

# The First 15 Months

Use this handy timeline to keep track of important dates and see what kinds of developments you should be looking for during your dog's first 15 months.

1

MONTH

- ☐ Happy birthday, puppy!
- ☐ Weaning onto puppy food should begin
- ☐ Begin a puppy deworming schedule in consultation with your vet

2

MONTHS

- ☐ Take them to your vet for a checkup and first vaccines
- ☐ Begin socializing them with other humans and pets that are known to be vaccinated and up to date
- ☐ Get them used to wearing a collar and walking with a leash

3

MONTHS

- ☐ Take them to your vet for a checkup and second booster vaccines
- ☐ Talk to your vet about microchipping and plans to spay or neuter ~~them~~
- ☐ Get them used to being groomed and having paws, ears and mouth looked at and handled

4

MONTHS

- ☐ Take them to your vet for a checkup and third booster vaccines
- ☐ Continue socializing them
- ☐ Talk to your veterinarian about an ongoing monthly flea, tick and worm prevention plan personalized for your local area's risks and your pet's intended lifestyle
- ☐ They should be completely housebroken

5

MONTHS

- ☐ Female puppies may go into heat for the first time — keep them away from male dogs
- ☐ Male dogs may start to roam if they haven't been neutered

7

MONTHS

- ☐ Your puppy will have lost all their baby teeth by now and have a full set of adult teeth

9

MONTHS

- ☐ Small breed puppies will appear fully grown, but they still benefit from being fed a special puppy food

12

MONTHS

- ☐ Happy first birthday!
- ☐ Your puppy is now an adult
- ☐ Ask your vet about transitioning to adult food

15

MONTHS

- ☐ Visit your vet for your first annual adult dog checkup and vaccinations



# Congratulations on Your New Puppy

**Few things in life feel as good as having a puppy in the house, and you're going to have a great time playing and getting to know each other.**

During this first year, your puppy will be growing quickly and learning new things every day. The way you care for him is important in giving him the best start possible. Inside this guide, you'll find some tips and suggestions to help him along with his development, as he becomes a part of your family you can't believe you ever lived without.

## New Puppy Shopping List

Now that you've got a puppy, you're going to need this stuff, too.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collar                | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming brush    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leash                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ID tag                | <input type="checkbox"/> Two or three toys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food and water dishes | <input type="checkbox"/> Crate             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Puppy bed             |  |

And, of course, nutritious food. Your vet can recommend the right food for your puppy.







Check out  
**HillsPet.ca/**  
**HealthyAdvantage**  
for lots more great  
information, too.

# Bringing Puppy Home

When you first bring your puppy home, it's important to give him time to adjust to his new surroundings.

## During those first few days:

-  Try to keep the household fairly quiet and ensure that all family members are interacting with the puppy in a gentle and calm way
-  Show your puppy where he should be eliminating outside, and give him a chance to go to the bathroom every couple of hours
-  Put lots of soft bedding and a few toys in your puppy's crate, and introduce him to it. Puppies need to feel secure, and a crate will feel like a safe den-like place for him
-  Take lots of time to interact and play with your puppy. This will help create a bond that will last a lifetime

Your puppy should be supervised at all times when he's not in his crate, and needs to stay sheltered in your home and yard until he's about 13 weeks old. But after that, you can start introducing him to other people and dogs.



## Tips for Puppy-Proofing Your Home

- 🐾 Use covered trash cans in your house and garage
- 🐾 Store household chemicals and poisons in a locked cabinet
- 🐾 Keep electrical cords and wires out of sight or secured to walls
- 🐾 Keep kitchen countertops clean and clear of food items to reduce temptation
- 🐾 Keep toilet lids down so your puppy can't fall in or drink from the bowl
- 🐾 Keep dangling blind and curtain cords out of reach



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information, too.

# Visiting Your Veterinarian



Make sure your pet gets a regular veterinary checkup **every 6 months** or as recommended by your veterinarian.



## **Just like you, your puppy needs immunizations and regular visits to the doctor to maintain optimal health.**

Together, you and your veterinarian can provide your puppy with the best care for a long, healthy life. Your veterinarian is the best source of information for your puppy's health, so it's important to follow his or her recommendations for the well-being of your pet.

### **What to Expect**

Some of the common diagnostic tests your veterinarian may want to perform include fecal examinations to check for internal parasites and blood tests to check for diseases.

During the physical exam, your veterinarian will feel your puppy's abdomen, listen to the chest, check the condition of the coat, look in the ears for infection and ear mites, and inspect the mouth for tartar buildup or gum disease.

### **Your Puppy's Vaccinations**

Vaccinations play a critical role in your puppy's health during the first four months of his life by providing protection against infectious diseases. Your veterinarian will start your puppy on a vaccination schedule and advise you when boosters are necessary.

