

Puppies 1st Week

Before Puppy comes home it is important to be prepared. Puppy training basics during the first week Puppy is home is critical. It is obvious that you need certain physical items such as a dog bed, food and water bowls, puppy chow, collar, leash, toys, etc. Equally as important, all family members must decide and agree on routine, responsibility, and rules.

The first few days are extremely important. Enthusiasm and emotions are up. Everyone wants to feed, play and hold Puppy. Pre-established rules are broken. At bedtime, Puppy whines and cries because he/she is alone. Everyone agreed that Puppy would sleep in his/her own bed, but someone melts and insists that Puppy will sleep in a bed. Puppy wins and gets to sleep in bed. The next morning we find Puppy has eliminated all over the bed. So the following night Puppy is banned to his/her bed and screams all night. No one sleeps the second night either.

Grouchiness sets in and enthusiasm is down. No one wants to get up at the pre-agreed early morning feeding time. How are we going to sleep with the constant whining?

Puppy has just been taken away from Momma and the littermates. Puppy is afraid, vulnerable and impressionable. What Puppy needs now is security and a routine. Set up a small room to be Puppy's very own special haven for the next couple of months. Paper the entire floor and put in a food/water bowl and bed in one corner. Scatter chew toys everywhere.

Play with Puppy quietly and gently. Don't flood him/her with attention and activity for hours on end. If Puppy looks like he/she wants to sleep, leave him/her alone. Puppy needs lots of sleep.

Decide who is responsible for feeding and cleaning up after Puppy. Don't deviate from the schedule. Routine is especially important for Puppy. Don't spend all your time with him/her. If Puppy is going to be alone during the day or night, he/she needs to start getting used to it now. If Puppy wakes up from a nap and whines, resist the urge to run in and comfort him/her.

Since Puppy is so impressionable, it is important to begin explaining the rules right away. Don't give him/her special license to get away with anything just because Puppy is a puppy. If you allow him/her to have their way about certain things now, Puppy will only be confused later when you decide to change the rules. Puppy will learn very quickly with proper instruction. *Never* hit your puppy or give overly harsh reprimands. Puppy doesn't mean to misbehave – he/she is just doing whatever comes

naturally. You will just teach Puppy to mistrust you. Instead, show Puppy what kind of behavior you want. Teach him/her to play with designated toys. Make them fun and exciting. Let Puppy know how happy you are and how good he/she is when he/she chews them. Then, when you see Puppy chewing your furniture, firmly say, "Off!" and immediately show Puppy one of the proper toys. Encourage Puppy to play with and chew on it. Praise Puppy profusely when he/she does so. If you don't catch Puppy in the act, anything you do will confuse him/her. The only way you can instruct Puppy is to be there. If you can't be there, don't allow Puppy to have access to places where he/she can get into trouble.

Schedule an appointment with your veterinarian *immediately*. Discuss Puppy's vaccination schedule and when he/she will be allowed outside. Puppy is susceptible to many canine diseases until fully vaccinated, so don't take Puppy outside until your veterinarian says it is OK.

Puppy's emotional and mental health is just as important as his/her physical health.