



## **Bringing Home Your New Dog or Puppy**

Congratulations on adopting your new dog! You will have years of companionship and a great relationship to look forward to. This document will help you help your dog to make the transition to his/her new home.

Dogs like to have a routine. They may react when this routine is disrupted and may take time to settle in. When you adopt a dog, you are asking them to adjust to new surroundings, new people and a new routine. It is natural for them to be a little stressed or nervous, be patient with your new friend.

### **The Preliminaries: Before bringing your dog home**

1. Make an appointment with the vet to have your dog examined as soon as possible, perhaps before you bring him/her home.
2. Make sure you have either a sturdy kennel, or a leash to secure the dog in the car. They may be stressed and want to roam, making it unsafe for you and the dog. Please do not leave a dog in the back of a pickup truck; if they are not restrained properly, they could fall out or choke. They are also at risk of getting ear infections, and debris in their eyes and mouth from the wind. It is much safer to transport your dog inside the vehicle.
3. Obtain supplies that you will need: food and water dishes, leashes and collars, poo bags, dog beds and towels, shampoos and grooming supplies. Place a kennel or dog bed in a spot for your dog so they have their own space. This gives them their own area to go to if they become scared or tired.
4. If you already have other pets, ensure that they are up-to-date on their vaccinations. If you have another dog, and these dogs are meeting for the first time, pick a neutral area. Some dogs may feel defensive of their territory and have a negative reaction to a new dog coming into the house. Have them meet on leash outside, away from the house. Go for a walk together and then enter the house together. You can also arrange for your current pets to meet a new dog prior to making the final decision to adopt.
5. Puppy-proof your home: if you are adopting a young puppy, there are some precautions to take. Puppies are like toddlers; they can easily get into trouble. Cover or hide all electrical cords, don't leave anything

you don't want chewed on the floor. Although it may be cute when puppies chew on old shoes, they can't tell the difference between an old shoe and a new one and you may be heading back to the shoe store for a new pair. Keep the floor clear of small items that a puppy could choke on, or that may do damage if ingested. Some toys have small bits of plastic that when chewed can cause serious intestinal damage. Make sure that toy time is supervised. Watch out for a puppy running around under your feet! It is also a good idea to confine your puppy to a "safe" room or kennel when you are not home so they don't get into trouble.

### **The first day in your dog/puppy's new home**

When you bring home your new dog/puppy, make every experience as positive as you can.

A young puppy may develop an irrational fear if something startles them, especially if they are timid. Be gentle and encouraging, with lots of praise for good behaviours. Remember that negative attention is still attention and dogs may do destructive things to get extra attention. Let the dog sniff around, block off any areas that will be off limits.

It's best to set boundaries at this point, if not, they will be more difficult later on. For example, puppies like to jump up. When they are small, it's cute, but when they are full-grown it can cause problems. So stop these types of behaviours at the onset, and keep the rules consistently enforced.

### **Introducing your dog/puppy to your children**

Children must learn immediately that a puppy is to be played with, and not teased.

Adult dogs that are being introduced to children may be frightened of the rough play or high activity. Also, teach your children not to play tug of war. This teaches the puppy/dog that they can take things from hands in a rough way, and children could end up in a nip.

Never allow children to pull on ears, tails or fur. Some dogs/pups may be mellow and not bothered, but some dogs are very sensitive. Teach them to be kind, and respect that a dog plays with its mouth like we play with our hands.

Children should not use their hands as toys; they may accidentally get a scrape as a result. Most dog bites occur with a known dog once it has gotten over being excited.

### **Introducing your puppy/dog to the rest of the home**

Dogs are creatures of routine. They like to have a set schedule, when that is disrupted they may act out. Give them a few days to settle in and relax. If you are moving, try to keep your routine with your dog as consistent as possible, and watch for open doors where escape is possible. Let them sniff around and become accustomed to their new home and their new pack.

### **Introducing your puppy/dog to your other dog**

If you already have another dog in your home, it is important to have them meet on a neutral ground.

The first dog may feel like its territory is being invaded and may want to protect it. If they meet at a park, for example, then they can meet on good terms and have their hierarchy established before going home. Dogs tend to sort out their place in a dog pack within a few minutes. You can expect to see them lean their neck over another dog's neck, put their feet up on the other's shoulders and stand tall. When they know where they stand, they will often play. Mounting does not always mean a sexual event. When a dog is fixed, it is a dominating move, and should subside when discouraged.

Make sure that the dog knows that in the family, you are the leader of the pack. In a dog's world, feeding is very important. Depending on your dog's temperament, feed them separately at first, and then slowly move them closer together. When they are done, remove their food bowls. It is best to actually feed the dogs yourself, don't free feed them as that teaches them that the floor feeds them, not the leader.

### **Introducing your puppy/dog to your cat**

Keep the dog and cat in separate rooms with the door closed so they can smell each other but not see each other. Then let the cat roam around the house when the dog is confined elsewhere, and vice versa. When ready, leash your dog and have them in a sit/stay, let the cat approach on his/her own. The concern here is that the dog may go after the cat, or the cat will scratch the dog. Give praise and treats when the dog is calm. Do short

visits like this until they become accustomed to each other and tolerate each other without fear or aggression.

Monitor the two animals closely and do not leave them alone together until you are sure that they get along. Teaching your dog “leave it” is also helpful. Ensure that the cat has a retreat where they can escape from the dog. Also, keep the litter box in a space where the dog can't reach it. Many dogs find cat feces to be a tasty treat. The same goes for cat food, it often gives dogs diarrhea due to the high protein content.

### **Socializing your puppy/dog**

This is one of the most important things you can do for your dog.

Socialize your dog with humans and with other dogs, or it could develop behavioural issues. If your dog is timid, start out slowly and don't push it. Fearful dogs can also become quite dangerous when they feel threatened. If the dog is dominant and not socialized, it can also become a danger to other dogs and humans.

Utilizing dog services such as walkers, daycares and boarding areas can be very helpful. Dog parks, and on-leash walks where you can encounter others safely is also essential.

One of the best things you can do for yourself and your dog is to participate in an obedience class. Group classes are best; they form a pack, encourage socialization and give distraction. Make sure that the class does the training in an everyday surrounding. Doing training in a gymnasium will teach a dog just that, and when it goes outside it will be unprepared to perform in real life. By doing training in a real-life way, the dog is getting prepared to learn things it will encounter day-to-day and it will succeed.

The training class always tends to be more for the owner than for the dog: it teaches you how to be a good leader and helps you to bond even more with your new companion. If there is a family with kids, have the whole family be a part of the class. Consistency is the key; make sure that everyone is using the same words and commands so as not to confuse the dog.

Enjoy your new dog! If you have any ongoing questions, you can always contact us at WAG: 604.935.8364.