

Puppy Care Guide

Brought to you by Isej Maltese

Bringing a new puppy home:

You'll need to puppy-proof the area where the youngster will spend most of his time the first few months. This may mean taping loose electrical cords to baseboards; storing household chemicals on high shelves; removing plants, rugs, and breakables; setting up the crate; and installing gates. Once you think you've completely puppy-proofed, lie on the floor and look around once more to get a puppy's-eye view.

If you have children, hold one last meeting to lay down the rules: Don't overwhelm Pup the first day, and don't fight over him or create mob scenes showing him to the neighborhood. Now you're off to get your Puppy.

Arriving to your home:

When you pick up your pup, your puppy will have eaten around an hour prior to coming to you. We leave food always available to the puppy 24/7. He/She will eat little bits during the day, at different times. Make sure to always leave food accessible. If you wish to switch to a different brand, do so over a period of about a week by adding one part new brand to three parts of the old for several days; then switch to equal parts; and then one part old to three parts new.

From the start, consistency is important. On the way home, Puppy should ride in the back seat, in a crate or carrier.

Once home, folks who plop the excited newcomer on the floor and let the kids' chase him will be mopping up in no time-and regretting the lesson they taught their new pup. Instead, take him to his toileting area immediately.

From there, carry out your schedule for feeding, toileting, napping, and play/exercise. From Day One, your pup will need family time and brief periods of solitary confinement. Solitude may be new to Puppy, so he may vocalize concern. Don't give in and comfort him or you may create a monster. "Gee, if making noise brought them running once, maybe more whimpering is needed to get their attention again," reasons the pup. Give him attention for good behavior, such as chewing on a toy or resting quietly.

Doing things correctly from the start prevents confusion. Through puppy preparedness, you are one step closer to your Dream Dog.

House Training Your Puppy

House training your puppy is about consistency, patience, and positive reinforcement. The goal is to instill good habits and build a loving bond with your pet.

It typically takes 4-6 months for a puppy to be fully house trained, but some puppies may take up to a year. Size can be a predictor. For instance, smaller breeds have smaller bladders and higher metabolisms and

require more frequent trips outside. Your puppy's previous living conditions are another predictor. You may find that you need to help your puppy break old habits in order to establish more desirable ones.

And while you're training, don't worry if there are setbacks. As long as you continue a management program that includes taking puppy out at the first sign he needs to go and offering him rewards, he'll learn.

When to Begin House Training Puppy

Experts recommend that you begin house training your puppy when he is between 12 weeks and 16 weeks old. At that point, he has enough control of his bladder and bowel movements to learn to hold it.

Steps for Housetraining Your Puppy

Experts recommend confining the puppy to a defined space, whether that means in a crate, in a room, or on a leash. As your puppy learns that he needs to go outside to do his business, you can gradually give him more freedom to roam about the house.

When you start to house train, follow these steps:

- Keep the puppy on a regular feeding schedule and take away his food between meals. (This should be after 5-6 months, as when they are younger they should have access to eat anytime of the day).
- Take puppy out to eliminate first thing in the morning and then once every 30 minutes to an hour. Also, always take him outside after meals or when he wakes from a nap. Make sure he goes out last thing at night and before he's left alone.
- Take puppy to the same spot each time to do his business. His scent will prompt him to go.
- Stay with him outside, at least until he's house trained.
- When your puppy eliminates outside, praise him or give him a treat. A walk around the neighborhood is a nice reward.

Using a Crate to House Train Puppy

A crate can be a good idea for house training your puppy, at least in the short term. It will allow you to keep an eye on him for signs he needs to go and teach him to hold it until you open the crate and let him outside.

Here are a few guidelines for using a crate:

- Make sure it is large enough for the puppy to stand, turn around, and lie down, but not big enough for him to use a corner as a bathroom.
- If you are using the crate for more than two hours at a time, make sure puppy has fresh water, preferably in a dispenser you can attach to the crate.
- If you can't be home during the house training period, make sure somebody else gives him a break in the middle of the day for the first 8 months.
- Don't use a crate if puppy is eliminating in it. Eliminating in the crate could have several meanings: he may have brought bad habits from the shelter or pet store where he lived before; he may not be getting outside enough; the crate may be too big; or he may be too young to hold it in.

Signs That Your Puppy Needs to Eliminate

Whining, circling, sniffing, barking, or, if your puppy is unconfined, barking or scratching at the door, are all signs he needs to go. Take him out right away.

