

Your Puppy's First Week Home: The Checklist

Made for the fridge door. Tick things off as you go, and by day seven the whirlwind feels like a routine. More help at newpuppydog.com.

Before Pickup Day

- ☐ Puppy-proof the rooms your puppy can reach: cords up, chemicals locked, small objects off the floor
- ☐ Set up the crate with bedding in a quiet corner near where the family spends time
- ☐ Buy the same food the breeder or rescue has been feeding, plus bowls, a collar and a leash
- ☐ Get enzyme cleaner for accidents. It is not a question of if, but when
- ☐ Book the first vet visit for the first few days after pickup
- ☐ Decide the house rules now: where the puppy sleeps and eats, and which rooms are off-limits
- ☐ Agree on the puppy's name and one set of cue words that everyone in the house will use
- ☐ Plan the first work week: who is home, and who handles the midday potty break

Day 1: Coming Home

- ☐ Collect the puppy in a crate, or held securely by a passenger, for the car ride
- ☐ Ask before you leave: what food, how much per meal, and when the last vet visit and worming were
- ☐ First stop at home is the outdoor potty spot. Praise like the puppy just won something
- ☐ Let the puppy explore one puppy-proofed room first, not the whole house
- ☐ Offer water, then a small meal of their usual food
- ☐ Keep visitors to the household only. Day one is for settling in, not socializing
- ☐ Start the potty rhythm: outside after waking, eating and playing, and every hour or two in between
- ☐ Expect a smaller appetite and extra sleep today. Both are normal on day one

The First Night

- ☐ Gentle play in the early evening, then a calm wind-down before bed
- ☐ Last potty trip outside immediately before bed
- ☐ Crate beside your bed for the first nights, so a hand and a quiet voice can settle the puppy
- ☐ Expect to wake once or twice for a potty trip. Keep it boring: out, potty, soft praise, back to bed
- ☐ A worn t-shirt that smells like you in the crate can help the puppy settle
- ☐ Write down wake times. The pattern improves fast and the notes prove it on rough nights

Days 2-3: Settling In

- ☐ Keep one simple rhythm: sleep, potty, play, eat, potty, rest, repeat
- ☐ Feed 3 to 4 small meals at the same times each day
- ☐ Practice the puppy's name: say it once, reward eye contact with a treat
- ☐ Handle gently every day: paws, ears, collar, and brief lifting, so vet and groomer visits are easy later
- ☐ Introduce one or two calm new sights and sounds a day, always paired with treats
- ☐ Supervise or crate, always. A puppy you cannot see is a puppy chewing something
- ☐ First vet visit: bring the vaccination records and a fresh stool sample

Days 4-7: Building the Routine

- ☐ Add training in 5-minute bursts: the name game, sit, and first indoor recalls
- ☐ Practice leaving the puppy alone for very short stretches, and build up gradually
- ☐ Practice crate time while you are home too, not only when you are leaving
- ☐ Let the puppy watch the world from your arms or the yard: people, bikes, traffic sounds at a distance

- ☐ Book puppy classes for after the first vaccination window if you plan to go
- ☐ Weigh the puppy and write it down. Weekly weights catch growth surprises early
- ☐ End of week one goal: longer sleep stretches, a known potty spot, and a puppy who knows their name

Call the Vet If You See

- ☐ Not eating for more than 24 hours, or much sooner for a very young or tiny puppy
- ☐ Repeated vomiting, or diarrhea lasting more than a day
- ☐ Lethargy: a puppy who is hard to rouse or loses interest in everything
- ☐ Coughing, labored breathing, or worsening discharge from the eyes or nose
- ☐ Any suspected poisoning or swallowed object: call immediately, do not wait

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