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# Feeding Your Puppy

**The first few months are vital for your puppy's lifelong health.**

Puppies of different sizes and breeds have unique nutritional needs, and choosing a food that will provide your pet with a complete source of nutrition is of great importance. Ask your veterinarian for a recommendation on what food will be the best for your puppy.

## Your Puppy's Essential Health Needs

To maximize your pet's potential for a happy life, he needs a food that contains:

- 🐾 Antioxidants to promote a healthy immune system
- 🐾 Natural DHA to promote brain and vision development
- 🐾 Fatty acids to support healthy function of the nervous and immune systems, and promote healthy skin and a shiny coat
- 🐾 Easily digestible carbohydrates to supply abundant energy for lively puppies
- 🐾 Essential vitamins and minerals to provide a complete balance for growth
- 🐾 A great taste, so he'll want to eat it

Hill's® Healthy Advantage® puppy food is uniquely formulated to meet all of these important needs and is recommended by your veterinary healthcare team.



## Is your puppy a large breed dog?

Large breed dogs have different nutritional needs than other breeds. Compared to regular-sized puppies, large breed puppies need to have restricted levels of calcium and fat in order to moderate their rate of growth. They'll still reach their full-grown size, just over a longer period of time, which will result in better joint conformation for these breeds.

### Don't feed your puppy table scraps.

It can result in excesses or deficiencies of nutrients in your puppy's diet, and may lead to health problems over time.

### Ask your vet

how to read pet food labels so you can make sure you're well informed.



Check out [HillsPet.ca/HealthyAdvantage](https://HillsPet.ca/HealthyAdvantage) for lots more great information, too.



# Signs of Good Health



Spend some time each day **observing your puppy** so you can become familiar with your puppy's specific traits and spot any changes you think you may need to ask your vet about.

# What's Normal

## EARS:

Should be clean and free of discharge, odour and redness.

## WEIGHT:

Active, playful puppies are rarely overweight. Ask your veterinarian for nutritional advice on maintaining your dog's healthy weight.

## NOSE:

Should be clean, without discharge or sores.

## COAT:

Should be shiny and clean.

## MOUTH:

Should smell fresh. Gums should be pink. Teeth should be free of tartar or plaque. Mouth and lips should be free of sores or growths.

## EYES:

Should be bright and clear.

## BLADDER/ BOWEL:

Report changes in the frequency or consistency of your puppy's urine or stool to your veterinarian immediately.



## What's Not Normal

■ **DIARRHEA:** This common ailment can be caused by many factors, including bacteria, viruses, internal parasites, toxic substances, too much food or psychological upsets. Call your veterinarian if stools are bloody, if there is a large volume of watery stools, if your pet is thin or potbellied, or if the diarrhea continues for more than 24 hours.

■ **CONSTIPATION:** Like diarrhea, constipation can be caused by many factors, including ingesting substances such as hair, bones or foreign materials. It may also be a result of disease or insufficient water intake. Your veterinarian may recommend blood tests, X-rays or perform other tests to find the cause.

■ **VOMITING:** It is not uncommon for a pet to vomit occasionally, but frequent or persistent vomiting is not normal. Call your veterinarian if vomiting occurs more than five times in a few hours, if large volumes are vomited, if the vomit contains blood or if the vomiting is accompanied by diarrhea or abdominal pain.

■ **ABNORMAL URINATION:** Straining to urinate or bloody urine may indicate a painful infection of the urinary tract. Contact your veterinarian immediately.

■ **EXCESSIVE SLEEPING AND LACK OF ACTIVITY:** If your puppy is a lot less playful or active than usual, he may be going through a growth spurt. However, if he is sleeping excessively as well as showing other signs of illness, contact your veterinarian.



A close-up photograph of two small dogs. The dog on the left is a Yorkshire Terrier with long, scruffy brown and black fur, its mouth open in a happy expression showing its pink tongue. The dog on the right is a Maltese with long, white, fluffy fur, looking towards the brown dog. The background is a solid, light teal color.

# Getting Social

Socializing is easy and can be fun for both you and your puppy. Be careful, though, and try not to do too much too soon. It's best to build up your puppy's new experiences slowly at first.



## People

**People come in all different shapes and sizes, and your puppy should have the opportunity to encounter them all.**

Get him used to strangers, but be careful that they don't scare or overwhelm him with a strong show of affection.

It's important for your puppy to get acquainted with children, too. If you don't have any children in your house, take him on walks in the park where you're sure to encounter some kids.

## Other Dogs and Pets

**A crucial aspect of socialization is introducing your puppy to other dogs, especially older ones.**

They can set a good example for your puppy about how to behave, and won't hesitate to put your little one in his place if he gets overexcited. Be sure those other dogs are friendly, though — the last thing you want is for puppy to be frightened and have a traumatizing experience. You also need to wait until after your puppy has had his 12-week vaccinations to socialize him with other animals.

