

THUMB SILVER LABRADOR RETRIEVERS

PUPPY INFORMATION

PUPPY COLOR/COLLAR/NAME: _____

VETERINARIAN CHECK/SHOTS/DEWORMED: _____

NEXT VACCINE DUE: _____

Congratulations on your new furry family member!!!! Each furry baby has been raised within our family and loved individually. All have been rocked, played with, hugged, kissed, interactive play, etc. We believe strongly in providing strong roots so they will be a perfect addition to your family. They will still make mistakes as they go (which we know can be frustrating). If you ever need assistance, there are many sources for you to choose from, however, we are happy to help -always - if you want to reach out to us. We don't have all the answers but will absolutely try to help. Please keep in mind the most important item: you will get out of your pup what you put into them. Therefore, they will unconditionally love, but if you want them to have boundaries, learn tricks, service dog, hunt, etc., they will! We have multiple pups doing a lot of very interesting things. The owners invested time on what they want them to do. We love to watch them grow. Please message us or post to our site, etc. Thank you for welcoming and loving our little friends. We hope they are the best family friend you can ask for!

FOOD: Purina Pro Plan Large Breed Puppy Food. We free feed. We find that keeping the dish full at all times they can eat when they want. Labs are notorious for eating as much food as is in front of them. Ours have not and do not have an issue with overeating. You may feed your puppy how you would like, but as background, this is how we fed them.

TREATS: Milk bones, Blue Buffalo Bits, puppy teether sticks (chewy.com)

POTTY TIPS: Take out regularly the first week or two (once an hour - it is a lot at first then each week their bladder will get a little bigger and they will be able to hold it longer), after they eat/drink and when they wake up from a nap. Praise when they go and provide a small treat/reward. If they were dewormed just prior to going home, for a week or so, their bowel movements may be loose. This is normal. If it continues on, please talk to the vet about this at their vaccination appointment.

FLEA/TICK/HEARTWORM: Once a month treatments available and recommended. Feel free to discuss with your vet. Vet included free samples in the take home bag.

BATH: On pick up day, your puppy will get a bath in baby shampoo. Due to their thin skin, it is not necessary to bathe them often.

NAILS: Nails have been trimmed on multiple occasions. They will leave with nails trimmed within a week. They do grow quickly and are very sharp.

STEPS: We work on steps, all can go up steps. Coming down is a different story. Multiple pups have gone up and come back down. Coming down is scary for puppies, but they will get it quickly. If you have steps they will learn as their legs get a little longer :)

INFORMATION:

- Exposure: In order for your puppy to have a well rounded beginning, we expose them to the following before they go to their Furever home-soft/loud noise; vacuum cleaner/mop; children/adults; variety of toys; etc. It's our understanding the puppy should be exposed to as many things as possible by 14 weeks. We know we haven't hit them all, so please keep that in mind the next couple weeks :)

- Soothing: We promote self soothing as much as possible, but all puppies have been handled, rocked, sang to, danced with, etc. The puppies have been exposed to white noise and music for lengthy periods of time (Baby Mozart, classical, Christian, relaxing piano music, a previous daycare list designed for toddlers and metal/rock. We found that due to the teething, they will often be soothed with a chew/teething toy. Just keep in mind, puppies have similar patterns as a toddler/teenager/etc. In this stage, overstimulation, fatigue, hunger can all make the puppy not behave their best.
- Sleeping: Keep in mind pups will miss Mom, but their litter mates for sure. They usually sleep in a pile flopped all over each other with a nightlight on. There are things out there that will assist with the transition if they are upset at night. Good routines, the blanket with Mom's scent, stuffed animal, etc. We tried the heartbeat stuffed animal and that seemed to work well with our youngest.
- Problem solving: We work on multiple problem solving activities - puzzles, getting out of the box, finding the food. This litter has performed great. Virtually 0.0 whining and determination to complete the activity.
- Other dogs: If you have other dogs/pups in the house, just a friendly reminder to set good boundaries for your new family member, i.e. food, treats, toys, play fighting/biting which can cause frustration in both adult and puppy.
- Attention: If you want to get their attention, we included a maraca to shake (they played with Aunt Stormi's rattle a lot- very popular). In addition, the great majority will run when the food tings on the metal dish.

