assist with housebreaking, this can backfire and cause urinary tract issues.

House Training

We started the house training process back when pups were only a couple weeks old.

You have probably heard the theory that dogs prefer to keep their environment clean. If given the option, dogs will not relieve themselves where they eat and sleep, so we encourage this behavior by providing a comfortable sleeping area and a separate area to relieve themselves. This is also the basis for house training with crate training.

As pups age, we provide a bigger and bigger area. The whelping box gave way to an exercise pen with pads and blankets for sleeping and playing, and litter boxes for “pottying”. We are certain that fostering this ability to maintain a clean environment will help the house training and crate training efforts when pups move on to their forever homes.

Crate training is often tied to housebreaking. The difficult part is that crating a puppy initially can be very stressful for both puppy and person, there definitely is going to be crying and screaming by the pup and sometimes even some crying by the person! Eventually, the pup will happily accept the crate as his or her own space, but initially it will seem like torture if we do not work very hard at making it a positive place. Place pup in crate when just about to fall asleep and keep the door open. Consistently put pup in crate when getting close to falling asleep. Feed pup in the crate, again without closing the door. Give certain special toys and treats in the crate and only in the crate.

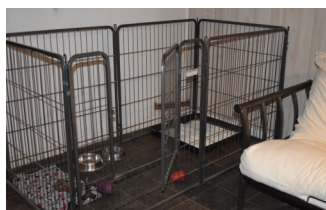
The crate pup starts out in needs to be small enough so the/she does not have room to urinate on one side and sleep on the other. If pup has an accident in the crate, remove any bedding, blanket or towels. Since the bedding will absorb the urine it defeats the purpose of house training with crate training – not wanting to urinate/defecate where they need to lie down. Except for overnight, pup should not be left in crate for any extended period of time, their ability to “hold it” is very limited. A good general rule of thumb is pup can hold it an hour for every month old it is (2 months old – 2 hours – MAX). As soon as pup wakes up, carry him/her outside, when he/she “goes” praise lavishly. I like to take pup to the same place in the yard every time and I tie a command to puppy going (“hurry up, go potty”). Pup should also be taken outside after play time and within 15-30 minutes of eating or drinking. You can usually tell when pup has to “go” as -he or she will start to search for a place and you will quickly learn to recognize the cues. As soon as you see the signs, scoop pup up and get outside.

If you need to leave pup for longer periods of time, and/or until you get your pup comfortable being locked in a crate, you might want to consider using an ex-pen type set up. We attach a crate (for a sleeping area) to the pen, and place a litter box (low sided container with shredded newspaper or other litter material), food, water and some toys in the pen. This gives the pup the ability to keep his/her environment clean without having unrealistic expectations of pup not having any accidents. You may be inclined to do this type of setup in a kitchen or bathroom without the ex-pen, but be aware that pup just may chew on cabinets or furniture, also areas such as kitchens tend to be too big.

We do a very brief introduction to the crate while pups are still here. I keep beef marrow bones in the freezer and give each pup a few minutes in the crate with a bone once or twice a day for a couple days in a row. I take pup out of crate while he or she is still very interested in the bone, leaving them wanting more! I do close the door, they are so interested in the bone that they do not even notice they are locked in.

You should continue this exercise at home, increasing the amount of time pup is in crate with the bone or other high valued items. If done right, pup will be anxious for their time in the crate. Add other time occupying treats, such as stuffed Kongs. There are loads of things Kongs can be stuffed with—peanut butter or yogurt mixed with kibble or other treats and then frozen. I like to put pup’s kibble in the Kong, seal the end with some canned dog food and then freeze it, you can do this with multiple Kongs so it lasts longer.

You will probably want to crate pup overnight and at that point you will need to close the door of the crate. There are folks who allow pup in bed with them which certainly will alleviate a lot of crying, but that is not for everyone. I have found that putting the crate next to my bed is the best way to get through the night and it helps to be able to slip my hand through the bars and reassure pup that I am nearby. It also helps as I can easily hear pup if they need to go out during the night, which initially is to be expected. Covering the crate can be helpful as well.



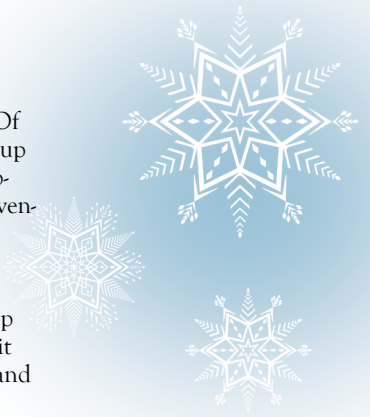
Example of an ex-pen set up with a litter box and bed. It is also a good idea to attach a crate for pup to go in and out of.

Mouthing

Puppies are like toddlers without hands, everything goes in the mouth. They jump on their people and mouth them – biting and snapping, it simply is what puppies do just like they did with their littermates. Of course, those needle-sharp teeth hurt! Initially, your reaction should be a loud screech, just like another pup would do. This startles them and usually they let go. Immediately redirect that mouth onto something appropriate for them to chew on – a toy - and say “YES”! It is a stage that seems to last forever, but it does eventually stop. Pup just needs to learn what they can and cannot chew on and it is your job to teach them.

