



Dog and puppy care



Congratulations on adopting from SPCA!

Dogs bring enormous joy into our lives and we wish you many years of happiness together.

This guide will help answer some common questions about settling a newly adopted dog into your home, and how best to care for them. If you have any other questions, please contact your local SPCA centre - we're happy to assist.

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Don't forget – we have lots of useful information on our website. Check out www.spcan.z/dogadvice

Preparing for your new dog

Dog shopping list:

- ✓ Food and water bowls or puzzle feeders
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Grooming supplies (e.g. brush, pet-safe shampoo)
- ✓ Collar or harness and lead (retractable leads are not recommended)
- ✓ Toys (e.g. a chew toy, a ball, food toys)
- ✓ Pet sunscreen (if your dog has a white or pink nose)
- ✓ A bed, kennel and/or crate
- ✓ Registration tag
- ✓ Poop bags
- ✓ Play pen or baby gate (for puppies)

The journey home

This is an exciting time for both canine and family! However, a car journey might be a completely new experience for them. All dogs should be restrained by a safety harness or travel in a crate in the rear of a vehicle.

Pet Insurance

When your dog is sick or injured, it's a stressful time. To make sure you are prepared, we suggest getting pet insurance to cover the costs of unexpected illness and emergencies.

We recommend Southern Cross Pet Insurance – they offer a great range of insurance plans and are a brand you can trust.



Essential information on arriving home

Bringing your dog home

- > Set up your dog's space with a bed, crate or blankets.
- > Provide water, toys, and a feeding area.
- > Keep puppies in one room for the first day or two (a tiled bathroom or laundry is ideal but ensure there is plenty of warm comfy bedding).
- > Ensure the room is quiet, secure, a comfortable warm temperature and well-ventilated.

Dog-proof your house

- > Remove hanging wires, cords or electrical cables that your dog could chew or get tangled in.
- > Keep all toilet lids closed to prevent your dog from drinking from the toilets or falling in.

Let your dog explore the house slowly

- > A small house can seem big to a new dog, especially a puppy.
- > Allow your dog to explore the house slowly, initially using a lead. Do this room by room to avoid overwhelming them.

Taking your dog outside

- > Take your dog to the garden on a lead for short regular visits.
- > Supervise your dog outside for the first week or two.
- > Watch them in the garden to identify hazards that may be present.
- > Dog-proof your fence; you need to make sure that your dog cannot get under or over the fence. Make sure that you also remove climbable objects near the fence, as these can provide an escape route!
- > Praise and reward your dog when they toilet outside.

Always supervise children with your dog

- > Visit www.dogsafety.govt.nz for information on safely interacting with dogs.

Taking your new dog for walks

- > Once your dog is fully vaccinated, you can go for walks together. Practice walking on the lead in the backyard first. Only let your dog off lead when they come when you call and in areas where this is permitted.
- > Read advice on introducing other animals to your dog on our website here: www.spca.nz/dogadvice



Your dog's microchip

All SPCA dogs are microchipped before you adopt them.

It is essential to keep the microchip details up-to-date if you move house or your contact details change.

Update your microchip details at:

www.animalregister.co.nz

Your dog must also be registered every year with your local council. Contact your local council or look on the council website for more details.

Introducing other pets and family

- > Keep all other pets away from your new dog initially.
- > Introduce to the family slowly so they don't get overwhelmed.
- > For detailed tips on introducing your dog to other dogs and cats visit www.spca.nz/dogadvice



FAQs

Where should my dog live?

Dogs need a secure environment with plenty of enrichment. Dogs are generally active, particularly when young, and need opportunities daily to run, jump, play, stretch, walk and interact with other dogs (if they like other dogs).

Can my dog live outside?

Your dog must be confined to your property by safe and secure dog-proof fencing. Dogs should not be tied up or chained (also referred to as tethered) unless it is completely necessary for husbandry reasons, and only ever for a short period of time.



Why must my dog stay in my property?

Your dog must be contained to meet your responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 1996.

Dogs who roam the neighbourhood unattended can get hurt or injured, lost, or annoy neighbours.

Can my dog sleep outside?

SPCA recommends allowing your dog to sleep inside, as dogs should be with their family.

Adult dogs can sleep outside if they are in a dry, warm, well-ventilated and cosy shelter with plenty of access to clean water. Puppies should not sleep outside, as they get cold easily. They are used to sleeping with their littermates and so may get lonely and distressed.

How should I train my dog?

We recommend you choose reward-based training as this is most effective. Avoid punishment-based training as this can lead to aggression and other problem behaviours. You can find more information on dog behaviour and training tips on page 13.

