

WELCOME HOME!

CARING FOR YOUR NEW DOG

Congratulations!

You have adopted a new dog into your family. Dogs are social animals that need to be part of a pack — that's you! With lots of care, training, socialization and love, your new dog will be a faithful and loving family companion. This care sheet provides basic care essentials, for more information see the BC SPCA website at www.sPCA.bc.ca and have a look at our suggested websites and resources.



SPAYING AND NEUTERING

The BC SPCA's goal is to ensure all dogs are spayed or neutered prior to adoption to reduce pet overpopulation. Likely your dog has already been spayed or neutered by the BC SPCA, one of the benefits of adopting an SPCA dog. If your dog is not spayed or neutered, your shelter will advise you on how to ensure the surgery is done. Keep in mind, spaying and neutering will also decrease the desire for dogs to roam, reduce aggression, and make them less susceptible to ovarian, uterine and testicular cancer.

IDENTIFICATION (ID)

If your dog gets lost he'll need some form of identification to help others find his way home. Make sure that your dog has two forms of ID. A visible tag that includes your dog's name and a phone number that you can be reached at all times and a permanent form of ID such as an ear tattoo or microchip. Most vet clinics will tattoo your dog for free when your dog is spayed or neutered.

It is also important to have your dog licensed - it's the law and the license number will help you ensure a speedy reunion with your dog if he gets lost. Check with your city/municipality for more information about licensing and where to purchase one.

COLLARS

Your dog will need a leash and collar. A collar is essential so you can fasten an ID tag, dog license and of course, your leash. Flat collars, Martingale collars and harnesses are best. Do not use choke chains or prong collars to prevent your dog from pulling on the lead. When used incorrectly, these types of collars can cause unnecessary pain and serious neck injuries. Consider using an over the shoulder collar or a head halter. Visit your local pet supply store to find the appropriate collar for your dog.



MEDICAL CARE — CHOOSING A VETERINARIAN

Select a veterinarian and visit with the vet when you first get your dog for a routine health check. The BC Veterinary Medical Association website allows you to search for a veterinarian in your area — www.bcvma.org. Once your dog has had an initial visit with a vet, you may only need to re-visit them once a year for a regular check-up and vaccinations. Consult with your vet clinic if your dog has any lumps, bumps, unusual skin problems such as red or raised skin, smelly ears, open wounds, becomes lethargic, refuses to eat, gains or loses excess weight or if you notice any other unusual physical conditions. You may also want to consult with your vet if your dog experiences a change in normal behaviour (e.g., refuses to go on walks, becomes terrified of visitors in your home, hides a lot, etc.)



Vaccinations

Your dog will have been vaccinated when at the shelter and will require booster vaccinations if a puppy and annual vaccinations if an adult dog.

HOUSING

Your dog will be most happy living and sleeping inside your home with the family. Set up an area with a comfy bed or blanket that your dog can call his own. The BC SPCA is strongly apposed to having your dog live outside but if this is your only option, an outdoor kennel should be weather- and draft- proof, situated in a dry spot, elevated, have insulated walls and flooring and plenty of dry bedding inside. Outdoor dogs should always have access to fresh water.

Dogs are extremely social animals and need lots of contact with humans and other dogs. If your dog sleeps outdoors, make sure that he is brought into the home daily to interact with his "pack."



FOOD AND WATER

Puppies that are weaned require good quality puppy food and adult dogs will thrive on a quality dry kibble. Both are available at your local pet supply store. Consult the feeding guidelines provided on the bag or can to determine how much your dog should eat in a day. It is common for most dogs to eat twice a day — in the morning and at dinner time. Puppies may require three meals a day.

Treats

There are LOTS of treats available for dogs at grocery stores and your local pet supply stores. Treats are great for training but should not replace dog food. Limit the amount of treats your dog receives each day and don't forget to take into consider the size of your dog too.

Non-Kibble Diets

There are different types of dog food available other than the standard kibble and can food, including different types of the BARF diets (bones and raw food) and recipes for home cooked meals. Consult your veterinarian to choose a diet that is best for your dog to ensure your dog is getting the right amount of nutrients he needs.

Table Scraps

It's very tempting to feed your dog table scraps but avoid doing so. This will not only promote begging at the table, but human food can be unhealthy to dogs and feeding your dog extra table scraps will likely lead to obesity. Human food is usually too salty or too sweet for dogs, factors that can affect good health.

Water

Your dog should always have access to fresh water. Change the water and wash out his bowl daily.

SOCIALIZATION & EXERCISE



Dogs are extremely social creatures. Make sure that they spend lots of time bonding with the family and have opportunities to interact with other dogs. Take your dog to visit friends, children and people of all shapes and sizes. This will help your dog feel comfortable with

different people other than their pack and decrease anxiety in new situations. Off-leash parks are great places to socialize your dog with other dogs — consult your city/municipality website for a listing of off-leash parks in your area.

Your dog requires lots of daily exercise. The amount depends on your dog's age and breed. Most dogs need one to two hours of outdoor exercise everyday. Some breeds (e.g., border collies, labs, and Jack Russell terriers) require more exercise than others (e.g., bulldogs, great danes, and mastiffs). If you are unsure of how much exercise your dog needs, consult your veterinarian.

TRAINING

Basic obedience training is essential for all dogs. Your dog should know the basic commands: sit, stay, come, relax, and

off. We strongly suggest enrolling in an obedience class with your dog.

Practice commands with your dog at home.

Keep training times short. Daily 5 to 10 minute sessions are much more effective than 30 minute sessions where you



and your dog may start to get impatient, frustrated or bored.

Clicker training is highly recommended by the BC SPCA. It's straight forward, inexpensive and very effective. It works by associating a click with a food reward for a desired behaviour. To start you must first teach your dog that the click is always followed by a treat. Practice just clicking and treating a few times for the first few days so that your dog associates the click with a treat. Once your dog knows that the click means a reward is coming, you can use it to "shape or capture" wanted behaviour or lure him into a desired position. Visit www.clickertraining.com for more information.

GROOMING/NAIL TRIMMING

All dogs, whether short or long hair, require grooming. Longer haired dogs need to be brushed daily to keep mat free. Visit



your local pet supply store for grooming tools appropriate for your dog's coat. Regular grooming will also help you detect external parasites (e.g., fleas) or any lumps, bumps or skin conditions your dog may have.

When standing, your dog's nails should not be touching the ground. On average, nails should be trimmed once every month by a vet, groomer or yourself at home. Consult with your vet or local groomer for tips on how trim nails. Great care must be taken that you don't trim too much. You can cut the blood vessel in the middle of the nail called the "quick." If you trim your own dog's nails, always have styptic powder nearby just in case you cut the quick. The styptic powder will stop the bleeding.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This sheet is meant to provide minimum care guidelines for your dog. Please visit www.sPCA.bc.ca for more information and recommended books and web links. The BC SPCA provides a series of DogSense Behaviour Sheets including *Preventing & Reducing Anxiety When Left Alone* (separation anxiety) and *Preventing & Reducing Behaviour Problems*. Additionally, your local library, bookstore or pet supply store to find books on dog care and dog obedience.