

Preparing for a new puppy
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Deciding to add a new four-legged family member to your home can be a very exciting time. Taking steps to prepare for the homecoming day will allow for a smooth transition for you and your new puppy.

Preparing your home: Puppies are very curious by nature and tend to get themselves into trouble. Their natural chewing behavior can compound this problem. It is important that you evaluate your home to eliminate potential harmful situations. Be sure to look at your home for concerns through the eyes of your puppy. It may be worth getting on the ground level to identify potential issues that you may not normally notice as you walk around. Be sure to secure any electrical cords from tiny teeth. Assure that all household chemicals and cleaning supplies, laundry detergents and fabric softeners are out of reach. Puppies love shoes, so it's a good idea to move them all to safety behind a closet door. Lidded garbage cans are preferable to open ones. Some houseplants can be poisonous to dogs so make sure they are out of reach as well. Having a ready supply of chew -appropriate toys available for your puppy during the teething period to avoid unwanted damage due to chewing.

Supplies: There are several supplies you will need that you may or may not already possess. Your new puppy will need a safe place to stay out of trouble when you are not able to provide supervision. This can be a small room or a cage or crate. If you choose a room you may need a gate to keep him in his designated area. If you go the route of a crate be sure to choose one that will be large enough for him to use as an adult. You will also need bowls for food and water. Many folks find metal skid resistant bowls a good choice to limit moving, spillage and falling over. It is advisable to have a pet ID tag on your puppy's collar with your dog's name, your name and phone number in case he accidentally gets loose. Other items for your shopping list may include a leash, collar, dog bed, nail clippers, high quality chew toys and stain remover for accidents.

Veterinary Care: It will be important to have your puppy undergo puppy examination soon after he arrives (within 48 hours if possible). You may want to have a veterinarian in mind if you are not already working with one. If you know the date for your puppy's arrival you can make an appointment ahead of time to make sure that your first visit gets conducted as soon as possible. Be sure to bring as much information to your visit as possible such as puppy's birth date and any vaccinations that have been previously administered.

Food: It is important that you provide a high-quality puppy food that is appropriate for your puppy. For puppies that are expected to mature at 50 pounds or higher, consider a food that is formulated specifically for large breed puppies. Find out what your puppy has been eating and continue that diet during the initial transition to his new home. If you decide to change his diet be sure to do this slowly so that the change does cause digestive upsets. Below is a table that provides guidance for a smooth transition.

Feeding Rates When Switching to a New Food

<i>Day</i>	<i>% of Current Food</i>	<i>% of New Food</i>
1 – 2	75%	25%
3 – 4	50%	50%
5 – 6	25%	75%
7	0%	100%

The Car Ride Home: The big day has finally arrived and you are now ready to pick up your new puppy. There are a few preparations you need to consider for the ride home. It is best to bring your puppy to home as soon as possible. Avoid the temptation to stop by friends and family to show off your new companion. You will have plenty opportunities in the future and right now you will want to focus on making this transition as easy as possible for your puppy. Depending on the length of the ride home you may need to stop for potty breaks. Be sure to have a leash and collar available. Also, since your puppy has not received all his shots choose a relief area that does not have other dogs to limit unnecessary exposure. If you are alone in the car consider having a crate or cage available to prevent your puppy from wandering and getting hurt when turning or braking. If possible have someone with you that can hold your puppy on their lap. It is also advisable to have towels available in case your puppy gets carsick during the drive.

The big day has finally arrived and you realize all of this preparation has paid off. You have provided as smooth a transition as possible and two of you can relax and enjoy your new adventure.