**General Dog Care**

A dog can be a wonderful addition to any home, but whether you're an experienced pet parent or a first-time adopter, it's important to keep your canine companion's health and happiness a top priority. Below are some useful tips for all dog parents.

### Feeding

* Puppies eight to sixteen weeks old need three meals a day.
* For dogs sixteen weeks or older, transition to two meals per day or as the puppy chooses

Puppies should be fed a high-quality, brand-name puppy food such as Hills, Purina, Royal Canin, Iams, and Eukanuba (large breed puppy foods for large breeds). After one year of age, puppies should be transitioned to an adult dog food diet. Please limit "people food," however, because it can result in vitamin and mineral imbalances, bone and teeth problems and may cause very picky eating habits and obesity. Clean, fresh water should be available at all times, and be sure to wash food and water dishes frequently.

### Exercise (Physical and Mental)

Dogs need exercise to burn calories, stimulate their minds, and stay healthy. Individual exercise needs vary based on breed or breed mix, sex, age and level of health. Exercise also tends to help dogs avoid boredom, which can lead to destructive behaviors. Supervised fun and games will satisfy many of your pet's instinctual urges to dig, herd, chew, retrieve and chase. In addition, consider trying puzzle and training games to mentally stimulate your dog.

### Grooming

Help keep your dog clean and reduce shedding with frequent brushing. Check for fleas and ticks daily during warm weather. Most dogs don't need to be bathed more than a few times a year. Before bathing, comb or cut out all mats from the coat. Carefully rinse all soap out of the coat, or the dirt will stick to soap residue.

### Handling

To carry a puppy or small dog, place one hand under the dog's chest, with either your forearm or other hand supporting the hind legs and rump. Never attempt to lift or grab your puppy or small dog by the forelegs, tail or back of the neck. If you do have to lift a large dog, lift from the underside, supporting his chest with one arm and his rear end with the other.

### Housing

Your pet needs a warm, quiet place to rest, away from all drafts and off the floor. A training crate or dog bed is ideal, with a clean blanket or pillow placed inside. Wash the dog's bedding often. If your dog will be spending a lot of time outdoors, be sure she has access to shade and plenty of cool water in hot weather, and a warm, dry, covered shelter when it's cold.

### Licensing and Identification

Follow your community’s licensing regulations. Be sure to attach the license to your dog’s collar. This, along with an ID tag and/or implanted microchip, can help secure your dog’s return should she become lost.

### Fleas and Ticks

Daily inspections of your dog for fleas and ticks during the warm seasons are important. Use a flea comb to find and remove fleas. There are several methods of flea and tick control. We recommend Nexguard, Frontline, or Revolution.

### Medicines and Poisons

Never give your dog medication that has not been prescribed by a veterinarian. If you suspect that your animal has ingested a poisonous substance, call your veterinarian or the Pet Poison Helpline at 844-492-9842.

### Spaying and Neutering

Female dogs should be spayed and male dogs neutered around six months of age.

### Vaccinations

Core vaccines are considered vital to all pets based on risk of exposure, severity of disease or transmissibility to humans.

Vaccines for canine parvovirus, distemper, canine hepatitis and rabies are considered core vaccines. Non-core vaccines are given depending on the dog’s exposure risk. These include vaccines against Bordetella bronchiseptica, Borrelia burgdorferi (Lyme), and Leptospira bacteria.

### Dog Supply Checklist

* Premium-quality dog food and treats
* Food dish
* Water bowl
* Toys, toys and more toys, including safe chew toys
* Brush & comb for grooming, including flea comb
* Collar with license and ID tag
* Leash
* Carrier (for smaller dogs)
* Training crate
* Dog bed or box with warm blanket or towel
* Dog toothbrush

### The Scoop on Poop

Keep your dog on a leash when you are outside, unless you are in a secured, fenced-in area. If your dog defecates on a neighbor's lawn, the sidewalk or any other public place, please clean it up.

Information referenced from the ASPCA