

PUPPY INFORMATION PACKET

SkyeLine Ranch Miniature American Shepherds

Congratulations on your new puppy!

Bringing home a puppy is an exciting time, but it is also a major adjustment. Your puppy is leaving everything they have ever known and learning an entirely new routine, environment, and family. During the first few weeks, patience, consistency, and positive experiences will go a long way in helping your puppy settle in and thrive.

Remember that no puppy is perfect. There will be accidents, chewing, puppy biting, and plenty of learning opportunities along the way. The time and effort you invest now will help shape the confident, well-mannered companion your puppy will become.

Please remember that I am always available if you have questions throughout your puppy's life.

CRATE TRAINING

A crate can be one of the most valuable tools for raising a puppy when introduced properly. It provides a safe place for your puppy to rest, aids in house training, and helps prevent unwanted behaviors when supervision is not possible.

For the first few nights, consider placing the crate near where family members sleep. Puppies are leaving their littermates and familiar surroundings, so some crying is normal while they adjust. Most puppies settle into their new routine within a few days to a week. Create positive associations with the crate by offering meals, special chews, or treats inside. Begin with short sessions and gradually increase the duration as your puppy becomes comfortable. The goal is for the crate to become a place of security and relaxation, not punishment.

Avoid leaving a puppy crated for extended periods of time. Instead, focus on helping them learn that the crate is a comfortable and rewarding place to be. If I have to be away for a period of time or I am sleeping, I prefer to leave the puppy in an x-pen with the open crate and a litter box so they can relieve themselves when needed.

Crate Recommendation:

Midwest iCrate 36" with double doors

Primo Pad (provides cushion, is very durable, and easy to clean)

HOUSE TRAINING

House training is largely a matter of consistency, supervision, and management.

At this age, puppies have limited bladder control and often do not realize they need to go until the urge is immediate. Frequent trips outside help set them up for success.

Take your puppy outside:

- First thing in the morning
- After meals
- After naps
- After play sessions
- Before bedtime
- Every 1-2 hours while awake

If an accident happens indoors, simply clean it up and move on. Try to prevent it next time. Do not punish the puppy for having an accident. Punishment can create anxiety and may cause puppies to hide when they need to eliminate because they become fearful of going in front of you. If you see them getting ready to go or starting to go, make a small distracting noise to get them to stop, pick them up, and bring them outside to finish pottying. I use the command “go potty” as we go, and if I see them doing the deed outside, I say “good potty” as they do it, so they learn what it means. If I have a treat on me, I will give them one at that time. This eventually helps them to go on command, which is convenient for dog trials or when you need them to go immediately.

Remember that accidents are a normal part of the learning process. Consistency and prevention are far more effective than correction.

If you plan to use a litter box for when you're gone or at night, I recommend using:

DuMOR Plastic Rabbit Cage Tray (found at Tractor Supply or online)

Pine Pellet Bedding (Can be found at Tractor Supply or any feed store)

Or

Paper Pellet Bedding (Vibrant Life Brand from Walmart is most cost effective)

FEEDING

A quality diet plays an important role in your puppy's growth, development, and overall health.

I recommend continuing the food your puppy has been eating here for at least the first week after going home to minimize digestive upset. If you decide to switch foods, do so gradually over 7-10 days.

I suggest feeding the puppy on somewhat of a schedule. Scheduled meals help with housebreaking because it makes bathroom breaks more predictable. If you leave food out all the time for the puppy, they will eat whenever and potty more irregularly. I do leave water out most of the time though.

I highly suggest feeding a high-quality food to your puppy. On high-quality foods, puppies eat far less and have less waste. If you use cheaper, grocery store brands, they eat up to twice as much and their stools are bigger and messier. Also, the ingredients are lower quality, making the puppy more prone to skin allergies, obesity, excessive shedding, poor coats, and other health problems. Puppyhood is definitely NOT the time to skimp on food quality. Expect to pay \$2.50 + per pound for the good brands of food. It is more cost up front, but will save you in the long run. Your puppy will eat less and have less health problems throughout their lifetime. I can't stress this enough...feed those babies well!

Current food: Eukanuba Medium Breed Puppy

Other Food recommendations:

Purina Pro Plan

Royal Canin

Inukshuk

Farmina

VACCINATIONS & VETERINARY CARE

Your puppy has begun their vaccination and deworming schedule before leaving for their new home. Please review the provided health records for specific dates and treatments.

Schedule a wellness appointment with your veterinarian shortly after bringing your puppy home. Establishing a relationship with your veterinarian early allows you to discuss vaccination schedules, parasite prevention, nutrition, and any questions you may have.

Heartworm prevention is especially important in many parts of the country. Discuss the best prevention options with your veterinarian and keep your puppy on a regular preventative schedule.