Do's and Don'ts in Potty Training Your Puppy

Keep the following do's and don'ts in mind while housetraining your puppy:

- Punishing your puppy for having an accident is a definite no-no. It teaches your puppy to fear you.
- If you catch your puppy in the act, clap loudly so he knows he's done something unacceptable. Then take him outside by calling him or taking him gently by the collar. When he's finished, praise him or give him a small treat.
- If you found the evidence but didn't see the act, don't react angrily by yelling or rubbing his nose in it. Puppies aren't intellectually capable of connecting your anger with their accident.
- Staying outside longer with puppy may help to curb accidents. He may need the extra time to explore.
- Clean up accidents with an enzymatic cleanser rather than an ammonia-based cleaner to minimize odors that might attract the puppy back to the same spot.

Watch For Early Signs of Illness

For the first few months, puppies are more susceptible to sudden bouts of illnesses that can be serious if not caught in the early stages. If you observe any of the following symptoms in your puppy, it's time to contact the vet.

1. Lack of appetite
2. Poor weight gain
3. Vomiting
4. Swollen or painful abdomen
5. Lethargy (tiredness)
6. Diarrhea
7. Difficulty breathing
8. Wheezing or coughing
9. Pale gums
10. Swollen, red eyes or eye discharge
11. Nasal discharge
12. Inability to pass urine or stool

Vaccination

Some canine diseases are very serious and can be fatal even with treatment. Highly effective vaccinations are available at your vet to help prevent some of these diseases. At 6-8 weeks of age puppies should receive their first vaccination; this is temporary and needs to be followed up with another one at 10 weeks old. Your puppy will then need annual boosters for life. **Ask your vet about the vaccine schedule your puppy will need to be protected. It is better to avoid, than regret.** Many of the contagious diseases your dog can catch are brought to your home through your shoes! Better to have the dogs protected just in case.

Dental Care

More than 80% of dogs over four years old will experience some form of gum disease which can lead to irreversible damage to the teeth and to other organs in the body. Prevention is possible with a well-balanced diet including raw bones (or specifically formulated dental bones) on a weekly basis, regular dental check-ups at least yearly and teeth brushing.

Heartworm

A dog affected by heartworm will have an infestation of long thin worms (up to 30cm in length!) lodged in the heart and feed on surrounding blood. Mosquitoes spread immature stages of heartworm when they bite dogs. Prevention is the best approach to this problem and relatively simple. Various products are available including monthly spot-ons and an annual injection. Puppies can start heartworm prevention from **12 weeks of age**.

Flea Control

All pets will be exposed to fleas at some stage so rather than letting an infestation develop, it is better to use a regular prevention treatment. There are a range of very safe and easy to use SPOT-ON-drops which are applied monthly and can be used on your pups at any age.

Worming

Puppies should be wormed every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age and then every month until 6 months of age, then every 3 months routinely. Worming should be performed regardless of whether worms are seen in droppings or not, as many worms are too small to be seen with the naked eye.

Coat Care

Regular brushing is important – daily brushing is best particularly with long-haired dogs. Shampoo only when necessary using a good quality dog shampoo, never a human shampoo. Ask us for a shampoo to suit your dog.

Ears

Healthy ears are clean and dry. Signs of ear problems include shaking the head, scratching at the ears, odor or discharge from the ears, and holding the head on one side. Every time you bathe your dog you NEED to apply a cleaning solution to avoid an ear infection. The one I use for my dogs is called: VETOQUINOL CARE EAR CLEANING SOLUTION (It cleans, dries, acidifies and deodorizes the dog's ears). Ear problems should be checked by a veterinarian.

Medication

Only give medication to your dog that has been prescribed by the vet, and follow the instructions closely. DO NOT give unprescribed medications to your dog without checking with a vet first. Even aspirin and aracetamol can be dangerous if given incorrectly, especially if your pet is on medication or has a medical condition.

People Foods to Avoid Feeding Your Pets

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center Phone Number: (888) 426-4435

Our Animal Poison Control Center experts have put together a handy list of the top toxic people foods to avoid feeding your pet. As always, if you suspect your pet has eaten any of the following foods, please note the amount ingested and contact your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435.

Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages and food products containing alcohol can cause vomiting, diarrhea, decreased coordination, central nervous system depression, difficulty breathing, tremors, abnormal blood acidity, coma and even death. Under no circumstances should your pet be given any alcohol. If you suspect that your pet has ingested alcohol, contact your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center immediately.