Some pups get pretty intense with mouthing and play biting, even snarling, which can be misconstrued as aggressive behavior, it is normal puppy development behavior. If the above does not work, simply stand up and turn away, disengaging and sending the message that such behavior is unacceptable. Do not EVER hit pup on the nose or face – doing so will produce a head shy dog. At the very most, grab pup by the collar and give a bit of a shake with a strong verbal correction in a deep, growling voice.

Mouthing is usually play behavior, but can also be connected to teething. Puppies have 2 sets of teeth just like people. The first set of 28 erupts at 2 weeks old and then begins to fall out around 10-12 weeks old. By the time pup is 6 months old, the baby teeth should be out and the complete set of 42 adult teeth come in.



Initial Veterinary Visit

It is at your discretion should you want to take your pup to be examined by your veterinarian right away,. The litter will be examined by Dr. 3rd and 9th – please call NOW to schedule that appointment so there is no delay if your vet is heavily booked.

The initial vaccine given to pup protects against the following:

Distemper - a virus that affects respiratory, gastrointestinal, and central nervous systems, as well as the conjunctival membranes of the eye, passed via body fluids. Often considered by some as a historic disease and extinct, however it is still a problem among un-vaccinated dogs and often seen in wildlife.

Hepatitis/Adenovirus2 – canine infectious hepatitis caused by Adenovirus spread dog to dog by saliva, feces or urine. Causes upper respiratory infection and then targets the functional parts of several organs including the liver, kidneys and eyes.

Parainfluenza – highly contagious respiratory virus often mistaken for canine cough, particularly difficult for older dogs and puppies.

Parvovirus - highly contagious intestinal virus, passed via feces. Causes anorexia, vomiting, horrific bloody diarrhea and is often deadly for puppies.

This vaccine is administered in a booster series, usually every 3 - 4 weeks from the time pup is 7-8 weeks old until it is 16-18 weeks old, which is necessary because pups usually have some immunity passed from the mother dog and that makes the immunity from the vaccine null.

Unfortunately, we do not know exactly when that mother’s immunity wears off, so administering the vaccine in this manner has proven to give the best protection from these potentially deadly viruses.

There are other vaccines that you will discuss with your veterinarian as to their timing and requirements, please do not allow your pup to be given several vaccines all at once overtaxing the immune system.

Rabies – is required by most, if not all states. It is a deadly viral disease spread by the saliva of infected animals and leads to brain inflammation and eventually death.

Leptospirosis – (sometimes given as part of the DHPP and sometimes given alone) is a bacterial infection that is passed in urine, particularly rodents, and often found in standing water such as puddles. Can lead to major organ failure, especially in puppies. Lepto is prevalent in certain areas, your veterinarian may or may not recommend it.

Lyme Disease – infection caused by a bacteria contracted from a bite by an infected tick. It often presents as lameness and can progress to organ failure. If you live in a high tick area, your veterinarian will most likely recommend this vaccine. We test our dogs for Lyme Disease and other tick borne diseases annually.

Bordetella/Canine Cough – upper respiratory infection passed dog to dog, this vaccine is always required by boarding kennels and often training facilities.

It was previously mentioned, but it is worth mentioning again, it is extremely important to continue socializing pup as soon as pup is settled at home, however you need to exercise great caution in where you take him/her until fully vaccinated. Controlled places where you are certain that only healthy dogs are, or have been, are the only safe places to take pup until he or she has received the full series of DHPP vaccines.

There are many things pup can pick up, but one of the most deadly is Parvo. Parvo can live in the soil from the feces of infected dogs, and can even be transported by our shoes. Puppies with Parvo become lethargic, vomit, have bloody diarrhea and need intense hospitalization, sadly even then many do not survive. (As you can probably tell, Parvo scares the heck out of me!)

Please discuss heartworm, intestinal and external parasite prevention with your veterinarian and go by their recommendations. They will also most likely bring up spaying or neutering, I urge you to avoid early spay/neuter (before pup is 18–24 months) or to at least research the subject on your own to form an opinion. Remember, if you are planning on showing your pup, you CANNOT spay or neuter.

Fear Periods

Many pups go through phases where he or she suddenly exhibits a concern of new items or situations, perhaps even of things he or she has been exposed to before. These fear periods commonly occur in the 8-11 week (regrettably right about the time pup leaves the security of the litter) and 6-14 month spans. These are a natural part of development and there is no way to avoid them, even with a lot of socialization. How you handle these periods can be critical, though. Forcing pup to engage with something they are extremely frightened of can create a long lasting fear. Give pup some space and let him or her explore on their terms - do not baby or coddle, but be a confident leader. Take a step back to where pup was comfortable and let him or her just observe. Praise and reward pup for engaging or even looking at the fearful object, or for looking to you for guidance. Try to arrange short training sessions involving the fearful object, make them fun with toys and treats. Pup may never completely overcome the fear, but always ending the training sessions on a positive note will be helpful in the long run.