Important note: Miniature American Shepherds may carry a gene mutation called MDR1, which may cause sensitivity to certain medications. While routine heartworm preventatives are generally considered safe, higher doses of ivermectin and certain other medications can cause serious adverse reactions and even death for dogs that carry the gene mutation. The sire and dam of this litter have both been genetically tested and are clear for the MDR1 mutation. However, I still recommend exercising caution and discussing any medications with your veterinarian. As a general rule, I prefer to treat all herding breeds as though they may be affected by MDR1 and avoid unnecessary use of high-dose ivermectin and other known MDR1-sensitive medications whenever possible.

For more information regarding MDR1 and drug sensitivities, visit:

<https://waddl.vetmed.wsu.edu/mdr1-in-dogs/#problem-medications>

Heartworm Medication Recommendation:

Interceptor Plus

SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is one of the most important investments you can make in your puppy's future.

The goal of socialization is not simply to create a friendly dog, but a confident dog that can comfortably navigate the world.

Expose your puppy to a variety of people, environments, sounds, surfaces, objects, and everyday experiences. Positive experiences during puppyhood help build confidence and resilience later in life. The critical socialization period ends at 16 weeks of age, so it is very important to do as much as you can with the puppy before this age.

Allow your puppy to experience new things at their own pace. Confidence develops when puppies are given the opportunity to observe, investigate, and process new experiences without being forced into them.

Remember that socialization can be passive. Sitting quietly and watching the world go by can be just as valuable as direct interaction.

Avoid dog parks and other high-traffic dog areas until your puppy has completed their vaccination series. I personally avoid dog parks all together because there are so many people that do not have control of their dogs and I have seen way too many accidents happen. Having a bad experience with another dog can hinder your puppy's development.

Your puppy does not need to greet every person or dog they encounter. In fact, teaching neutrality can be just as valuable as teaching sociability. The goal is a dog that can confidently exist in the world without feeling the need to interact with everyone they see.

TRAINING

Miniature American Shepherds are highly intelligent, eager to learn, and thrive when given both mental and physical outlets.

Focus on building engagement, confidence, and life skills from the beginning. Some of the most valuable skills to teach early include:

- Name recognition
- Attention and focus (“Watch Me”)
- Recall
- Loose leash walking
- Settle or Place training
- Impulse control
- Cooperative handling and grooming
- Sit politely for greetings
- Ride calmly in the car
- No jumping
- Wait at doors and gates

Keep training sessions short, positive, and fun. A few minutes several times each day is often more effective than one long session.

Reward-based training methods help build trust, enthusiasm, and a stronger relationship between you and your puppy.

Whenever possible, I encourage puppy owners to enroll in a positive reinforcement training class. Group classes provide valuable socialization opportunities while helping owners develop training skills and confidence.

Training Treat Recommendations:

- Freeze Dried Chicken
- Freeze Dried Beef Liver
- Stella & Chewy’s freeze dried meal mixers and meal patties
- Vital Essentials freeze dried treats
- Pure Bites freeze dried treats
- Zuke’s Puppy Naturals
- Pupford Training Treats

GROOMING & HANDLING

One of the greatest gifts you can give your puppy is teaching them that handling is normal and safe.

Regularly practice:

- Nail Trimming
- Brushing
- Bathing and drying
- Ear checks
- Teeth inspection and brushing
- Gentle restraint

Keep sessions short and positive. Reward calm behavior and gradually build your puppy's comfort level over time.

These experiences will make future veterinary visits, grooming appointments, and routine care significantly easier and less stressful.

ENRICHMENT

Mental enrichment is just as important as physical exercise, especially for intelligent breeds like the Miniature American Shepherd. Enrichment helps build confidence, encourages problem-solving skills, and can prevent boredom-related behaviors.

Some easy enrichment ideas include:

- Food puzzles and treat-dispensing toys
- Frozen Kongs, West Paw Toppls, or Woof Pupsicles
- Snuffle Mats and Lick Mats
- Short Scent-work games
- Hide-and-seek games
- Learning new tricks
- Exploring new environments and surfaces

A NOTE ABOUT MINIATURE AMERICAN SHEPHERDS

Miniature American Shepherds are often called the "do-it-all" dogs because of their versatility. They excel as family companions, performance dogs, working partners, and adventure buddies.

They are intelligent, people-oriented, and eager to be involved in everyday life. While they are adaptable, they thrive when given appropriate mental stimulation, training, and opportunities to use their minds.

A well-socialized and well-trained Miniature American Shepherd can excel in obedience, rally, agility, herding, scent work, trick training, therapy work, and many other activities.

Most importantly, they form strong bonds with their families and are happiest when included in daily life.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Raising a puppy is a journey. There will be wonderful moments, frustrating moments, and everything in between. Stay consistent, keep training positive, and remember that progress is made one day at a time.

Thank you for trusting me with the opportunity to provide your newest family member. I love receiving updates and watching my puppies grow, so please stay in touch and share photos, accomplishments, and milestones throughout your puppy's life.

Welcome to the SkyeLine Ranch family!