

Puppy Care

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Now that you have your puppy and have already bought the needed supplies on the Puppy Shopping List you're ready to use this Puppy Care Sheet :) It goes over some of the main aspects of raising a puppy, as well as answering some questions you may have.

- Feeding -

Our puppies are normally fed 3-4 times during the day, mainly at 7am, 12pm, and 4pm with snacks offered in between meals since they're still so young. They have water available all day from 7am-7pm.

To help you find out how much to feed your puppy you can use the feeding guideline located on most dog food bags. It looks somewhat like this daily feeding guide for Blue Buffalo Puppy Food based on expected adult weight:

	1-3 months	3-5 months	5-7 months	7-12 months
10 lbs	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$
20 lbs	1	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
25 lbs	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$

These are only guidelines though. The best way to determine if your puppy is getting enough food is to feel his rib cage and spine. You need to not visibly see or easily feel the bones, but you shouldn't have to push through a layer of fat to find them. You can adjust their feeding (or treat...) amounts if needed, as each puppy is different and they don't all need the same amount of food. Employ caution if you let your puppy eat all she or he wants, as with this method your puppy could get a little too chubby after a month or two.

If your puppy is spayed or neutered then they may have a tendency to become stocky. You'll need to combat this by closely following feeding guidelines and providing enough exercise. We do not recommend free feeding your adult dog all they want, as some dogs will take this liberty a little too far.

When possible never switch your puppies food immediately after bringing him or her home as this can cause several days of diarrhea at a time when the puppy would still be learning about housetraining. If, after a few weeks have passed, you decide to switch your brand of dog food it's best to do it slowly over several days to give their digestive system time to adjust. Other brands we recommend are Taste of the Wild, Canidae, Orijen, Innova, Solid Gold, and Chicken Soup for the Dog Lover's Soul. These foods all received above average ratings (based on their ingredients) from dog food reviewing sites such as www.dogfoodanalysis.com. Distributors for these brands can be found by using their websites.

- Vaccinations, Preventatives, and Neutering/Spaying -

Puppies, like children, require several vaccinations and boosters before they are protected from diseases. Your puppy has already received his first puppy vaccine in a series of three. Your vet will administer his or her second vaccine at 9-10 weeks old and the third at 11-12 weeks. A Rabies vaccine is also needed, but our vet recommends waiting until the puppy is at least 16 weeks old to administer it.

External and internal pests that your puppy needs help fighting are Fleas, Heartworms, Intestinal Worms, and Ticks. Your vet should have several different pills, liquids, or topical treatments available. As these pests can not only irritate but fatally harm your puppy we definitely recommend purchasing them.

Neutering (for boys) and Spaying (for girls) is easiest on a puppy if it's done when they're young, around 4-5 months old. They recover faster and it has the added bonus of preventing males from starting to mark and females from coming into heat and accidentally getting bred. It also helps prevent cancer in both sexes, and has the added bonus of making males a little less eager to roam or, in some cases, attempt to breed objects such as legs. :P Some people do find the thought of neutering or spaying uncomfortable, but unlike in humans the dogs don't realize what they lost, and as they weren't allowed to breed anyway helps them not be frustrated by the denial of a natural instinct.

If you do decide to breed always wait until at least the female's second heat to breed her as they aren't physically ready to have puppies at their first heat. Try to find a male owned by an experienced breeder as it can sometimes be difficult with a first time female or male. Be sure to have either a vet or mentor on call when the puppies will be due. You will have to assist the female through her labor (which can take 4-8+ hours), as it will be her first litter and quite a few things can go wrong. Be ready to call in a sick day or two. :)

- Grooming -

Grooming is going to be a very important part of your new puppy's life. Cockapoos normally visit the groomers every 1-3 months, so it's best if they can get used to being groomed at a young age. We normally give the puppies a hygiene or sanitary cut before they leave. This includes a bath as well as shaving their nose, feet, tummies, and caboose. Plus the ever needed nail trim.

You'll need to start looking for a groomer for your puppy soon. If possible see if you can find a small grooming shop nearby where your puppy will be handled by the same groomer each time. This helps your puppy as being handled by a new stranger each time can be scary for them. To help get that perfect trim you could bring pictures with you to the groomer to help give them an idea of what you'd like.