If you've got other pets in the house, introduce your new puppy to them gradually, and separate them at any sign of aggression. Acceptance can take time, so don't ever leave them unsupervised until you're certain they're getting along well.



# Rea Body





# Understanding Your Puppy's Language

## Is your puppy trying to tell you something?

By learning how to interpret your puppy's body language, you can interpret your puppy's intentions.

### Friendliness

**WAGGING** tail.  
**SMILING.**  
**HALF-CLOSED**  
eyes.

### Signs of submission

**MAKING** himself appear small and acting like a puppy.  
**CROUCHING** sideways near to the ground.  
**ROLLING** on his back.

### Signs of aggression

**MAKING** himself larger by standing tall with his ears and tail sticking upright.  
**PUSHING** out his chest and raising the hair on his neck and back.  
**GROWLING** and waving his tail slowly.  
**WIDE** open eyes.

*Ask your vet for guidance if your puppy appears excessively aggressive.*

### Wanting to play

**RAISING** a paw or bowing down.  
**BARKING** and trying to grab your attention.

# Collar, Leash & Identification

## Collar

Your puppy's first collar should be one with a buckle or snap closure, and never a chain or choke collar. It should fit with enough slack to get two fingers between the collar and his neck, but not loosely enough to slide over his head. Be sure to **check the size every few days**, since puppies can grow very quickly in a short period of time.

You can help your puppy get used to his collar by initially making him wear it for only short periods of time. If he seems uncomfortable or struggles and scratches at it, don't be concerned — it should only take a few days for your puppy to get used to it. When he begins to ignore his collar, you can leave it on him all the time.

**Ask your vet**  
how microchipping  
and tattooing can  
help keep your  
puppy safe.

## Leash

Once your puppy is used to his collar, you can attach a leash. To help him get used to the feel of his leash, let him drag it around during a few play periods, picking it up now and again and keeping still when you do. That will help your puppy learn he can't go wherever he wants because he's attached to you.

## Identification

In case your puppy gets lost, it's important to attach an identification tag with **your name and contact info** to your puppy's collar.



# Looking Good

**Grooming** is important for your pet's health, and a nice way for you to spend quality time with your puppy.

## HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

- 🐾 Establish a regular location and time for grooming
- 🐾 Brush in the direction of hair growth — brushing against the hair pattern may be uncomfortable for your puppy
- 🐾 Dogs with thick or long coats may need grooming every day, while smooth-coated breeds may require grooming less frequently
- 🐾 While you normally don't need to clean a dog's ears, use grooming time as a chance to check them for dirt, debris or redness
- 🐾 For bathing your dog, make sure to choose a shampoo that's suited to his hair type
- 🐾 Ask your vet to show you how to trim your dog's nails





**Puppies need to learn they should only go to the bathroom outside, and the sooner they master this skill, the better for everyone.**

# Housetraining

**Here are some best practices for successful housetraining.**

## **Keep Your Puppy within Eyesight**

Prevent your puppy from starting any bad habits in the home by keeping an eye on him. He should be supervised until he's gone four weeks without an accident.

## **Create a Schedule**

Teach your puppy where to go by frequently taking him to the desired area and letting him sniff around. He should go outside shortly after he eats, plays or wakes up from a nap — and should go outside immediately if he starts to sniff around looking for his “spot.”

## **Reward Good Behaviour**

When he does go where he's supposed to, give him a treat. Make sure to give him the treat immediately, too, so he associates it with doing a good job.

## **Remember, Accidents Happen**

Don't punish your puppy — it may damage your relationship and slow down the housetraining process. Puppies aren't perfect, but he'll get the hang of it.

# Obedience Training

**Practice these five basic training steps  
with your puppy every day.**

**sit 🐾 stay 🐾 heel 🐾 come 🐾 down**

Do each command for about five minutes and come back to it whenever you can. Practice the commands in lots of different places so that he gets used to responding to you in all sorts of situations. Reward him with love and affection, and when he does an exceptional job, give him a treat, too.



# Becoming an Adult

Once your puppy has his first birthday, he's not a puppy anymore — he's an adult.

He may still act like a mischievous puppy, but his needs will have changed in the following areas of his life.



## VACCINATIONS:

At approximately 14 months of age, your vet will recommend a booster vaccination. This is also a good time to update your dog's flea and worming treatments.

## EXERCISE:

Regular exercise is essential to keep your dog fit and healthy. Plus, it keeps his mind active and happy, too.

## SPAYING & NEUTERING:

If you haven't already, ask your veterinarian about the benefits of spaying or neutering your dog.

## NUTRITION:

Now that he's fully grown, your dog needs grown-up food. In fact, continuing to feed him puppy food may cause him to become overweight. Your vet can advise you on your dog's nutritional requirements and recommend the best Hill's® adult food for his unique needs.