



Before You Bring Your Puppy Home

Congratulations on your new family addition! We know how exciting it is to bring a puppy home. These next few weeks will have you itching with anticipation. While you await the arrival of your new addition, here are a few tips to prepare for your pup!

Call your vet!

The pandemic has created a shortage of veterinarians, staff, and an overflow of pandemic puppies. For this reason, many veterinary clinics are not currently accepting new clients or are booking 1-2 months in advance simply because they are so busy. Once you place your deposit with us, we recommend booking all booster appointments for your puppy as soon as possible. It's better to be ahead of the game than scrambling for a veterinarian last minute. At your first appointment, it's recommended to ask for a spay/neuter quote. Although we highly recommend waiting until your pup is over 1 year of age before spaying/neutering, it's best to get an idea of what the procedure will cost so you are well prepared for it when the time comes.

Questions to ask your vet about the spay/neuter procedures and quotes:

- Is IV fluid therapy included in the quote?
 - IV fluids are necessary for a spay/neuter surgery, but surprisingly not all veterinary clinics make them mandatory. IV fluids keep your dog hydrated throughout surgery, help to push drugs into their system quickly, improve recovery, and are quick and reliable access point to circulate drugs in an emergency.
- Are pain medications included in the quote?
 - Most veterinary clinics provide pain medication for each patient throughout surgery, however, not all clinics include post-op pain medication in the quote, or at all. Inquire about the pain medication your puppy will receive throughout surgery in addition to 1-3 days post-op.
- Am I required to perform pre-anesthetic bloodwork and is this included in the quote?
 - Pre-anesthetic bloodwork is an important screening tool prior to putting your puppy under anesthetic. This bloodwork will show levels of clotting cells (platelets), the presence/absence of infection (neutrophils, white blood cells), the presence/absence of intestinal parasites (eosinophils), and the function of the organs- specifically the kidney and liver which are extremely important in the metabolism and excretion of drugs. Before the administration of these drugs, it's best to ensure everything is functioning as it should.
- What type of anesthetic monitoring will my pet receive during surgery?
 - Every clinic varies in the equipment it uses. As new technology becomes available many veterinary clinics are upgrading their monitoring equipment. The gold standard of care is to have heart rate monitoring/EKG, blood pressure, pulse oximetry (O2 saturation), temperature, and respiration monitors. Ensure all monitoring is included in the quote and available to your pet throughout the duration of their anesthetic.

Enroll in Puppy Classes!

Just like your vet, the training and daycare facilities are just as busy. Research **positive reinforcement** trainers in your area and sign your puppy up for puppy classes and socialization. Labradors are extremely biddable and food motivated dogs. Avoid training facilities that promote the use of prong collars, negative reinforcement, e-collars, or other harsh training tools. Each facility will vary on the age and vaccine requirements necessary to join puppy class. The majority will require 2 DAP (Distemper) vaccinations and the Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine to join class. Typically, these vaccines are complete by 12 weeks of age, so plan accordingly. The earlier you can get in the better! ☺

Start Handler Training Before the Puppy Arrives

If this is your first puppy, chances are you have a lot to learn about training and raising a dog. Fear not, Labradors are fantastic dogs to learn with, but they do require consistency and daily enrichment. While you await the arrival of your little one, start reading up on positive reinforcement techniques for training basic commands, crate training, leash walking, potty training, and deterring unwanted behaviour. A few of my favourite books and resources are listed below.

Quick Tips for a Happy Puppy by the Canadian Kennel Club – Both the CKC and the AKC have a lot of fantastic articles on their websites about puppy training and handling. There's also lots of information about getting your dog into a competitive sport such as agility, obedience, and retrieving.

<https://www.ckc.ca/en/The-Dish/March-2019/Quick-Tips-For-A-Happy-Puppy>

Basic Training by the Canadian Kennel Club

<https://www.ckc.ca/en/Raising-My-Dog/Training>

McCann Dog Training is a great YouTube Channel filled with how to videos for training your puppy basic commands all the way up to advanced tricks. A great channel to watch with your kids!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5QwYIOxcT1higtcJVGzCCg>

“Your Pandemic Puppy” is a great book to read about puppy socialization by Dr. Marty Greer, DVM. I highly recommend this book and it can be purchased off amazon in paperback or kindle version.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Your-Pandemic-Puppy-Well-Adjusted-COVID-19/dp/1943824509>

If you head over to **VCA Canada's** website and click on the search bar at the top right-hand side of the home page, you can type in any questions you might have and find access to hundreds of articles written by veterinarians and backed by scientific evidence. They have a ton of great information in a user-friendly format for everyone.





