

So, you're getting a puppy!

Welcome to the delightful world of dog ownership! The next few months will bring many changes for you and your new puppy. You've adopted the equivalent of a "newborn" into your family so keep in mind that your new charge is totally dependent on you for all its needs. Fortunately, your puppy will progress through the newborn, toddler, rebellious teen stages much quicker than a human. Generally once your puppy is a five months old, house training will be behind you. Once it is a year old, life will be much easier for everyone as house manners and general training is usually complete.

For those of you with children, you have just doubled your work load. Not only will you have to teach your puppy how to be a good citizen but you will also have to teach your children how to behave around the dog. Patience and perseverance will be needed over the coming months. Be sure children understand their role in the puppy's upbringing. Remember, every phase of the puppy's development lasts only weeks vs the development of a human child whose phases can last months or years.

Here are some tips and suggestions for helping to make your first days at home easier for everyone:

Before your puppy arrives:

- **collect supplies:**
 - o a buckle collar
 - o 6 foot leash
 - o puppy shampoo
 - o puppy food (Eukanuba small breed puppy food – pink bag – available at pet stores). Start with a 10 lb bag and judge from there how much you want to buy at once. Check expiry dates on bags and keep the UPC codes.
 - o puppy treats (hard biscuits like milk bone or Eukanuba biscuits for teething puppies and soft treats like canine carry outs for manners/obedience training)
 - o chew toys – select two to three toys for your new puppy and keep rotating the toys so that puppy doesn't lose interest. You will soon find out what kind of toys are preferred. Start with a rawhide bone or rawhide stick to help keep your puppy from chewing your new shoes. Whenever the puppy goes into its crate, include a toy and biscuit to make crate time more enjoyable. Whenever your puppy chews something it isn't supposed to, trade the "off limits" object for a toy.
 - o small baggies for poop pickup
 - o metal comb and nail clippers
 - o metal food and water dish (plastic collects bacteria- dish should be able to hold at least two cups of food/water)
 - o collect an old towel and place it by the door that the puppy will go out of to go to the bathroom area. This will be used to wipe feet when it comes in from outside.
 - o Have paper towel and vinegar on hand for cleaning up puppy messes.
 - o If you already have a name, getting a metal tag with the puppy's name and your phone number engraved on it will help get your puppy returned to you if it should get lost.
- **Decide on the designated outdoor bathroom spot.** Think about what command you want to use to indicate that it's bathroom time. (puppies will be introduced to this by the breeder using the words "hurry up")
- **Think about where you are going to put food and water dishes.** Should be located in main living area close to the crate but out of a high traffic area. Water dish will be available until 8 pm and filled with fresh water daily. Food is only made available at meal times and is taken away in between meal times.
- **Pick a spot for the crate** preferably in a main living area where you spend the most time. You can move it from room to room with you but I found our dogs got used to it being in the same spot and knew where to look when they got tired.
- **Decide who will be training the puppy.** It is best to have only one person do the obedience training. Difference in tones and body language between people can be enough to confuse a puppy.
- **If you have children, think about how they can get involved in the puppy's care.** Feeding puppy is usually a good place to start. Sometimes, depending on age, they can also help taking puppy for walks, play time, cuddle time, combing coats and putting puppy to bed.
- **Scout out a veterinarian close to your home.** Your puppy will need shots soon and it is better to know where you are going before you need to get them done.

- **Think about how you want to handle the night time puppy needs.** Puppy will not have the bladder control to go eight hours without needing a bathroom break until it is almost three months old so you have two choices:
 - o Either keep the crated puppy where you can hear it and take it outside when it starts whining at night **OR**
 - o Create a “safe” spot for it at night (a bathroom or laundry room with a linoleum floor works well). Put the crate (left open), newspaper and a toy into the room and close the door so the puppy can’t get out. The puppy will sleep in the crate and when it needs to go to the bathroom, it will use the papers. Check the pen immediately upon getting up in the morning, even before you get dressed. When puppy goes two to three nights in a row and the papers are clean, try keeping it in the closed crate for the night. Eight hours is the maximum your puppy should be crated at night until it is 4-5 months old. **Be sure to take away water after 8 pm.** It will help your puppy to not store up too much liquid that needs to be released at night.
- **Check the plants in your home and yard.** Many house plants are toxic for puppies, some are fatal if ingested. A good site to use as reference is: http://www.dog-pictures.co.uk/dog-care-articles/common_plants_poisonous_to_dogs.shtml or <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/dogs/>. Remove or relocate plants that may be a problem.

The BIG Day! – puppy comes home.

- **BEFORE** you take your puppy in the house, take it to the outdoor bathroom spot and give it a chance to relief itself. Use the potty command you decided on. If it does not go to the bathroom, take it inside, put it in the crate and try again in 15 minutes.
- When you enter the house, give the puppy a chance to explore the room(s) it will be spending the most time in. The puppy does not need to know that there are more rooms to the house until it is older. Try to avoid overwhelming it with lots of people and attention for the first few days. This will help it get settled into its new surroundings.
- Show the puppy where the water dish is and if it is due to eat, put the food dish down. It may not eat right away. Taking food out of the dish and offering it out of your hand is a good way to get puppy eating and also works to establish your pack leadership.
- Put the crate in its spot. After the puppy has been allowed to explore and play for 30 minutes or so, take it outside to the bathroom again and then put it into its crate and let it have a rest. All the new things will make it tired and ready for a nap.
- **This is a good time to review the puppy information that will be included in your new puppy kit.**
- **DON’T** console a startled or scared puppy. If a loud noise or new object startles your new puppy, either take no notice of the reaction or encourage the puppy to approach and investigate the new object. Soothing words and cuddles only serve to reinforce the puppy’s notion that there was something to be afraid of. Try to expose the puppy to whatever startled it as often as possible and keep your tone happy and positive. It will eventually become accustomed to this situation or noise.

I will forward a short write-up on basic puppy training in a few days. In the meantime, you can start collecting your supplies and get ready for your new addition.

Sincerely,
 Catherine Betts
 Miniature Schnauzer Breeder