

## Handy Hints for Puppy Owners



- **Food-** Many food options exist for your puppy. It is important to find food that helps with their life stage, expected breed size, and lifestyle. Diets should have a balance of protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals with the protein source listed first. It is also important that the diet is NOT grain-free unless recommended by a veterinarian. If switching between foods, this should be done gradually over 5-10 days.
- **Potty Training-** Potty training is not always an easy task. When a puppy is young it is important to give them frequent bathroom breaks, taking them to the same part of the yard every time. It is important to reward your dog after they go to the bathroom outside during this training period.
- **Grooming-** Grooming your dog regularly is an important part of maintaining a happy healthy dog. Many dogs need to be brushed daily to maintain clean matt free coats. Bathing is also something that can be accomplished regularly. Depending on the dog, this could be done monthly or as often as weekly during allergy and muddy seasons. Bathing your dog too frequently could result in drying out the skin.
- **Nail Trim-** Dog nails have to be kept short and trimmed regularly, some as often as every couple of weeks. Walking your dog on hard surfaces will also help wear nails down naturally. Begin playing with your dog's feet now to make this task easier in the future.
- **Chewing Items-** Dog chews have a large variety of options. Many dogs love to chew anything and everything. To keep teeth healthy, a dog chew should be able to be indented by your nail. Rawhides can also cause stomach upset but there are many raw hide free options. As your dog ages, chews should become softer as the teeth become more worn down and fragile. It is also important that chews maintain a safe size as they can become choking hazards as they are worn down.
- **Toys-** Dog toys have large variations coming in harder chews, stuffed animals, balls, and more. It is important to have a large variety to enrich your puppy's life. Some dogs may also have varying toys that they can safely play with while others who tend to tear things apart will have smaller safe selections to avoid obstructions. Many toys that you can place food or treats in also exist to add an extra step to play time. These can also be made with household items such as putting tennis balls in muffin tins or folding the ends of paper towel rolls.

- **Beds-** There are many different types of dog beds available. They all have positives and negatives. It is essential to provide your dog a comfy place to call their own. It is important to initially monitor your dog with a new bed, as chewing apart and consuming stuffing may cause a blockage.
- **Puppy Proofing-** It can help to think of your pet as a toddler. Crawl on your hands and knees to see things from their perspective and find nooks and crannies that they can hide in. Ensure household cleaning supplies and chemicals are secured away from the pet.
- **Puppy's Grow-** Continue to make sure collars and harnesses are appropriately fitted daily. Puppies grow fast and a collar that fits today may be too small tomorrow. You should be able to fit 1-2 fingers underneath the collar.
- **Plants-** Many plants can be toxic if consumed by dogs. Ensure that plants that may cause problems are kept in a safe place that your dog cannot reach. When in doubt if a pet consumes a plant, call Pet Poison Helpline at (855) 764-7661.