<https://vcacanada.com>

PetMD is another fantastic source for all questions. Just like VCA's website, you simply type your search words into the finder, and they will populate articles written and reviewed by veterinarians and specialist. I highly recommend reading up on heartworm and tick prevention before you get your puppy to prepare any questions you may have for me or your vet in addition to the Distemper, Rabies, Lyme, Lepto, and Bordetella vaccines. This way you won't be overwhelmed at your first vet visit and will have a prepared list of questions (Vets love it when you come prepared) ☺

<https://www.petmd.com>

Puppy Supplies

If you're like me, purchasing puppy items is one of the best parts of getting a new pup. I know many of you are eager to start shopping, so I've put together a list of must-haves to grab before you bring your little one home. (I excluded the typical supplies like collar, leash, tag, and food and focused on good finds you might not immediately think of)

<p>Slow-feeder bowl</p> <p>Labradors are notorious for eating fast. I love these slow feeders bowl more than anything else in our home. It slows them down, helps them digest their food better, prevents bloat, and is extremely entertaining.</p>	
<p>Kong</p> <p>These are the best invention for Lab puppies. My favourite thing to do with these is stuff them with plain yogurt or natural peanut butter with kibble, freeze them, and give them to the puppies as an indoor enrichment game. It will occupy them for hours! Great for crate training or just simply entertaining them.</p>	
<p>Snuggle Puppy</p> <p>The snuggle puppy can be purchased in pet stores or off amazon and is a great toy to have on hand for the puppies first night away from its litter mates and mother. The puppy can be heated and has a battery-operated heartbeat to mimic the warmth and feel of a littermate. I highly recommend these for crate training.</p>	
<p>Adjustable Crate</p> <p>The biggest mistake pet owners make when crate training is using a crate that is too large for the puppy. You want the pup to be able to turn around in the crate and lay comfortably not have room to play. If you give your puppy too much space, it will sleep on one side of the crate and pee/poop on the other side. Puppies naturally do not want to pee/poop where they sleep, so you want a comfortable but small space for proper crate training. These adjustable crates are great because they have an internal divider that can be adjusted as the puppy grows so you don't have to purchase multiple crates throughout the first year. We use ours from 8 weeks – full grown and love it.</p>	

Lick mats (or dish mats from the dollar store)

I recently discovered a silicone dish drying mat at the dollar store that works marvellously as a lick mat for the dogs. It was \$4.00 and provides 30 minutes of fun. Just like the Kong, I spread plain yogurt, natural peanut butter, non-sweetened apple sauce and safe fruits and veggies on the mat, freeze it and serve the next day. You can switch up what you serve for variety or can serve fresh (not frozen) for equal fun in a little less time. Proper lick mats can also be purchased at the pet store or amazon for \$15.00.

This mat in the picture has suction cups on it to attach to your shower as a distraction during baths!



Forti-flora

I highly recommend all puppy owners purchase a box of Forti-flora before bringing their puppy home. The transition to a new environment can be stressful for a puppy and can lead to some gastrointestinal upset. Forti-flora is a canine probiotic that not only supports a strong immune system but helps ease the GI tract and reduces the likelihood of loose stools or diarrhea (which is not fun when you're potty training). You will receive a coupon voucher in your puppy goody bag which can be picked up early if you wish to purchase it ahead of time.



Extra Long Line

When training recall, I love these long leashes. They allow your pup to explore and create distance but ensure proper recall 100% of the time. I highly recommend these when training off-leash.



Things to avoid at the pet store:

- Rawhide and cooked bones- choking hazard
- Antlers – break teeth (Maple required emergency dental surgery at 5 months due to an antler)
- Nyla bones – Labs will chew plastic chards off that can cause tears in the mouth/esophagus
- Rope tug toys – known for fraying and causing intestinal obstruction
- Retractable dog leashes – do not teach proper leash manners and are safety risk if snapped

*Labs love to chew and eat everything, so I always caution supervision with toys and treats and to never leave a toy or treat in the crate with your pup unsupervised. The only thing I will leave in the crate with our dogs are the Kongs, but if you have a strong chewer even that may be unsafe.

Did you know? Household Toxins:



- Grapes and Raisins
 - As little as one grape can cause kidney failure in any size dog.
- Chocolate
 - Dark bakers' chocolate and cocoa are extremely toxic to dogs as well as milk and white chocolate in larger amounts
- Xylitol (artificial sweetener) – sometimes advertised as 'Birch Sugar'
 - Commonly found in diet foods (sugar free peanut butter, gum) and baked goods. Causes liver failure.
- Human medications
 - It's common to assume your dog can have one of your Advil's or Tylenols, but dogs cannot excrete these medications which can lead to fatal kidney failure. Never assume your dog can take a human medication without consulting your veterinarian.
- Corn on the cob
 - Corn on the cob is one of the leading culprits in emergency exploratory surgery. Corn kernels are okay, but the cob is extremely dangerous. They get stuck in the stomach or try to squeeze their way through the intestines causing major damage.

Other common toxins to avoid:

- Avocados
- Onions, garlic, and chives
- Macadamia nuts
- Cooked bones
- Caffeinated drinks
- Yeast dough