Avocado

Avocado is primarily a problem for birds, rabbits, donkeys, horses, and ruminants including sheep and goats. The biggest concern is for cardiovascular damage and death in birds. Horses, donkeys and ruminants frequently get swollen, edematous head and neck.

Chocolate, Coffee and Caffeine

These products all contain substances called methylxanthines, which are found in cacao seeds, the fruit of the plant used to make coffee, and in the nuts of an extract used in some sodas. When ingested by pets, methylxanthines can cause vomiting and diarrhea, panting, excessive thirst and urination, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures and even death. Note that darker chocolate is more dangerous than milk chocolate. White chocolate has the lowest level of methylxanthines, while baking chocolate contains the highest.

Citrus

The stems, leaves, peels, fruit and seeds of citrus plants contain varying amounts of citric acid, essential oils that can cause irritation and possibly even central nervous system depression if ingested in significant amounts. Small doses, such as eating the fruit, are not likely to present problems beyond minor stomach upset.

Coconut and Coconut Oil

When ingested in small amounts, coconut and coconut-based products are not likely to cause serious harm to your pet. The flesh and milk of fresh coconuts do contain oils that may cause stomach upset, loose stools or diarrhea. Because of this, we encourage you to use caution when offering your pets these foods. Coconut water is high in potassium and should not be given to your pet.

Grapes and Raisins

Although the toxic substance within grapes and raisins is unknown, these fruits can cause kidney failure. Until more information is known about the toxic substance, it is best to avoid feeding grapes and raisins to dogs.

Macadamia Nuts

Macadamia nuts can cause weakness, depression, vomiting, tremors and hyperthermia in dogs. Signs usually appear within 12 hours of ingestion and can last approximately 12 to 48 hours.

Milk and Dairy

Because pets do not possess significant amounts of lactase (the enzyme that breaks down lactose in milk), milk and other dairy-based products cause them diarrhea or other digestive upset.

Nuts

Nuts, including almonds, pecans, and walnuts, contain high amounts of oils and fats. The fats can cause vomiting and diarrhea, and potentially pancreatitis in pets.

Onions, Garlic, Chives

These vegetables and herbs can cause gastrointestinal irritation and could lead to red blood cell damage. Although cats are more susceptible, dogs are also at risk if a large enough amount is consumed. Toxicity is normally diagnosed through history, clinical signs and microscopic confirmation of Heinz bodies.

Raw/Undercooked Meat, Eggs and Bones

Raw meat and raw eggs can contain bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli that can be harmful to pets and humans. Raw eggs contain an enzyme called avidin that decreases the absorption of biotin (a B vitamin), which can lead to skin and coat problems. Feeding your pet raw bones may seem like a natural and healthy option that might occur if your pet lived in the wild. However, this can be very dangerous for a domestic pet, who might choke on bones, or sustain a grave injury should the bone splinter and become lodged in or puncture your pet's digestive tract.

Salt and Salty Snack Foods

Large amounts of salt can produce excessive thirst and urination, or even sodium ion poisoning in pets. Signs that your pet may have eaten too many salty foods include vomiting, diarrhea, depression, tremors, elevated body temperature, seizures and even death. As such, we encourage you to avoid feeding salt-heavy snacks like potato chips, pretzels, and salted popcorn to your pets.

Xylitol

Xylitol is used as a sweetener in many products, including gum, candy, baked goods and toothpaste. It can cause insulin release in most species, which can lead to liver failure. The increase in insulin leads to hypoglycemia (lowered sugar levels). Initial signs of toxicosis include vomiting, lethargy and loss of coordination. Signs can progress to seizures. Elevated liver enzymes and liver failure can be seen within a few days.

Yeast Dough

Yeast dough can rise and cause gas to accumulate in your pet's digestive system. This can be painful and can cause the stomach to bloat, and potentially twist, becoming a life threatening emergency. The yeast produce ethanol as a by-product and a dog ingesting raw bread dough can become drunk (See alcohol).

BREEDER'S NOTE:

I hope this information is helpful for you while caring for your new baby. Please feel free to contact me if you are unsure about something or if you have any questions. I have made a page with products that I use and recommend for Maltese care. If there is anything you don't find in the list, let me know to add it. This is the link: <http://www.isejmaltese.com/products-for-your-maltese>

Again, welcome to the ISEJ MALTESE family! 😊 - Jessica Maldonado cell. (939)640-9099