\$ SAVING TIPS: Amazon, Tractor Supply, Chewy.com all have subscribe & save options for food, treats and pet needs.

FREE PET SAFETY PACK: <https://secure.aspca.org/take-action/order-your-pet-safety-pack>

BAG CONTENTS*:

- Blanket. It is new or laundered. It has been in the litter and rubbed on Mom. It is not dirty, but will have some of Mom's hair on it.
- Toy and/or stuffed animal
- Bag of Purina Pro Plan Large Breed Puppy to get started or to use in transition if you choose to change food
- Treat
- Vet records/bag from vet (we use Maple Valley in Caro, MI)
- Documentation
 - Agreement
 - AKC registration paperwork-a lot of new puppy owners do not register with AKC. This is your choice. There is a fee to register them. If you register, the silver labs are registered as "chocolate", charcoal as "black" and white as "yellow".
 - New Puppy papers, etc.

*Please express caution with the maraca, stuffed animal. As they age, they will break the maraca and likely try to eat the beads. The same will apply to the stuffed animal.

NOTES:

****Genesis 1:31: God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.****

The New Puppy Checklist

Bringing home a new puppy is an exciting time for any family.

Here are a few tips on making the transition easy.

- ✓ **Puppy Food** The first year is critical to your puppy's development. During this time, your puppy needs special nutrition to promote strong bones and teeth, proper development of body systems and a thick, lustrous coat. At certain times during this period of growth and development, your puppy will need up to twice the amount of food per pound of body weight compared to an adult dog. Start your puppy on the right track with a complete and balanced puppy food.
- ✓ **Training Treats** Purchase treats that are low in calories and are a small size to reinforce a puppy's good behavior during training. And, a good rule to live by is the "10% rule." Treats should not exceed 10% of your puppy's daily calorie intake.
- ✓ **Collar and Leash** Your puppy's first collar and leash should be made of lightweight nylon or leather. For collar size, measure his neck and add two inches. Check his collar frequently to be sure he hasn't outgrown it. When he is older or if you have adopted an adult dog, you will need to buy a webbed-cotton or leather leash with a secure clasp. Six feet is the best length for training and walking.
- ✓ **Identification Tag** An identification tag permanently attached to the collar should give your new dog's name, and your name, address and phone number. Another identification option is available: placing a microchip under your pet's skin. Consult your veterinarian for more information about this method of identification.
- ✓ **Crate** The crate will become your dog's safe place, and his special place to go to sleep and feel secure. Put it near or in the family hub of activity, so your dog feels like part of the family. This is his home, too, and he should feel comfortable here. The key to successful use of the crate is to always use it in a positive manner — never as a punishment.
- ✓ **Grooming Tools** The proper grooming tools will differ depending on your puppy's hair coat. For short-haired breeds, use a brush with natural bristles, a rubber curry comb or grooming hand mitt. A sturdy wide-tooth metal comb and perhaps a slicker brush are needed for long-haired breeds. Establish your dog's grooming program as soon as possible so he'll get used to being groomed.
- ✓ **Toys** Safe toys are an important part of your pet equipment. They can help your dog exercise and provide a safe way to satisfy your puppy's need to chew.

Rubber toys that can be filled with treats, nylon chews and hard rubber balls are fun and usually safe. If your dog can fit a toy in his mouth, the toy is too small and could be unsafe. Avoid sponge toys or items with squeakers, whistles or other attached parts that your dog could swallow.
- ✓ **Notebook** Keep all of your puppy's photos, vet records, and vital statistics in one place. This will be especially helpful if your puppy/dog gets lost.
- ✓ **And Don't Forget the Basics** Make sure to grab things like food and water bowls, a dog bed, pet shampoo, a pooper scooper, carpet stain remover, and puppy training materials.



Good luck to you and your new puppy!

 **PURINA**[®]
PROCLUB[®]

Your Labrador Retriever

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Labrador Retrievers: What a Unique Breed!