While your puppy doesn't really need brushing at this age, it's a great idea to introduce them to being brushed as soon as they're settled in. For just a few minutes set them on a table, brush them all over, and to help out your vet, exam their ears, eyes, and toes. Use a stern voice if the puppy tries to turn it into a playtime, as being groomed or examined is normally not a good time for that.

The Cockapoo fur can develop mats when your puppy's adult coat grows in. A mat is just a little knot in the fur that can develop into large tangles that are painful to remove. To prevent these mats you need to comb through your puppies coat with a toothed comb. Don't only use a slicker or soft bristle brush as these can go right over the mat. To remove mats carefully try to untangle them with your fingers or the tip of the comb. If heavily matted your Cockapoo should be shaved rather than subjecting him to extensive, painful dematting.

Nails should be trimmed at least every month, as they can grow fast and if allowed to grow unchecked can actually cause it to be uncomfortable for your puppy to walk. Begin very early to handle their feet to help them get used to the feeling.

- Socialization -

Socialization is a very important aspect of your puppies first few weeks with you. Why? Because it's the only time in your puppies life when you have the ability to really change what they believe is normal and safe. If your puppy never goes anywhere or meets anybody from 8-16 weeks old there's a good chance he or she might never be comfortable going new places or meeting new people. No one wants this for their puppy, so it's your job to make socialization a priority.

Because they won't be fully immunized for several more weeks it's best not to take them to dog parks, beaches, or around possibly unvaccinated dogs. That still leaves plenty of other places though, such as city sidewalks and outdoor restaurants, Home Depot & Lowes, a friend's house, and obedience classes with only vaccinated puppies and dogs. Puppy obedience classes are a must for any puppy, as not only do they get socialization but they learn new things too.

If possible try to aim for your puppy meeting at least 1-2 new people every day. Make sure they meet a large variety of people, since puppies can be very sensitive about differences that we might not notice. While women may be deemed wonderful to get pets from, a man with a large hat can be a dangerous threat to run from. A puppy used to calm adults could see children as strange little creatures that certainly aren't human like his owners. If you can't make it out with your puppy then bring people to him. This includes neighbors, mailmen, friends, co-workers, anyone you can drag through the door really. And while you're at it, make them act like treat dispensers wearing large floppy hats 😊

- Sleeping -

Your puppy will really miss his siblings the first few nights you have him home. This is normally shown by increased whining and crying, especially at night when they have to sleep alone. This can be minimized somewhat by having your puppies crate located on the floor right by your bed. That way if they do cry a reassuring hand and murmur is close by to let him know he hasn't been abandoned.

During the day your puppy will spend a lot of time sleeping. This is normal and though the naps will get shorter as he ages even as an adult he'll still love those siestas. 😊 While they're puppies you'll need to make sure they get enough rest, so if you see them nodding off gently put them in their quiet, darkened

crate for a nap. You can let them out when they start waking up, but be sure to take them right outside for a potty break before letting them play.

- Puppy Behaviors -

When your puppy first comes to your home it can be a scary time for him, as he's just left his siblings, mother, and familiar surroundings. As a result of this he can suddenly become a quiet puppy who sleeps a lot. This changes pretty quickly though and within a week you could have a little devil on your hands.

While being sleepy and quiet can be normal during the first few days you bring your puppy home, important signs to watch out for, since they might warrant a vet visit, are: Extreme lethargy, loss of appetite, disinterest in his surroundings, dull eyes, vomiting, and inability to keep food down.

Hypoglycemia, a situation where a small puppy's blood sugar levels fall below a safe level, needs to be countered quickly by giving Nutrical, Karo syrup, or Honey as soon as you notice any of these symptoms: drowsiness, collapsing, disorientation, pale gums, muscle weakness and tremors. With love and care, your puppy will have no problem adjusting to his new home, but better safe than sorry :)

- Things to Avoid -

There are several common items that you need to be sure your puppy doesn't have access to. These include, but are certainly not limited to: Grapes, Onions, Caffeine, Chocolate, Cooked Bones, Avocados, Oleanders, Poinsettias, Oak Leaves/Acorns, Lily-of-the-Valleys, any chemicals that a child shouldn't ingest, Rat/Insect poison, Electrical cords, and ingestible pieces of plastic/cloth/metal smaller than their mouths.

