

Puppy Care - General tips and suggestions:

Car Travel:

The puppies have been introduced to car travel and are doing well. They will usually settle down in a lap and sleep during a short trip.

When you are taking your puppy for a car ride, please keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Try not to take puppies for long or bumpy car rides after eating. Some puppies get car sick and cleaning up after a car sick dog is no fun!!
- The safest place for a puppy to travel in a vehicle is in its crate. Having said that, I realize that sometimes there is no room for the crate and hauling the crate in and out is annoying. Our dogs travel in the vehicle on the floor on the passenger side. They know the word “floor” once they get in the vehicle and will stay there during our drive. Puppies should not travel in the driver’s lap.
- Puppies should not be left alone in a vehicle until they are totally housetrained and are at least 8 -9 months old. When you do leave the puppy alone, make sure all dangerous objects, tissue boxes, coins, wrappers etc. are put away as the puppy will entertain itself with whatever it can find in the vehicle when you are gone. Take a toy or two in the vehicle and leave it there for each trip. Do not leave the puppy alone for more than 30 minutes unless you want to replace your seats with new ones!!
- The vibration of the vehicle will usually make a puppy want to go to the bathroom. When you get to where ever you are going, don’t forget to take the puppy outside to relieve himself.
- Never leave a puppy unattended in a vehicle in warm weather. Puppies dehydrate very quickly and will suffer heat stroke and die if left in a closed vehicle. Just leaving windows open is not enough!! Leave the puppy at home in hot weather and keep car rides for cooler weather.
- If going on a long trip, make sure you allow for plenty of bathroom breaks and chances to stretch legs. Pack food for the trip although some dogs won’t eat while traveling. Most will drink but limit water as you don’t want to stop more times than you absolutely have to.
- Make sure you keep a leash handy and clip it on before letting your puppy out of the vehicle. Also make sure the puppy waits for permission before exiting the vehicle.

Grooming:

Here are some suggestions for keeping your puppy looking neat and clean.

- Comb out the beard, eyebrows, hair on the legs and belly at least every three days. Pay special attention to the “underarms as that is where mats tend to form. Comb your puppy as often as possible even though his coat is still growing in. The more used to it they get when they are young, the easier grooming sessions will be when they get older.
- Clean the sleep out of the eyes every day or two.
- Give a partial bath weekly until house training is complete. Bath the feet, belly and butt. Dry off with a towel and blow dry (hold your hand where you are directing the blow dryer to. This will ensure that you are not overheating an area and causing a burn. If the heat is too much for your hand, it is too much for your puppy’s sensitive skin!!). Comb out the fur prior to the bath. If there are mats in the fur and you don’t comb them out, they will get more tangled when water is added and you will have to cut them out. A clean puppy house trains more easily than a dirty one. Once your puppy is house trained, a bath once a month will be sufficient unless the puppy gets into mud or something equally sticky and stinky. Bath only with a puppy shampoo. Too many baths will dry out the skin and make your dog itchy and flaky.
- Keep the hair around the anus trimmed short so that poop doesn’t get stuck in it. It helps keep puppy clean!
- Trim nails weekly. Just cut off the curve of the nail. Use flour on nail if you cut it too short and it starts bleeding!
- Trim eyebrows every month. Comb them forward and cut them so that they hang over the eyes but won’t obstruct vision.
- Every eight to 10 weeks, give your dog a hair cut or take him somewhere to get a hair cut and full grooming
- Clean the ears with a Q-tip every week (ask me how)
- If you would like to learn how to groom your own dog, ask me for the handout on grooming a schnauzer.

Food:

- Young puppies should be fed three times a day. Divide total daily rations into three equal portions. Put food down at meal times, make sure they know it’s there and that they sit before they get their food. After 30 minutes, take the food away.
- Puppies tummies need to be taught what full is and what hungry is. If food is left out all day, puppies will snack throughout the day and never really develop the “I’m hungry, it’s time to eat”. Constant snacking promotes overweight dogs and it is hard to monitor how much is actually being eaten. Now that our dogs are full grown, we leave food in their dish all day but they only eat it when they are hungry which is once a day. They don’t snack!
- Stick to the same food. Don’t feed table snacks. Puppies tummies are very sensitive and new foods can cause vomiting and diarrhea. Puppies should stay on puppy food until at least 12 months. After that, switch to a formula for adult dogs. Gradually add the adult food to the puppy food until eventually the food is only adult food. This gradual change will help prevent diarrhea.

- Feed the quantity recommended by the chart on the side of the dog food bag. Some puppies need a little more, some need less. If your puppy seems hungry after eating the recommended amount, try adding a little more next time until you find the amount that will satisfy. Sometimes puppies will eat a larger meal at breakfast and smaller meals at lunch and supper. Sometimes the reverse is true. Find out what works for your puppy.
- Puppies will let you know when they don't need food three times a day. Usually around 3 ½ to four months they will lose interest in their mid-day meal. When you notice this, just divide their daily food portion into half and feed half in the morning and half at night.
- At some point your puppy may only want food once a day. Many adult dogs eat only once. You will need to figure out if your puppy is one of them or if two meals is preferred.
- Try to feed at about the same time of day. Puppies thrive on schedules and routines and it will help them adjust when things are kept similar from day to day. Remember to always make the puppy believe the humans are eating first!!
- As the puppy is eating its food, either add a very small dog treat to the food and/or occasionally take some food out of the dish. Your puppy should let any member of your family take away or add things to its dish at any time. If any growling occurs, take the dish away and pretend to eat it. Don't give it back for about a half hour. Then repeat the exercise.
- Recommended dog treats are milk bone dog biscuits or carrots for teething puppies and rawhide bones (the ones that are knotted at either end and are either chicken or beef flavored) to keep in the crate. Other good treat are the soft canine carry outs (ask me about these) They are relatively inexpensive and are easily cut/broken into smaller pieces.

Puppy Rules:

Here are some suggested rules for all members of your household and guests to be aware of:

- Before greeting puppies ALL visitors should:
 - Ask puppy to sit and give attention only if puppy sits.
 - give puppy an approved treat to help teach puppy that new people are friends
 - Review the puppy play rules.
- DO NOT play tug of war with the puppies.
- DO NOT play games that encourage puppies to bite or mouth you.
- DO NOT let puppies bite fingers, toes, etc...or pull on shoestrings or clothes. Gently direct their attention elsewhere, or to an appropriate toy.
- DO NOT let them climb up on something where they could fall off. (Do not put them up on high surfaces either.)
- If puppies fall asleep in a lap or on a floor, put them into their crate so they stay safe.

Barking:

- Your puppy will eventually find it's voice and decide to bark when it hears a new noise or when someone comes to the door. This often coincides with your puppy maturing sexually around 6-7 months of age.
- If your puppy continues to bark after you ask it to stop, try this:
 - Put 10 or so pennies inside an empty pop can and tape the opening closed. When the puppy barks, shake the can loudly. Most puppies don't like the sound and will stop barking. This distracts them from what they were barking at and they will often forget to bark after the sound stops. Reward with a treat when your puppy stops barking.
- If your puppy barks at the slightest noise, try turning on some background music. This will often disguise the small sounds so that they don't attract the puppy's attention and the barking will stop. (works well in our house)
- Schnauzers are watch dogs and will alert you with a bark when someone comes to the door etc. It is part of their nature and you can't change it. However, you can teach them to only alert and stop once you acknowledge the alert. Excessive barking is a result of poor training. If your dog won't quiet down, and you've tried the suggestions listed above, seek advice from a professional.