Your dog is special! She's your best friend and companion and a source of unconditional love. Chances are that you chose her because you like Labrador retrievers, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Bouncy, cheerful, loyal, and enthusiastic
- Good with kids and other pets
- Large, strong, and athletic
- Has a short, easy-to-care-for coat
- Eager to please and responsive to training

No dog is perfect, though, and you may have noticed these characteristics, too:

- Can be rambunctious and rowdy, especially as a younger dog
- Sheds quite a bit
- Needs a lot of exercise
- Is a bit "mouthy"—likes to carry and chew things
- Exhibits signs of "separation anxiety" if left alone too much

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's got her own personality, and you love her for it.

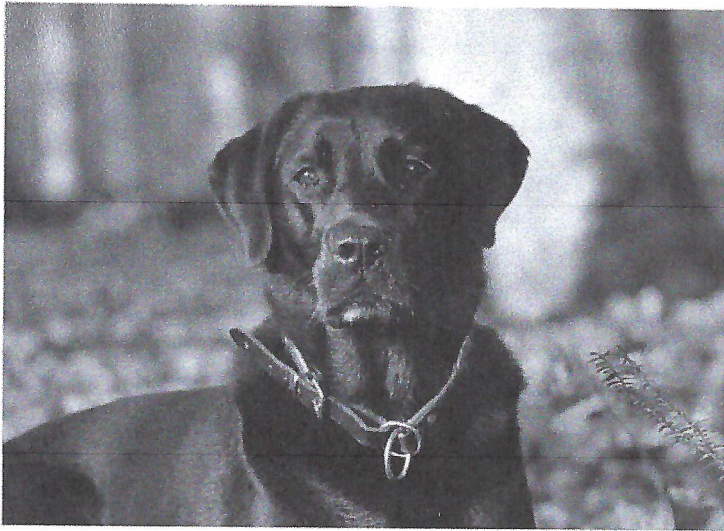
Your Labrador Retriever's Health

We know that because you care so much about your dog, you want to take good care of him. That's why we'll tell you about the health concerns we'll be discussing with you over the life of your Labrador retriever.



1601 Lee Road
Winter Park, FL 32789
Phone: 407-644-2676
Fax: 407-644-1312
www.wpvvet.com





we examine your pet. If she is overweight, we'll discuss exercise and diet because obesity is a risk factor for some types of cancer.

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. It starts with tartar build-up on the teeth and progresses to infection of the gums and roots of the teeth. We'll clean your dog's teeth regularly and let you know what you can do at home to keep those pearly whites clean.

Ear Infections

Labrador retrievers often get ear infections, which are painful and annoying. The earlier we catch this, the less discomfort and pain he suffers. Be sure to call us if you notice that he is scratching or shaking her head, there is a foul odor about the ears, or his ears seem painful to the touch. We'll pay special attention to his ears each time we see her. No one likes an earache!

Eating Weird Stuff

Labrador retrievers eat things they're not supposed to—rocks, coins, plants, and socks, among others. Your pet carries the item in her mouth to check it out or play with it, or she thinks it's food. When swallowed, these objects often get stuck and have to be surgically removed. Some of what your dog eats is toxic and can poison her. If you notice that she is vomiting or acting lethargic, call us immediately.

Exercise Induced Collapse

Some young Labrador retrievers develop this condition in which they collapse during a period of intense exercise combined with intense excitement. An otherwise fit, muscular dog loses his balance, loses control over his back legs or all legs, or falls over. At the first sign of lack of coordination or wobbliness, you must stop the exercise and let your dog rest. If he has this condition, we'll try experimental treatments that have been successful in some dogs.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma, an eye condition that affects people too, is an extremely painful disease (people say it's like being stabbed in the eye with an ice pick!) that rapidly leads to blindness. Symptoms include squinting, watery eyes; cloudiness of the cornea; and redness in the whites of the eyes. In severe cases, the eye may look swollen or like it's bulging. We'll perform annual glaucoma screening for your pal to diagnose and treat it as early as possible. Glaucoma is a medical emergency. If you see symptoms, don't wait. Call us or an emergency clinic immediately!

Hip and Elbow Dysplasia

You've probably heard of this inherited disease that causes the hip joints to form improperly and leads to arthritis, but

Many diseases and health conditions are genetic, meaning they're related to your pet's breed. That doesn't mean your dog will have these problems; it just means that he's more at risk than other dogs. We'll describe the most common issues for Labs to give you an idea of what may come up. Of course we can't cover every possibility here, so always check with us if you notice any unusual signs or symptoms.