Settling in: advice and tips

Toilet training

Watch for signs your dog needs to toilet (sniffing, circling); if you see these signs, take them outside immediately.

Puppies have limited bladder control, so need a toilet break after eating, drinking, sleeping or playing. Take your puppy to the toilet last thing at night and first thing in the morning, and regularly throughout the day.

Be prepared for a few accidents. Never punish your dog; this will only cause your dog to be afraid of you and toilet secretly.

If you find your dog toileting inside, wait until they have finished and then take your dog and the 'accident' outside in a paper towel. Put the paper towel in the toileting area, let your dog sniff it and then praise your dog.

Always praise your dog when they toilet in the desired place.

If a sudden change in toileting habit occurs, take your dog to your vet immediately as this may indicate that they are ill.

Crate Training

Crates are collapsible pens; they are useful for sleeping or giving your dog 'time out', and can become a familiar and cosy environment that you can set up anywhere and have your dog feel at home.

Crate training at night can help with toilet training, as dogs prefer not to toilet where they sleep.

Crates are a safe way of transporting your dog and can also be helpful when taking your dog on holiday.

Read more about crate training on our website at www.sPCA.nz/dogadvice

Keep it clean:

Use an enzymatic cleaner to clean up after accidents. Avoid using ammonia-based cleaning solutions. These do not remove the odour and their strong chemical odours may encourage your pet to urinate in the area again.

Dogs in cars

On a warm day the temperature in a parked car can reach a dangerous level of heat in a matter of minutes, even with partially opened windows. Dogs left in hot cars can quickly suffer severe heat stress, hyperthermia, brain damage and can die. On warm days, leave your dog at home.

Exercise

Dogs need exercise every day, rain or shine. Walking on a lead is just as important as running off lead. It teaches your dog to stay by your side and pay attention to you. Practice walking at different paces, doing about turns, sudden stops and asking your dog to sit.

Off lead exercise:

- > Before letting your dog run off lead it is important that they come when called.
- > Use a long line at first if you are unsure if your dog will return.
- > Begin in a controlled area with minimal distractions before moving to an area with more distractions, such as a park.
- > Always reward your dog with praise and/or treats when they come back.
- > Call your dog to you and release them regularly so you have control and work on their recall.
- > See page 14 for more tips on training your dog.



Food and water

Feed your dog premium food

- > Dogs need a premium food for energy and health. Premium food is available at SPCA and most vet clinics. Dogs adopted from SPCA have been fed PurinaOne – we recommend that you continue with this.
- > Make sure they have access to fresh, clean water at all times, inside and outside.
- > Puppies need special high-energy food to help them grow, but once they reach a year old (possibly older for large breeds) they can move onto an adult diet.
- > Dogs over seven years old need a senior diet.
- > Dogs with health problems often need specific kinds of foods; discuss the best diet for your individual dog with your vet. Follow feeding instructions to ensure you are not over or under feeding your dog and be careful to not overdo it on the treats!

Foods to avoid

- > Cat food
- > Human food has salt, sugar, or additives that can be harmful, fattening or cause reactions.
- > Cooked bones can splinter. Only provide uncooked bones (e.g. lamb brisket, chicken carcass) and always supervise when eating.
- > There are many foods and other items which can be toxic to dogs, Read more about what foods to avoid on our website at www.spcan.z/dogadvice.
- > Do not give your dog milk as this will cause many dogs to get diarrhoea.

Introducing a new food

Introduce any new food gradually over one or two weeks to avoid causing your dog stomach upsets. Mix the new food in with the old, slowly changing the proportions.



Health advice

Desexing

At SPCA, we believe desexing is one of the most important ways to prevent unwanted litters being born. All dogs are desexed at our centres before being adopted.

Vaccinations

Dogs and puppies adopted from the SPCA will have had initial core vaccinations and you will be given a health card recording these. Check this for the due date of future vaccinations and arrange these with your vet.

Young puppies may not have completed their full course of all vaccinations when they are adopted (as they might be too young to have finished the full course), but we will alert you to this. Your puppy needs to be fully vaccinated before you take them off your property.

Fleas

Flea prevention and treatment are essential. Check their healthcare card to see when their next treatment is due.

How do I tell if my dog has fleas?

Your dog may be itching and scratching a lot or grooming excessively.

You may also see fleas or flea dirt in your dog's coat.

How do I get rid of fleas?

You can get a quality product that can treat fleas from SPCA or your vet.

Flea and worm treatment

Regular treatments will help keep your dog free of fleas and worms. Check your dog's health card for treatment dates.

