

TIPS FOR NEW PUPPY OWNERS

By Dr Michael Yazbeck, Veterinary Director, Greencross Vets

Bringing a new puppy home is an exciting milestone, but for first time puppy owners it can also be a little daunting... but it doesn't need to be!

Your puppy will need lots of guidance as they navigate life. Here are my tips to help you:



FOOD

Just as kids need a diet that suits their growing needs, puppies are no different and they need to eat food that meets their specific needs until they are at least 12 months old.

As a vet, I always recommend feeding puppies a super-premium life stage-specific food that is approved for growth. Even better - feed a puppy a diet that is tailored to their size. There are dry and wet options available.

Vaccinations start 6-8 weeks old and are given every 2-4 weeks until 16 weeks of age. Your puppy will need boosters for the rest of their life to remain immunity from infectious diseases.

It's recommended that you wait two weeks after their last vaccination before taking them out for walk in public.

VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations are important to help protect your puppy from contagious and potentially fatal diseases. It's essential to build your puppy's immunity when they are young by ensuring they complete their vaccination program.



PARASITE PREVENTION

Regular, year-round parasite prevention is extremely important to protect against fleas, intestinal worms, heartworm and ticks – especially in areas prone to paralysis ticks.

Parasite protection begins as early as 2- 3 weeks with their first deworming. Up until 12 weeks of age, your puppy will need to be wormed every fortnight, then monthly until six months of age. All dogs should be wormed every three months for optimal protection.

There are a range of heartworm, flea and tick preventatives that can be tailored to your schedule and pup's preferences, such as oral, topical and injectable options.

MICROCHIP

It is a legal requirement in all Australian states (except the Northern Territory) that all dogs have a microchip. If your puppy has not already been microchipped, it is recommended you do this at your puppy's first vet visit.

TRAINING

Having a well-behaved and socialised dog is easy if you begin their training when they're a puppy. The key to training your puppy is being consistent and providing positive reinforcement in a timely manner (within seconds!) at every learning opportunity.

Puppy preschool is a great way for your puppy to learn new commands while also creating a strong bond with you. It's also the perfect opportunity for your puppy to socialise safely before they finish their vaccinations.

TEETHING

Just like human babies, puppies are born with no teeth. Their first set of baby teeth grow between 3-4 weeks of age. When your puppy is around 4-5 months old these teeth will fall out to make room for their permanent set of adult teeth. By 5-7 months, all the adult teeth will be present.

When giving your puppy toys to play with make sure they're appropriate for their age and size - you don't want to give them anything that's too hard or unsafe.



HEALTH CHECKS

At every vaccination, your puppy will receive a health check from your vet. Once vaccinations are complete, we recommend taking your puppy for a health check every six months.

SOCIALISATION

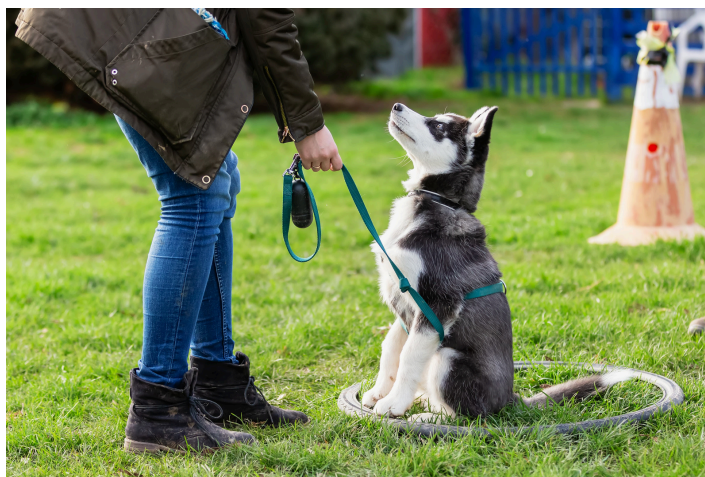
Dogs need to get used to being around other animals and humans. A puppy who isn't socialised from a young age, particularly before 14 weeks old, risks becoming fearful in new situations or exhibiting behavioural issues.

PET INSURANCE AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Pet insurance is recommended from a young age as it's a good way to prevent bill shock and provide peace of mind in an emergency.

There are also pet wellness programs available which cover the cost of vaccinations, microchipping, desexing and regular health checks.

For any questions or concerns it's always best to speak to your local vet for advice.



Dr Michael Yazbeck, Veterinary Director

Dr Yazbeck graduated from the University of Sydney in 2015 and is the proud recipient of the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association Prize for Medicine and Surgery. He has a keen interest in small animal surgery, internal and emergency medicine. A career highlight was travelling to South Africa to treat animals from local village dogs to wild giraffes.

