SPCA

Dog and puppy care

Congratulations on adopting from SPCA!

Each of the dogs in our care comes with a story. They may have been a victim of cruelty or unwanted and abandoned, while some may never have experienced life in a loving, family home, until now. Your dog may not be perfect, but they will be perfect for you.

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 new dog into your home, and how best to care for them. If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact your local SPCA Centre - we're happy to assist.

The journey home

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

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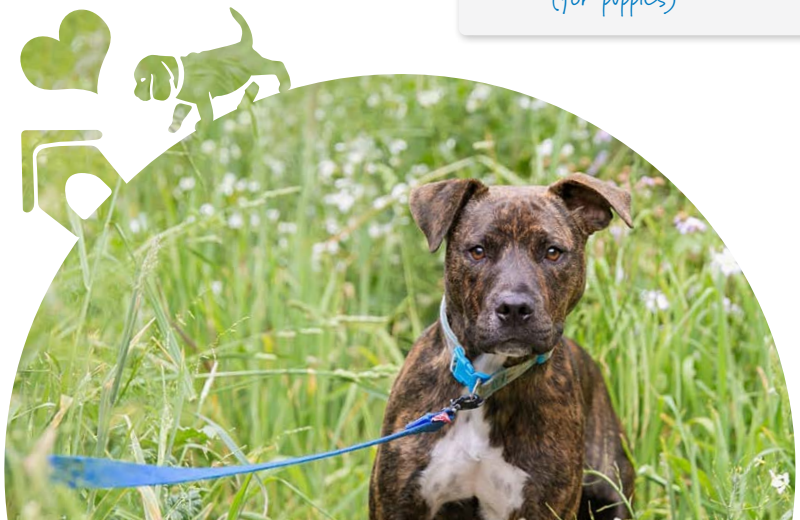

Preparing for your new dog

Dog shopping list:

- ✓ Food and water bowls or puzzle feeders
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Grooming supplies (e.g. brush, pet-safe shampoo, nail clippers or dremel)
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Council registration tag
- ✓ Poop bags
- ✓ Play pen or baby gate (for puppies)

Pet Insurance

As a responsible and loving dog owner, we know how important it is to you that your little hero stays happy and healthy.

Pet insurance can help you pay for vet bills when your furry mate is unwell. Plus with SPCA Pet Insurance, you could get the first three months cover free of charge when you adopt through SPCA.

So get a quote today!
Call 0800 193 020
or visit www.spcapetinsurance.co.nz

SPCA Pet Insurance®

Don't forget, we have lots of useful information on our website. Check out: www.spca.nz/dogadvice

Most SPCA dogs are mixed breeds. To find out more see: www.spca.nz/mixedbreeddogs

Make a plan to keep your dog safe in a disaster. See here for tips: www.mpi.govt.nz/getpetsthru

Essential information on arriving home

Bringing your dog home

- Set up your dog's space with a bed or crate and blankets where your dog can rest undisturbed.
- Provide water, toys, and a feeding area.
- 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.
- You can find information about other hazards on www.spca.nz/hazards

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 to avoid overwhelming them.

Kids can learn how to care for dogs and puppies at: www.spca.nz/kids-dogcare

Taking your dog outside

- 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!
- 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.
- Praise and reward your dog when they toilet outside.

Always supervise children with your dog

- Visit www.spca.nz/dogsafety for information on safely interacting with dogs.
- For advice on introducing your new dog to children in the household visit: www.spca.nz/dog-safety

Socialisation

- A socialised puppy grows into a well-adjusted, friendly dog.
- It is important to give your puppy positive experiences with a variety of different sights, sounds, surfaces, and situations to help them grow up to be a confident adult dog.
- For more information about socialisation visit www.spca.nz/puppy-socialisation

Introducing other pets and family

- Introduce your dog to the family slowly so they don't get overwhelmed.
- Gradually introduce your dog to other healthy, calm, fully vaccinated dogs and cats. For detailed tips on introducing your dog to other dogs and cats visit www.spca.nz/dogadvice

Your dog's microchip

All SPCA dogs are microchipped and registered on the NZ Companion Animal Register (NZCAR) before you adopt them.

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.

It is essential (and free) to keep the microchip details on NZCAR up-to-date if you move house or your contact details change, in case your dog gets lost.

Update your microchip details at www.animalregister.co.nz

FAQs

Should I have a vet yet?

Yes. Check out local vet practices and get recommendations from other dog owners if you don't.

Why must my dog stay on my property?

Your dog must be under control at all times to meet your responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 1996.

Dogs should not be tied up or chained (also referred to as tethered) unless it is completely necessary and only ever for a short period of time.

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?

SPCA advocates for the use of reward-based training as this is most effective and best for your dog's welfare.

You can find more information on dog behaviour and training tips on pages 13 & 14.

Settling in: advice and tips

Toilet training

- Watch for signs your dog needs to toilet (sniffing, circling), and take them outside immediately.
- Puppies have limited bladder control, so take them out to toilet after eating, drinking, sleeping or playing.

