New Year, New Puppy



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Here's some good advice on making your home a safe haven for your new puppy.

Get everything ready for your puppy before you bring him home.

First, make a nice bed for him. An old box or durable, chew-resistant basket raised off the floor away from drafts makes an adequate bed for a puppy. Don't spend too much at this stage on an expensive bed he's likely to chew. The inside of the bed should be lined with an old blanket so he can snuggle into something soft and warm.

Put the bed (or crate/kennel) in a spot that's relatively quiet so your puppy can sleep undisturbed whenever he's tired. Many people find that a quiet corner of the kitchen or family room is ideal. You may want to partition off an area around his bed for a few days to create a little "den" where he can feel secure and be out of harm's way.

Your puppy should have his own food and water dishes. These should be designed so he can eat and drink comfortably without getting his nose and ears wet. Have a supply of food ready for his arrival. Find out from the breeder what the puppy is used to eating. It's best to maintain the same diet for a few days.

All puppies like to chew. This is normal behaviour, and it helps with the teething process. Give your puppy some toys of his own to chew to deter him from chewing your

possessions. Toys don't need to be elaborate, but make sure they are non-toxic, large enough that they cannot be swallowed, and relatively indestructible. Objects that are small enough to be swallowed may become stuck in the throat, stomach or intestines, and can be a serious threat to your puppy's life.

Although you will not be able to take your new puppy for walks with other dogs until he has completed his course of vaccinations, you will need a **suitable collar and leash** for him. The collar should be soft and well fitting. For the first few days, he will need to wear it only for short periods when you are there to supervise. It must not be too tight, since this is uncomfortable for the puppy and could hurt him, but neither should it be too loose, as it may catch on a protruding object or he could chew it up.

You may want to consider a collar with a quick-release feature. Check his collar daily and loosen it as his neck increases in size. **Do not buy a choke chain for a young puppy.** If used incorrectly, it could cause irreparable damage to his neck.

You also need to buy a brush and comb—the type depends on the hair type of the breed. Ask the breeder or a groomer to show you how to groom your puppy properly and to recommend some suitable grooming equipment.

Finally, make sure you **have the name and address of a good veterinarian**. Ask your breeder and your friends to recommend one.

While your puppy is small, **keep everything in your home that might be dangerous to him out of reach**. He may tug or chew anything he finds, including plants, cleaning chemicals, blinds and electrical cords.

Check your yard to make sure the fencing is secure, and that there are no small holes through which your puppy could disappear. Make sure your gate shuts securely, and that your puppy won't be able to squeeze through or under it.

Keep pools and ponds covered.

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