



USPCA
ANIMALRESCUE



Caring for
Dogs & Puppies

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A Good Home

Best bed

Dogs and puppies spend a lot of time sleeping and need a warm, dry comfortable place to snooze in. The ideal spot for a bed is in a quiet corner well away from draughts.

Always look out for a bed which is easy to clean and which is big enough to allow the dog to go through its natural routine of turning around before sleeping.

For puppies, remember that they will chew their beds to bits given the chance, so choose a rigid plastic bed.

Bedding should be washed or replaced once a week.



Feeding Well

Regular feeding and a balanced diet are essential ingredients for a happy, healthy dog.

Dogs need lots of high quality protein, fat and carbohydrates. Protein comes from meat, fish, cheese and eggs. Carbohydrate is found in cereal foods such as biscuits. Fat is in protein foods and milk.

Drink up

Dogs and puppies need to have a bowl of fresh water at hand at all times. Make sure a dog gets regular water stops if you go on a long journey.

Prepared food

There is a wide range of products now available. Some of them are all-meat foods which require you to give extra biscuit or cereal. Others provide for all a dog's nutritional needs. If you choose a dried food, remember that it can make your dog very thirsty so make sure that plenty of fresh water is available. Whatever prepared food you choose, always read the manufacturer's instructions.

Dogs don't need a varied diet, so once you've found a balanced diet which suits them then stick to it. Changing diets can lead to upset stomachs.

Feed about the same time every day, but leave time for the dog to digest food before exercise. Most adult dogs are happy with one main meal a day. But small dogs, extra-large dogs and elderly dogs may prefer two meals a day.



Puppy feeding

Young puppies (between aged two and four months old) need their own special feeding regime. They need food which is easy to digest, such as minced meat, flaked fish, cereals such as cooked rice and porridge, and milk. But just like adult dogs, they still need fresh water always available.

At this age, a puppy needs about four meals a day.

A good suggested schedule is:

8am – *Cereal with milk*

12 noon – *Cereal with meat*

4pm – *Cereal with milk*

8pm – *Cereal with meat*

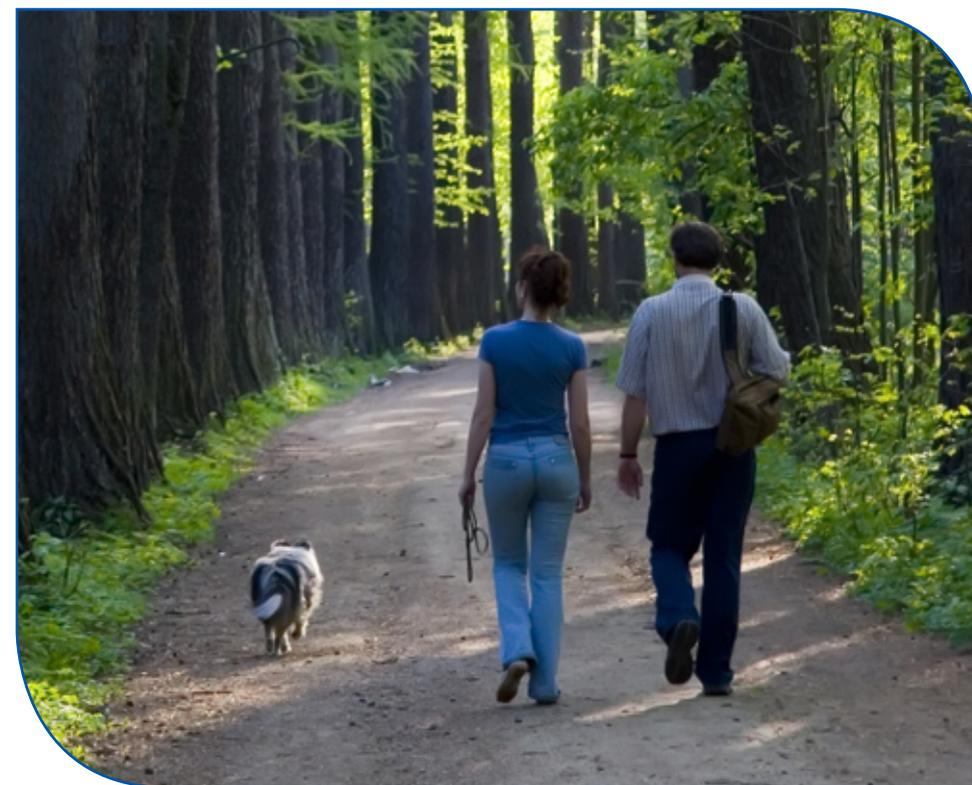
When a puppy is between the ages of four and ten months old, the number of meals can be gradually reduced and the amount of food given increased. Stop providing one of the milk and cereal meals at four months, then drop the other at six months.