This guide, along with the health evaluation schedule it contains, helps us and you plan for your pet's health-care needs. At the end of this booklet, we've included a description of what you can do at home to keep your Lab looking and feeling his best. You'll know what to watch for, and we'll all feel better knowing that we're taking the best possible care of your pal.

Allergies

Labrador retrievers can get "hay fever" or food allergies, just like humans. Symptoms may include itchy skin, recurrent ear infections, and chronic vomiting or diarrhea. The good news is that there are many treatment options available to treat allergies, from special diets to medications.

Bleeding Disorder

Your Lab is prone to develop a genetically linked bleeding disorder called hemophilia. We may not know anything is wrong unless severe bleeding results during surgery or if your pet has a serious injury. We'll perform diagnostic testing for blood clotting time before we perform surgery to test for this problem.

Cancer

Cancer is the most common cause of death of pets over age twelve, and your golden is especially prone to certain kinds of cancer. Early detection is critical! We'll do periodic blood tests and look for lumps and bumps when



in the limbs, a stiff gait, and carrying the head low. If we suspect that your dog has this disease, we'll do some testing to be sure. Typically, you'll need to reduce your pet's stress, and we may treat the condition with medication. Most dogs with myopathy are stabilized by twelve months of age, have a normal life span, and are suitable as house companions: no hunting or working for them!

Obesity

Obesity is a significant health problem in dogs and a serious disease that may cause arthritis, some types of cancer, back pain, and heart disease. Though it's tempting to give your pal food when he looks at you with those soulful eyes, you can love him to death with human food and treats.

Parasites

All kinds of worms and bugs can invade your dog's body, inside and out. Everything from fleas to ticks to ear mites can infest her skin and ears. Hookworms, roundworms, heartworms, and whipworms can get into her system in any number of ways: drinking unclean water, eating or stepping on feces, or being bitten by an infected mosquito. Some of these parasites can be transmitted to you or a family member and are a serious concern for everyone. For your friend, these parasites can cause pain, discomfort, and even death, so it's important that we test for them on a regular basis. We'll also recommend preventative medication as necessary to keep her healthy.

Spaying or Neutering

One of the best things you can do for your Lab is to have him neutered (called spaying in females). In males, this means we surgically remove the testicles, and in females, it means we surgically remove the uterus and ovaries. Spaying or neutering decreases the likelihood of certain types of cancers and eliminates the possibility of your pet becoming pregnant or fathering unwanted puppies. Performing this surgery also gives us a chance, while your pet is under anesthesia, to evaluate and possibly address some of the diseases your retriever is likely to develop. This is convenient for you and easy for your friend. Don't worry; we'll let you know what specific problems we'll look for when the time arrives.

Thyroid Problems

Labrador retrievers are prone to a common condition in which the body doesn't make enough thyroid hormone. Signs can include dry skin and coat, hair loss, susceptibility to other skin diseases, weight gain, lethargy, mental dullness, sleeping excessively, fearfulness, aggression, or other behavioral changes. We'll conduct a blood screening test annually to look for the disease. Treatment is usually simple: replacement hormones given in the form of a pill.

did you know it can also be a problem in a Labrador retriever's elbows? You may notice that she has lameness in her front legs or has difficulty getting up from lying down. We can treat the arthritis—the sooner the better—to avoid discomfort and pain. We'll take X-rays of your dog's bones to identify the disease as early as possible. Surgery is sometimes a good option in severe and life-limiting cases of hip dysplasia. Keep in mind that overweight dogs may develop arthritis two years earlier than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering.

Infections

In addition to ear infections, Labrador retrievers are susceptible to other bacterial and viral infections—the same ones that all dogs can get—such as parvovirus, rabies, and distemper. Many of these infections are preventable through vaccination, which we'll administer to your dog based on the diseases we see in our area, his age, and other factors. Your retriever is more likely than other breeds to get certain kinds of skin infections as well, so watch for scratching, licking, smelly skin, and lumps on his toes.

