



Dog Adopter Tips: Puppy Care

Congratulations on adopting your new puppy! Puppies bring an endless sense of fun and sweetness, but because they are babies, there are some extra considerations when raising one. Here are some tips for keeping your puppy safe and happy while helping them grow to be your lifelong companion!

The Great Outdoors:

Puppies' immune systems are weaker than adult dogs', so infections are more dangerous for them. Parasites and germs can be in the soil, on the ground, in other dog's fecal matter, and in urine. Be very careful where you take your puppy until they have received all of their booster vaccines and de-worming treatments, following your veterinarian's recommendations. (And remember to keep up to date on monthly flea preventative and annual vaccines and exam!)

Playtime:

Puppies don't know a whole lot about the world yet, and much of their experience playing so far has been with their littermates. Puppies wrestle with each other to learn how to use their bodies, and bite/tackle each other during this rough play. While this is normal play between dogs, puppies need to learn not to bite or scratch people. Their teeth may be tiny now, but soon they'll break skin if they're encouraged to play rough with you.

When your puppy nips at you or jumps on you in play, immediately stand up and pull away and give them a toy instead, praising them once they begin to chew or toss it. They'll learn to only chew on the toy and not your hands or clothing, satisfying their natural mouthing energy in a constructive way. Be careful with games of tug, and try to always win the toy in the end by offering them a treat or another toy as a reward when they let go.

If, after a few months with you, your puppy still isn't learning that humans can't be nipped, it may be time to reach out to a professional trainer. Contact PAWS for help and trainer recommendations.

Socialization

Puppies are naturally social and it's very important for them not to be isolated from people, or they may grow up to be defensive or aggressive around strangers. Of course your family and friends provide a great way to start socializing your new puppy, but make an extra effort to introduce them to strangers who may look or act different from you.