

# Your Guide to Puppyhood

## Before Choosing Your New Best Friend:



- **Research** breeds, breeders and animal shelters.
- **Safety first!** Puppy-proof your home.
- **Gather all the “must-haves”** for puppyhood.
- **Make a plan for introducing** your pup to other pets in the home.
- **Find a VCA Animal Hospital** in your area.

## Love at First Bark: Welcome Home!



- Have a **play and snuggle session** with human family members.
- Get your puppy **used to being touched**. Gently touch around eyes, ears, feet and mouth (and reward for good behavior!).
- Let the **crate training** commence.
- Establish good **potty training**. Take them to the same spot for each potty break.
- Introduce puppy to **non-human family members**.
- Show off pics of puppy with their **first toy**.
- Snap pics of puppy’s **first mealtime**.

**6–8**  
Weeks Old  
Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Time to Meet the World



- Schedule puppy’s **first veterinary appointment**.
  - Get puppy’s first round of **vaccines** and **deworming**.
  - Ask the veterinarian about **how much to feed** your puppy.
  - Start **parasite preventives**.
- **Download the myVCA™ app** to manage your appointments and keep track of vaccinations.
- Begin training your puppy with **simple commands** (and small rewards!).
- Keep your puppy busy (and out of trouble) with **toys and play sessions**.
- Make new dog friends by enrolling in **socialization classes**.
- Schedule a **social visit** with the veterinarian.

**10–12**  
Weeks Old  
Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## A Bundle of Energy



- Make an appointment for puppy’s **first booster appointment**.
- Start **brushing teeth and bathing** to keep them looking good (and prevent future fears).
- Take your puppy to **two new places** each week (like a friend’s house or car ride—no dog parks yet!).
- Introduce puppy to **new sights, sounds and smells**.
- **Invite friends** over for a gentle play session. Paparazzi welcome!
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**16–18**

Weeks Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ready to Take on the World



- Book an appointment for **second round of booster and rabies vaccines**.
- **It's teething time!** Revisit **puppy-proofing** to avoid teething casualties.
- Start dog walks off on the **right paw** with **leash training**.
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**5** Months  
Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Puberty Strikes Early



- Talk to your veterinarian about **spay and neuter**.
- **Try a new game** to test your puppy's skills.
- Go on a **fun road trip** to keep up on **fear-free traveling**.
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**6** Months  
Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Continue Those Healthy Habits



- Check in on **potty training**. Pup should be a pro soon!
- Reinforce **obedience** by teaching a **new trick**.
- **Evaluate body condition** to make sure your pup isn't overeating.
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**7** Months  
Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Show Us Those Pearly Whites



- Check to see if **baby teeth** have **fallen out**.
- **Keep brushing daily** to keep teeth clean.
- Schedule a visit for puppy's **first heartworm test**.
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**8** Months  
Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Getting in the Swing of Things



- Establish a **daily routine** for your puppy that includes **mild exercise**.
- Keep your pup **social and energetic** with **outdoor walks**.
- Teach **another new trick**. Learning never stops!
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**9** Months  
Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Keeping Health on Track



- Introduce **puzzle toys** to make **mealtime** fun.
- Evaluate your pup's **body condition** again. With age, the risk of obesity rises.
- Exercise the mind. Try a **new game** with your pup.
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**10** Months  
Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Don't Slow Down Now



- Take a walk with a **friend and their dog** to continue socialization.
- Visit a **dog-friendly restaurant**, bar or café. Your pup deserves all the attention!
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**11** Months  
Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## Keeping it Fresh



- Schedule your puppy's **first dental cleaning**.
- Sign up for a **fun new training class** with your pup.
- Begin planning your puppy's **birthday bash**.
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian.

**1** Year  
Old

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

## All Grown Up (Happy Birthday!)



- Have a **birthday celebration!**
- Schedule an **annual wellness appointment** with your veterinarian.
  - Make sure your pup is healthy. It's time for their **first annual lab work**.
  - Check in with the veterinarian on **puppy exercise restrictions**. It might be time to increase them!
  - Stay up to date on **vaccines**.
- Switch to **adult dog food** (talk to your veterinarian if you have a large or giant breed).
- **Look back at photos** to see how much your puppy has grown.
- Administer **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian (you knew this was coming).

**1** Year  
Old +

## A Lifetime of Dog Snuggles



- Continue to schedule **wellness appointments every year** with your veterinarian.
  - Protect your pup by **keeping up to date on vaccines**.
  - Get **annual lab work** to monitor your pet's health.
- **Assess your pet's weight** every few months to stave off obesity.
- Keep up on **exercise routines**. It's good for you and your bestie.
- Celebrate **every birthday** and share those **progress pics with us**.
- Enjoy **snuggles and puppy kisses**.
- Continue **parasite preventive(s)** from your veterinarian **every month**.