Worms

In large numbers, worms may cause life-threatening problems, particularly in young puppies. In affected animals, common signs include:

- > A pot-bellied appearance
- > Abdominal discomfort
- > Lack of appetite and tiredness
- > Vomiting and diarrhoea
- > Poor growth

However, in both puppies and adult dogs with small numbers of worms, there may be no obvious signs of infection.

Some types of worms can also be spread to humans. You can get safe, effective worm treatment from SPCA or your vet – be sure to keep on top of this.

Teeth

Dogs can have a variety of problems with their mouth and teeth that may cause them pain, discomfort and/or difficulty eating.

Signs that there may be a problem include:

- > Smelly breath
- > Obvious tartar on the teeth or gum
- > A broken tooth
- > Reduced appetite
- > Difficulty eating

If you suspect there is a problem with your dog's mouth or teeth, please take the dog to your vet as soon as possible.





Ears

An ear problem may cause your dog to:

- > Shake their head
- > Carry their head at a different angle (usually angled down to the side of the affected ear)
- > Have a loss of balance
- > Your dog may scratch at the affected ear
- > There may be discharge, inflammation and a nasty smell from the ear
- > If you notice any of these clinical signs, please seek prompt veterinary treatment.

Grooming

Regular grooming is a good way to calmly interact with your dog and can also help you to detect health concerns (for example, you might notice a lump under the skin that should be checked). Even dogs with short coats need regular grooming, and most dogs need their nails clipped. It is good to start this from a young age so that your dog becomes used to grooming and nail clipping and is not afraid of it.

Regular vet visits

Take your dog for a check-up at least once a year. Contact your vet promptly if you are concerned about any health issues.



Remember: Never give a dog human medicine (e.g. Panadol), as our medications can be harmful or even fatal to dogs. If you are concerned about their health, head straight to the vets.

Behavioural advice

It is very important to properly socialise and train a dog. This will improve your life and theirs.

Teach your dog good behaviour

Dogs are generally keen to learn, and the key to success is good, clear communication. Your dog needs to understand how you would like him or her to behave. Do this by rewarding behaviours you are happy with using food, praise and pats.

Teach basic commands

It is useful for your dog to know how to “sit” or “lie down”; this will help to help your dog control their impulses, and help keep them under control, and avoid undesirable behaviour such as jumping up, begging at the table or running up boisterously to greet your visitors.

Do not reward undesirable behaviours.

Set guidelines about how you would like your dog to behave and be consistent; it is important that all the members of your family are also consistent in rewarding your dog’s desirable behaviours and not rewarding undesirable behaviours.



Training and Enrichment

Training tips

- > Exercise your dog before training sessions.
- > Set your dog up for success; make sure the environment is not too distracting, break down complex tasks into smaller, easier steps.
- > Train little and often; aim for two short training sessions of 5-10 minutes per day.
- > Be patient; training your dog will take time and effort but it can be a great deal of fun.
- > Always end on a positive note.
- > Be sure to reward your dog with things that they truly enjoy. Different dogs will happily work for different things; for example, dry kibble, small pieces of meat, playing with a ball or a chance to run off lead at the dog park.
- > Use lots of verbal and physical praise to reward your dog for good behaviour.

There are many different training options and sources of training advice available, including: SPCA, your vet, dog trainers and training clubs. Use of physical punishment or training aids which cause pain or fear to correct behaviour can damage your bond with your dog, cause development of problem behaviours and increase the risk of aggressive behaviour.



Play

Play is a vital part of your dog's life and provides them with much needed enrichment. Playtime will keep your dog mentally stimulated and happy.

The best way to encourage play is to provide your dog with toys and set aside some time to play with your dog. It's best to give them a variety and rotate them often so they don't get bored.

Remember when playing with your dog to always use toys, never your hands or feet, and do not rough play with your dog. In multi dog households, always supervise dogs with treats and toys to avoid any problems.

Enrichment

There are lots of ways to enrich your dog's life! As well as regular exercise and play, here's some other ideas:

- > Treat balls and puzzle feeders are great food enrichment. They are designed to encourage your dog to work for their food using their paws or snout to find the food. Just remove the amount of dry food you use in them from your dog's next meal or simply provide your dog's meals in them so they don't overeat!
- > Paddling pools are a great way for your dog to cool off in summer and for water play.
- > Frozen treats are easy to make and can be used in hiding games or simply as an alternative treat for your dog. Freeze liquid meat stock in an ice cream container or ice cube tray. Pop them out when frozen for your dog to enjoy!





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