Joint Disease

When Labrador retriever puppies are allowed to grow too quickly, the cartilage in their joints may not attach to the bone properly. It's best to stick to our recommended growth rate of no more than four pounds per week to avoid this condition. In addition, as she gets older, your Lab is more likely than other breeds to tear a ligament in her knee. Surgery may be required to fix either of these problems. Keeping her at the right weight, feeding a high-quality diet, and avoiding too much jumping (like playing Frisbee) are the keys to avoiding a ligament tear.

Muscle Disease

Labrador retrievers may develop a disease of the muscles, called myopathy, when they're three to seven months old. Physical signs include bunny hopping, loss of muscle tone

Taking Care of Your Labrador Retriever at Home

Much of what you can do to keep your dog happy and healthy is common sense, just like it is for people. Watch his diet, make sure he gets plenty of exercise, regularly brush his teeth, and call us or a pet emergency hospital when something seems unusual (see “What to Watch For” below). Be sure to adhere to the schedule of examinations and vaccinations that we recommend for him. This is when we’ll give him the necessary “check-ups” and test for diseases and conditions that are common in Labrador retrievers.

Routine Care

Build her routine care into your schedule to help your retriever live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime! Another very important step is signing up for pet health insurance; there will certainly be medical tests and procedures she will need throughout her life, and pet health insurance will help you cover those costs.

- ✓ Supervise your pet as you would a toddler. Keep doors closed, pick up after yourself, and block off rooms as necessary. This will keep her out of trouble and away from things she shouldn’t put in her mouth.
- ✓ Brush her teeth at least three times a week.
- ✓ Clean her ears weekly, even as a puppy. Don’t worry—we’ll show you how!

Diet and Exercise

Watch his diet, and make sure he gets regular exercise. Overweight Labrador retrievers are more prone to cancer, hip dysplasia, ligament tears, arthritis, and other problems.

- ✓ Keep your dog’s diet consistent and don’t give him people food.
- ✓ Feed a high-quality diet appropriate for his age.
- ✓ Exercise your dog regularly, and don’t overdo exercise.
- ✓ Don’t let your dog chew on bones, ice cubes, hooves, or tennis balls.

What to Watch For

Give us a call immediately if you notice any of these signs in your Labrador retriever:

- ✓ Vomiting or chronic diarrhea
- ✓ Weight loss or weight gain
- ✓ Lumps, bumps, and moles
- ✓ Lethargy, mental dullness, or excessive sleeping
- ✓ Fearfulness, aggression, or other behavioral changes
- ✓ Limping or lameness
- ✓ Hair loss
- ✓ Coughing or difficulty breathing
- ✓ Episodes of weakness
- ✓ Pot-belly appearance
- ✓ Inability or straining to urinate
- ✓ Cloudiness, redness, itching or any other abnormality involving the eyes

- ✓ Itchy skin (scratching or licking)
- ✓ Change in appetite or water consumption
- ✓ Scratching or shaking the head, discharge in the ear, or foul odor about the ears

Partners in Health Care

DNA testing is a rapidly advancing field with tests being developed to help diagnose conditions before they become problems for your friend. For the most up-to-date information on DNA and other screening tests available for your pal, visit www.Genesis4Pets.com.

Your Labrador retriever counts on you to take good care of her, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that she lives a long and healthy life. Our goal is to ensure that your pal has the best health care possible—health care that’s based on her breed, lifestyle, and age. Please contact us when you have questions or concerns.

Health Evaluation Schedule for Labrador Retrievers

Now that you’ve read about the health issues we’ll be monitoring, we wanted to give you an at-a-glance summary of what services we’ll provide to keep your Labrador happy and healthy. It may seem like your pet is prone to quite a few problems, but don’t worry; we’ll take the lead in keeping her healthy for a lifetime. We’ll review these health-care steps with you in more detail, but please feel free to ask questions or voice concerns at any time.

Studies to determine the frequency of inheritance or disease in this breed either have not been completed or are inconclusive. There is a general consensus among canine genetic researchers and veterinary practitioners that the conditions we’ve described herein have a significant rate of incidence and/or impact in this breed.