Parasites/Deworming

Internal and external parasites can have debilitating effects on dogs, especially young pups. And, even though a mother dog can be tested clear of intestinal parasites, she can still pass larvae to her pups either in-vitro or through her milk.

External parasites are generally fleas and ticks and are for the most part seasonal. A severe flea burden is not only extremely uncomfortable for a dog, but can actually cause anemia as they literally suck the blood out of the dog. Ticks, of course, are known for the horrible diseases they can transmit—Lyme Disease, Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasmosis are a few.

Internal parasites include heartworm, intestinal worms, and single cell organisms.

Heartworm larvae is transmitted dog to dog by mosquitos and develop into actual worms that lodge and eventually clog the heart. Untreated, it is deadly, but treatment is not easy either, it causes the worms to die and be carried to the lungs where they are slowly reabsorbed by the body. The dog must remain quiet and relaxed for several weeks while this happens. Thankfully, there is a preventive for heartworm, please be sure to discuss this with your veterinarian.

Common intestinal parasites include roundworms, whipworms, hookworms, tapeworms and single cell organisms such as giardia and coccidia. These parasites are commonly contracted from the mother dog and/or the environment - soil, plants or other objects, or by ingesting an infected host such as a rodent, bird or insect. Intestinal parasites cause a range of symptoms from vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia, anemia, and malnourishment. Most of these worms will show in a fecal sample tested by the veterinary lab.

It is rather common for pups to be born with certain intestinal parasites such as roundworms. Breeders routinely deworm pups, and can also have fecal samples checked. It is not at all unusual for dogs to develop intestinal parasites at some point in their life. Some are picked up in the environment, and some remain dormant in the intestines, but can become active and shed at times of stress. Should you have any concern about an intestinal parasite in your dog, simply have a fecal sample tested by your veterinarian's office.

Our pups are dewormed with Pyrantel in 3 doses at 10 day intervals and then a fecal sample is tested just to be sure nothing is active. It is a good idea to have a sample checked occasionally throughout your dog's life.

Thank you ...

for welcoming one of our GSP puppies into your home and your life. We hope that he or she will enrich your life with many, many years of devoted, loving companionship. Please remember we are **not** sending you off with a pup with the expectation of never hearing from you again, but rather look forward to getting pictures, hearing of milestones and answering any questions you may have along the way. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you ever have any questions or concerns about training, health or anything else regarding your pup. While there is plenty of information on the internet and social media, we find it is often contradictory and not always correct.

Our greatest desire is that your pup grows to be a much loved and cherished member of your family, but please do not expect this to happen overnight. There will be plenty of trials and tribulations in the near future, however with clear expectations and the dedication this breed needs, you will have an amazing dog before you know it. That being said, we are the first to admit the GSP is not the right breed for everyone. We ask you to be certain NOW that you are ready for this commitment, rather than decide 6 months down the road that this dog does not fit your lifestyle.



Separation Anxiety

GSPs are very much prone to develop separation anxiety. Some can't stand to be a room away from their people, much less left home alone for any significant amount of time. Being separated from their people causes some serious stress for many dogs with reactions ranging from howling and barking to destructive behavior around the house, and in severe cases self mutilation and attempting to escape the house. Once again, the crate is your friend when it comes to avoiding the pitfalls of separation anxiety.

To prevent your pup from developing it, diligently take the following steps:

- * (I am going to repeat crate introduction, as it is equally important here as it is for housebreaking.) Work hard at making the crate a positive place, start out with short bursts of time putting pup in the crate with his favorite toys reserved only for the crate along with busy type toys such as stuffed Kongs or frozen marrow bones, take pup out before he or she loses interest in the Kong or bone, leaving pup wanting more. Pup will soon want to go in the crate to get the special treats.
- * Do not baby or coddle your pup. Keep pup safe, but let him or her develop some independence, be your pup's confident leader
- * Next, build up the time pup spends in the crate while also conditioning pup into thinking your leaving is a good thing. It is ideal if you have a fair amount of time to work on this process before actually having to leave pup for hours at a time. Start gradually, do the crate introduction exercise suggested above and start leaving the room for a few minutes and then returning, taking pup out of crate before he or she is done or bored with the Kong or bone. Build this time up to the point of walking out the door and coming back after a few minutes, then maybe a drive around the block, then a grocery store visit.
- * Do not make a fuss about leaving, quietly walk out the door as quickly as possible after giving the Kong or bone. Your leaving should be a good thing.
- * Make your return no big deal either, quietly come in and do not immediately rush to the crate. If you can, do not take pup out of crate if he or she is crying or making a fuss, wait for a moment of quiet. You want to reward the quiet behavior, not the screaming, whining, barking.
- * Ensure pup is getting a significant amount of exercise, both physically and mentally in the way of training. This is very important! It is helpful if pup is already quite tired when you put him or her in the crate.
- * Extreme cases of separation anxiety are sometimes prescribed medication, both traditional and herbal/homeopathic medications.

