



Beaconsfield Veterinary Centre

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YOUR NEW PUPPY

The first night

The first couple of days away from its mother and littermates will be very overwhelming for your new puppy. Give it time to settle in and quietly make itself at home. Start with a small area and gradually allow it access to more rooms in the house. The puppy should be given a bed that is somewhere away from draughts. For the first few nights it can be a good idea to put a ticking clock and a hot water bottle in the bed with the pup. This can provide comfort in the absence of its mother. Get into a routine that you want the pup to be a part of right from day one. This includes sleeping, feeding and general attention. Do not fall into the trap of making exceptions 'just for the first night'. Your pup will probably cry a little bit on its first night, but unfortunately if you go to comfort it you will create a habit. It may seem cruel not to go to the pup, but most pups will settle down if you leave them. Be aware that it is normal for pups to race around madly for half an hour and then to sleep very soundly for hours. Make sure that they have time to rest undisturbed, as they need plenty of sleep during this growth phase.

How do I introduce my new pup to other pets in the household?

When introducing your pup to other dogs a lot depends on what kind of temperament your older dog has. Does it usually like other dogs? Even if your older dog is well socialised and accepting it is still important to introduce the new pup gradually. Supervise the first interactions carefully to observe for any aggression or nervousness. Try to make it a positive experience for both dogs. This can often be made easier by introducing them away from home, and in doing so any territorial issues are eliminated. Be aware that food can be a source of inter dog aggression even between the most placid of dogs, so don't leave them alone with bones and chews.

Introducing your new pup to the household cat can pose more of a problem. The pup will want to play with the cat and the cat will not like this! Usually the pup gets the message early on once the cat has retaliated with a scratch. Unfortunately, if the scratch is in the eye, it can

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cause big problems for the pup. So, you will need to monitor their interactions and make sure that the cat has an escape route that it can use to get away from an exuberant pup!

Socialisation and Training

The critical socialisation period for dogs is between 6 and 16 weeks of age. All of the experiences that your puppy has during this time will go to shape what kind of dog it becomes. After 16 weeks of age it becomes more difficult to correct any behavioural problems, fears and bad habits. So during this socialisation stage we have a window of opportunity for moulding our pup's behaviour, and it is worth putting in a lot of hard work with your pup at this age to save you from potential problems down the track.

One of the best things you can do for your dog is to bring it along to our puppy school. Puppy school is extremely important for all dogs, even those that already have a playmate at home. The pup will learn what's acceptable and what's not in the doggy world. You will also start some basic training. A 6 week old puppy can easily learn the basic commands, so there is no reason to put off training until the pup is 'old enough'.

At this age we can work on issues of dominance in the household. The pup needs to know where it stands in the pecking order, and will look to you for guidance on this. You and your family have become members of the "pack" in your puppy's eyes and it is important for everyone in the household, including children, to know how to give out the right signals.

Give your pup as many positive and different experiences as possible during this time. Trips in the car, playing with children, hearing strange noises e.g. lawnmower, hairdryer, bicycles. These experiences must always be positive so never force your puppy if they show fear of a situation. If you are concerned that your puppy is developing fears or bad habits give us a call. Do not leave it, as the older the pup gets the harder it will be to correct. Puppy school, consistent training and input at home are the best investments you can make in ensuring that you end up with a nice, well-mannered and social dog.

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At the vet clinic

Although the clinic is obviously available for vaccinations and for dealing with any health problems, it is important to be aware that you can also use the clinic as a resource for any questions regarding your pup's behaviour, bathing, parasite control etc. Having a new puppy is a wonderful experience but can often be stressful when faced with toilet training, puppy chewing and information overload of all the different products and foods, so please use us for support! Our vets and nurses will be happy to help.

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