How We'll Keep Your Labrador Retriever Healthy

*Puppy to Adolescent:
Infant to 17 in People Years*

*Adult: 18 to 39 in
People Years*

*Senior: 40 to 59
in People Years*

*Senior: 40 to 59
in People Years*

	Age	Services We'll Provide	Labrador Retriever-Specific Problems We're Looking For
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	6-8 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Internal parasite test and/or deworming Vaccinations Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care	Heart murmurs Hernias Proper dental alignment Parasites
<input type="radio"/>	10-12 weeks	Brief physical examination Heartworm prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth and ears at home	Proper growth rate Allergies and ear infections Muscle disease Behavioral problems Parasites
<input type="radio"/>	14-16 weeks	Brief physical examination Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss obedience training, nail trimming, and grooming Schedule spay/neuter surgery	Allergies and ear infections Muscle disease Adult teeth coming in properly Skin infections Tonsillitis Parasites
<input type="radio"/>	4-6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Presurgical diagnostics for spay or neuter surgery Hip and elbow evaluation Bleeding clotting time	Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Muscle or joint disease Hip and elbow dysplasia Hemophilia
<input type="radio"/>	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip and elbow evaluation Heartworm test Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Excessive weight gain Behavioral problems Allergies and ear infections Skin infections Joint disease Hip and elbow dysplasia Heartworm and other parasites
<input type="radio"/>	2 years through 5 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip and elbow evaluation Internal organ health evaluation Thyroid testing Glaucoma screening Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Allergies and ear infections Skin infections Healthy weight Hip and elbow dysplasia Internal organ health and function Thyroid function Glaucoma Heartworms and other parasites
<input type="radio"/>	6 years through 7 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip and elbow evaluation Senior internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Thyroid testing Heart health check Glaucoma screening Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Allergies and ear infections Skin infections Healthy weight Arthritis Hip and elbow dysplasia Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Thyroid function Heart disease Glaucoma Heartworms and other parasites
<input type="radio"/>	8 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Thyroid testing Heart health check Glaucoma screening Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Allergies and ear infections Skin infections Healthy weight Arthritis Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Thyroid function Arthritis Heart disease Glaucoma Heartworms and other parasites

Note: We recommend twice-a-year examinations so that we may diagnose problems sooner. This approach also gives you the budget-friendly option of spreading preventive testing over two visits rather than one.

How to Introduce Dogs the Right Way

Written by:

PetMD Editorial

PUBLISHED: MARCH 18, 2020

Reviewed on March 18, 2020, by Dr. Alison Gerken, DVM, and Victoria Schade, dog trainer

Introducing a new dog to your family dog is sure to spur a mix of nervousness and excitement.

In order to make the transition smooth, you should plan each step of the process—from the dogs' first meeting to the steps you'll take to keep the peace for the first few months.

The first step toward ensuring a lifelong doggy friendship is for you to have a plan and a calm approach.

Introducing a New Dog to Your Home

After you introduce your new dog to your resident pet, you can introduce your new dog to your home.

Instead of bringing both dogs inside right away, you should have a helper take your resident dog for a stroll. Then give your new dog a chance to check out his new living space alone.

Keep an eye on your new dog as he investigates. When he's checked everything out, bring him to an open area of your home, away from the front door. Cramped spaces can lead to jockeying for position and accidental scuffles.

Once again, pick up any dog toys, treats, beds, prized possessions, or food that could create tension between the dogs. Then you can have your helper bring your resident dog inside.

Daily Life After Introducing a New Dog

Try to keep your household calm as the dogs *acclimate* to one another. Don't throw a "welcome to the family party" on the first day home.

Maintain your resident dog's typical daily schedule, and try to set aside one-on-one time with each dog, like going for solo walks.

Always be aware of signs of brewing tension between your dogs, like low growling, hard stares, and body blocking. If you notice any of these signs, you should intervene immediately.

Separate the dogs and direct their attention to something else. Give them a break from one another for at least 20-30 minutes before allowing them to engage again.

Here are some more important tips for keeping the peace after introducing dogs:

Monitor Mealtimes

Always separate your new dog and resident dog during mealtimes. You can either place their bowls in different rooms or use a dog gate to separate them.

If one dog finishes first, don't allow him to hover as the other dog eats. To prevent tension, you should keep them apart until both dogs have licked their bowls clean. Always pick up the bowls after feeding time.

Give Each Dog Their Own Bed

Some dogs are possessive of their resting spaces, so watch to make sure both dogs are acting appropriately around their beds. Even if a bed is big enough for both dogs to share, it's a good idea to get a different bed for your new dog.