- Housetraining -

Your puppy has the ability to hold his bladder for a very short time at this age, and that time does vary by activity. Overnight without distractions 4-5 hours is possible, while being held/napping 1-2 hours, and while playing or just walking around 30min-1 hour. Puppies will also need to go potty right after waking up, a short while after eating/drinking, and normally after intense play.

It's recommended to pick a small (4x4ft) area in your backyard to designate as the "potty spot". The goal is to be as boring as possible walking around and around in that spot until your puppy finally does his business. Give him the cue word while he's going and then praise him like crazy and go for a quick romp around the yard. Very quickly he'll learn how to make you start playing—just go potty!

Never discipline a puppy with more than a stern "No" if you catch him in the act of going potty in an inappropriate spot or within 1-2 seconds of the event. Never smack him or rub his nose in it, as puppies can learn not only that you're not very nice but that it's just not safe to go potty where you can see them. If you do catch him in the act you can also make a startling noise (just to make him stop, not to scare him) and rush him outside to the appropriate spot.

At first you may need to wake up in the middle of the night to let your puppy out of his crate to go potty as he might not be able to hold it over the 6+ hours of a normal night. Never force a puppy to go potty in his crate by crating him too long, as this can teach him that it's ok to potty where they sleep, making it much harder to housetrain them.

First thing in the morning (before you do anything else) get your puppy out of his crate and outside for a potty break. Waiting even 2-3 minutes might cause your puppy to have to go in his crate.

Be sure to use cleaning products designated for pet accidents and stains, as cleaners containing ammonia can actually make an area smell like urine to a puppy. We use Nature's Miracle or Pet Out! But any brand will work.

We like to use playpens if we have to leave the puppies for more than 2-3 hours during the day. This allows them to eat, drink, play, sleep, and go potty where as a crate would restrict them to just sitting there bored and possibly in need of a restroom break. To make a puppy playpen you can either section off a small area or buy a playpen fence for children or puppies. Put your pen on a tiled area and place in it their crate (with a blanket inside, not on the tile just in case they confuse it with a pad), toys, food/water bowls, and on the opposite side of the pen (preferably the back of it) place a pad inside of a pad holder. You can mist the pad lightly with water to help discourage your puppy from playing with it.

- Training -

Your puppy will not only be easier to live with but he'll also be happier if you take the time to train him.

We recommend puppy training classes (available at Petsmarts, Petcos, etc) as it helps them learn how to socialize with other dogs and gives them a chance to meet new people. Plus they learn how to sit, down, come, and more even when they're in public and out of your house.

If your puppy loves to run around, jump through hoops, clamper up stairs, and basically just move then you might consider agility classes. These classes allow your puppy to exert their limitless energy and learn at the same time.

In your daily interactions with your puppy try to have three different voices: The stern, low, growly "No" for discipline; the happy, high-pitched or baby-talk "Good Boy" for praise; and the normal voice for everyday living and commands.

If you need a good treat for your puppy there are several interesting options available: Carrots, Boiled Eggs, Cottage Cheese, Cheddar Cheese, Sweet Potatoes (also help with diarrhea), or Peanut Butter. Another option is to buy a small bag of a different puppy food and as long as it's fed sparingly they might never catch on that it's actually regular dog food. Canned dog food can also be frozen or baked and then cut into chunks. Dehydrated chicken, beef, lamb, or salmon are all treats that seem to be held in very high esteem among the dogs begging for them :)

A few more tips are: Giving your puppy a peanut butter filled Kong (you can even freeze it) when you put them in their crate can help make it a good experience.

Never call a puppy to you if you want to do anything that they would consider mean (a bath, crating, discipline, etc) as that can teach them not to come to you when called.

Have consistent cue words and hand signals for tricks since it can confuse a puppy if each person has their own special word (down or lay for example)