Exercise Time

It is essential that dogs get enough exercise and you should take a dog for a walk at least once a day. How much exercise they need depends very much on the breed. For example, Labradors, collies or Alsatians will need loads of exercise, while the smallest breeds may be happy enough with an outdoor run combined with a daily walk.

Puppies shouldn't mix with other dogs until their vaccination jabs have had time to work – that's around 14 week of age. But they should get plenty of chances to play outdoors.

A dog must get used to walking on a lead. In towns, a lead will protect the dog from traffic and keep it from places where young children play – dog faeces can be a health hazard.



Health Matters

Grooming

All dogs benefit from a daily groom. It's not only a chance to remove dust and other debris but it's also a chance for an owner to do a check for lumps, bumps, parasites or skin problems. Check ears for ear mites and check pads and between toes for foreign bodies which may cause irritation.

If the dog is a long-haired breed then it needs to be groomed thoroughly every day, using a brush and comb. Otherwise it may end up with matted hair or skin irritation. Some breeds may need to have their coats clipped regularly – this should only be done by a skilled groomer.

It's fine to bath a dirty or smelly dog, but avoid doing this too often as it may make the coat rather dry. Bathing isn't recommended for puppies under the age of six months, unless essential.

Vaccinate

Vaccinations are vital for dogs to protect them against infectious diseases such as distemper, canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, canine parvovirus, influenza and kennel cough. Puppies will initially need to be injected twice but bear in mind that regular boosters are needed for adult dogs at intervals of one or two years.

Diseases And Complaints

Parasites

Sooner or later, all dogs will suffer from parasites. If you see any warning signs, consult your veterinary surgeon immediately – it's kinder to your dog to get rid of the problem as soon as possible.

Fleas

Fleas cause dogs a lot of irritation and can also be a host for tapeworms. Treatments for your dog can be bought from your local veterinary surgeon – simply follow the manufacturer's instructions. You must also make sure that any flea eggs have been destroyed. Do this by burning or washing any other likely breeding areas with specialised flea treatments.

Worms

Dogs will need to be wormed regularly to protect it against the many types of worms which can cause harm. Some worms can also be harmful to humans and may even cause blindness in children. For this reason, faeces should always be cleared up if children are nearby. Children should also wash their hands after playing with dogs. Consult your vet.

Lice

Lice can cause a dog severe irritation and even anaemia. Check for tell-tale signs of white eggs in your dog's fur. Consult your vet.



Mange mites

There are two types of mange: demodectic and sarcoptic.

For symptoms of demodectic mange, look out for inflamed skin and bald patches. If you don't pick up on the symptoms early enough, the dog may become permanently bald.

Sarcoptic mange causes skin irritation and scabs. It is also contagious in both dogs and humans so early treatment by your vet is also essential.

Ticks

Ticks are blood suckers which feed off a dog for several days before dropping off. If you see a tick, only pull it off after cutting its air supply for 30 minutes with a dab of grease. Otherwise the head may still remain embedded in the skin and cause an abscess. Consult your vet.

Ear mange

Ear mange can cause permanent ear damage to your dog. You may notice a dog shaking its head a lot, losing its balance or holding its head in a different way. You may also see a discharge. Consult your vet.

Ringworm

In spite of the name, ringworm is not a worm but a fungal infection – look out for round, bare encrusted patches. Take care because humans can get it too. Consult your vet.

A Kind End

Well cared for dogs can live to a good age – sometimes 18 years or more. But if a dog shows signs of a painful disability, has an incurable illness or severe injury, it should be gently put to sleep.

This is a very difficult decision to make and you should always talk to your veterinary surgeon, but it is the kindest thing that an owner can do for a suffering animal.

No untrained person should ever put a dog to sleep and it is an offence to kill an animal by improper means.





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