Introduce Toys Slowly

Introduce toys back into the house slowly after the first introduction rather than bringing out the entire toy chest right away. Always supervise your dogs when they are trying out a new toy.

Look for playful interactions without signs of guarding, like standing over the toy or snapping at the other dog if he gets too close to it.

Separate the Dogs When You're Away

Alone time is an important aspect of the getting-to-know-you process. Whether you're leaving the house for the day or just taking a shower, always separate your dogs when you can't watch them. This obviously keeps them safe, but it also provides them with downtime apart from one another.

In the long-term, it is always wise to supervise them together and separate them when no one is home. This will keep everyone safe and interactions more positive.

Create Playtime Breaks

Many dogs don't understand when to say "when," particularly if they're having a good time together.

But that nonstop play can tip over into inappropriate behavior when dogs get overtired. Giving your dogs a break from one another allows them to relax and regroup.

Create spaces for each dog so that they can be separated—either in different rooms or behind a dog gate. Dogs need a break from their housemates, just like all of us do.

Have Patience

It can take months before your new dog and resident dog mellow into true comfort with one another, so have patience with them as they get used to siblinghood.

Always acknowledge positive interactions between your dogs and enjoy watching the lifelong friendship bloom.

Featured Image: [iStock.com/YuriyS](https://www.istock.com/photo/1111111111)

Steps for Introducing a New Dog to Your Current Dog

If you know how to introduce dogs properly, you'll set them both up to make a good first impression. Follow these steps for introducing dogs to each other.

1. Find a Neutral Spot to Make Introductions

If possible, find a neutral, outdoor, fully fenced space—an area that neither dog has “claimed” through frequent visits or walks. The space should be quiet with no other dogs or people, like the backyard of a friend who doesn't have pets or a park during off hours when no one is there.

Unfortunately, this isn't always possible, so the next best option is an outdoor space with enough room for the dogs to roam on-leash as they get to know one another. If outdoor space isn't available, opt for a large garage or basement.

Put away anything that might cause a scuffle—like dog toys, bones, beds, and even empty food bowls. Consider everything, including objects that don't seem to interest your dog. An old bone might suddenly become valuable again if your new dog takes an interest in it.

2. Watch for Positive Dog Body Language

Since the dog introduction process begins with both dogs on-leash, you'll need a partner that understands [canine body language](#) to help out.

Watch the dogs for happy, waggy body language and interest in one another without hard stares, tense postures, freezing in place, or a lowered or tucked tail.

Look for signs that one dog is trying to get away, which are often missed or misinterpreted. If your dog runs over to you, don't send them back "into the fire" because this is usually an indication that your dog needs a break from the interaction.

If you're not comfortable with how the dogs are interacting during this first step, or you're unsure of what your dogs' behaviors mean, enlist the help of a trainer during the introduction process.

3. Walk the Dogs Together

After introducing a new dog, the next step is parallel walking with both dogs. They should be far enough apart that they're aware of each other, but not so close that they fixate on trying to reach one another.

Walk both dogs in the same direction with a comfortable *buffer* of distance between them (this will vary by dog). Then, turn back and trade places with the other dog-human team so that each dog has a chance to scent where the other dog walked.

Allow the dogs to investigate potty spots, since urine-sniffing is one of the ways dogs pick up information about other dogs. Both handlers should remain calm and keep their grip on the leashes as loose as possible.

If both dogs are offering relaxed, social behaviors towards one another, gradually decrease the distance between them while continuing the parallel walking. Don't allow a direct face-to-face approach as the dogs get closer, since head-on is a stressful and unnatural way for dogs to meet.

4. Allow the Dogs to Interact Off-Leash

If you feel comfortable with how the dogs are interacting, return to an enclosed area, drop the leashes, and allow them to interact. Give the dogs a few minutes to sniff one another while praising their calm interactions, and then encourage the dogs to continue moving with you for a final, brief walk together.

At this point, the dogs might continue sniffing to learn more about each other, or they might begin playing. Look for the universal dog invitation to connect: a play bow where dogs put their elbows on the ground and rear end in the air.

As the dogs play, watch for the signs of a respectful interaction: a mutual give-and-take with pauses in the action.