- Ensure a toilet break last thing at night and first thing in the morning, and at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Stick to a routine to help your puppy learn. Supervise or contain them in a crate or area lined in puppy pads until fully trained to reduce the risk of accidents.
- Accidents happen. If you find your dog toileting inside, calmly interrupt them and take them quickly to the correct place. Always praise them when they toilet in the right place.
- Never punish your dog for accidents as this may cause fear and secret toileting.
- It can be very common for even the most house-trained dog to have accidents in their new home. To avoid this happening take them outside regularly throughout the first few days.
- If a toilet-trained dog suddenly starts having accidents, take them to your vet immediately, as this may indicate they are ill.

Safe Haven and Crate Training

All dogs need a quiet, comfortable place to rest - a safe haven. This could be a cosy bed in a quiet corner or a crate, which some dogs like because it feels enclosed and secure.

Choose a spot away from busy areas, direct sunlight, and draughts. Make the space inviting by adding soft bedding and safe chew toys. Feeding some treats and meals there can help build positive associations.

Whether it's a bed or crate, never send them there as punishment and avoid disturbing them once inside.

If using a crate, it should be big enough for your dog to stand, turn around, and stretch out comfortably. Covering part of the crate can help nervous dogs feel more secure.

Crates can be helpful for travel, and for toilet training older puppies and adult dogs. Read more about crate training on our website at www.spca.nz/crate-training

Keep it clean:
Use an enzymatic cleaner to clean up after accidents. Other cleaning products do not remove the odour and their strong chemical odours may encourage your dog 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, heat stroke, brain damage and can die. On warm days, leave your dog at home. For more information visit www.spca.nz/dogs-die-in-hot-cars

Exercise

Dogs need exercise every day, rain or shine. Once your puppy 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 reliably come when you call and in areas where this is permitted.

Off lead exercise:

- Only let your dog off lead in areas where this is permitted. 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 pages 13 & 14 for more tips on training your dog.

Food and water

Feed your dog a complete and balanced diet

- Dogs need a complete and balanced diet for energy and health. Complete and nutritionally balanced food is available at some of our SPCA Centres, and at your local vet and supermarkets. 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 with health problems may 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

- Even tiny amounts of grapes, sultanas or raisins can cause kidney failure in dogs.
- Human food has salt, sugar, or additives that can be harmful or fattening.
- Cooked bones can splinter. Only provide uncooked bones (e.g. lamb brisket, chicken carcass) and always supervise when eating.
- Do not give your dog milk as this will cause many dogs to get diarrhoea.
- 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.spca.nz/dogadvice.

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 and puppies are desexed before adoptions are completed, unless advised to delay by a veterinarian.

Vaccinations

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

If you adopt a young puppy, they may be too young to have completed their full course of vaccinations, but we will alert you to this.

Your puppy needs to be fully vaccinated before you can take them for walks in public places or introduce them to unknown or unvaccinated dogs.

For more information visit www.spca.nz/dog-vaccinations

Fleas, worms and ticks

If your dog is scratching a lot, they may have fleas. You may also see flea dirt (black specks) or fleas in your dog's coat.

- If one pet has fleas it is likely all your pets do, so you need to treat all pets in the home at the same time.
- Fleas can thrive in your home. To get rid of them, vacuum regularly and treat your carpets, pet beds and soft furnishings with a veterinary recommended product.

Most dogs get worms at some point in their life. If regular worming treatment isn't given, your dog may get ill. Worms can also pose a small risk to your family's health.

- Ensure you pick up your dog's waste and dispose of it safely to reduce risk.

Ticks can attach to any part of a dog's body and feed on their blood.

- Ticks can pass diseases on to your dog so it's best to remove them as soon as possible – speak to your vet about how to do this safely.

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

Teeth

Without regular brushing or dental chews to keep their teeth clean, dogs can develop painful dental problems that can be costly to treat.

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.

If your dog has a hind dew claw, this is a normal anatomical feature and not a health concern. For more information visit www.spca.nz/dew-claws

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 many dogs need their nails clipped. It is good to use treats and start from a young age so that your dog is 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 medications meant for humans can be harmful or even fatal to dogs. If you are concerned about their health, head straight to your vet.

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 your help to understand how you would like them to behave. Do this by rewarding behaviours you are happy with using treats, toys and pats.

Teach basic cues

It is useful for your dog to know some basic cues such as “sit”, “wait”, and to have a good recall. This will help you to communicate with your dog, keep your dog safe, and help to teach them how to greet people politely.

Do not reward unwanted behaviours

Dogs will repeat behaviours that get them attention - both good and bad! Instead of punishing unwanted behaviour, teach them what you would like them to do instead. For example, if your dog jumps up on people, teach them to sit and reward them with lots of praise and pats.

Training and Enrichment

Training tips

- Exercise your dog before training sessions as this can make it easier for them to focus.
- Set your dog up for success; make sure the environment is not too distracting, and 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 punishment or training devices, such a shock collars, 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.

SPCA recommends using CANZ accredited trainers: www.companionanimals.nz/canzaccreditation

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 of toys 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. In multi-dog households, always supervise dogs with treats and toys to avoid any problems.

If you would like to try your hand on making your own toys, we have lots of tips here: www.spca.nz/dog-toys

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 encourage your dog to use their paws or snout to find the food. Just remove the amount of food you use in puzzle feeders 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.
- Hide food or treats so your dog has to sniff them out. Alternatively, instead of providing meals in a bowl, try scattering their meal in the garden, on the floor or on a snuffle mat.

For more enrichment ideas see www.spca.nz/dogfoodenrichment

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