



CASPCA PUPPY HANDBOOK

First, thank you for fostering! Generally, puppies in the Foster Care Program are those who have not yet received their second set of vaccinations and would be medically safer in a foster home than here in the shelter. Puppies need foster care at least until they are 8 weeks old. That is the youngest age at which it's safe to spay or neuter them, and they must be altered before we can place them up for adoption. When you return the puppies for their spay or neuter surgery, that's the end of your foster period for that animal and a job well done! Foster periods usually last for 2 weeks (although it depends on the age of the puppy) and foster homes are vital to these pups.

The CASPCA provides medical care for all foster animals. Since we're the organization responsible for these animals, it's important that our vets make all treatment decisions about them. If you have questions, do not hesitate to call or email as follows:

Questions? Call 434-964-3310 or email foster@caszca.org.

Puppies are a true joy to have in the home, but they are also a lot of work. Being a puppy foster parent is both rigorous and rewarding – you can never have enough pee pads or paper towels. Puppies are also uncoordinated and can easily fall. This is a lengthy handbook, but it should provide you with most if not all of the tools you need to be an excellent and responsible caregiver for your little canine lives! Call us at any time if you have questions at the numbers above. We are here to help.

One significant aspect of fostering underage puppies is that you are dealing with animals that have not yet developed immunity to a variety of potentially fatal canine diseases. While you might be anxious to play with the puppies in the park, etc., the puppies must not walk on any surfaces (such as parks or sidewalks) where another dog may have urinated or defecated in the past. Even if it appears clean it may still be harboring contagious diseases. It is imperative for foster puppies to stay in the home or in a protected back yard.

Fostering requires a flexible schedule and a personal commitment to the puppies. In a typical day you can expect to give food and water to the puppies at least twice – three times is better (feeding small amounts, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup). The pee pads will need changing and don't forget to make time for playing and snuggling! The expected minimum time commitment is about 2 hours a day caring for your puppies. If the puppies you are fostering are sick, you will need to medicate your puppies as well.

More Very, Very Important Things to Remember

- Please do not take your puppies to any public places where unvaccinated dogs may have been!
- Puppies cannot be in your backyard unless they are over five weeks of age and you are present.
- Please do not ever tie your puppy (or any animal) with a rope or chain.
- Please feed your puppies separately if possible and feed small amounts (1/4-1/2 cup depending on the size and age of the puppy) several times a day.
- Always provide fresh water.
- If you have a doggy door, do not let your puppy use it without prior approval from the clinic or foster coordinator. Puppies should not be in your yard unsupervised.
- Any and all medical issues **MUST** be reported immediately. Puppies have a much weaker immune system than adult dogs.
- Puppies need to be handled on a regular basis for socialization purposes, so make sure that you are playing, holding and handling the puppies regularly and carefully!!
- When not supervised, puppies should be in a safe, clean and comfortable crate or X-pen, which we can loan to you. You can also use a baby gate.
- **Make note of when the puppies are due for any shots or vet treatments and call 964-3310 to schedule their visit in the clinic.**
- It doesn't hurt to roll up your carpets.....
- Other puppy-proofing
 - Remove any potentially toxic plants, or hang them out of reach.
 - Close toilet bowls.
 - Check for exposed electrical cords.
 - Remove breakable items that could be knocked off shelves.
 - Remove small, ingestible items.

Handbook of Puppy Care

(The following information is drawn substantially from the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program)

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Introduction

Puppies under the age of 8 weeks need a mother- either a dog or a human surrogate. They are very vulnerable in a shelter and the chance to get them into a foster home within 24 hours is a chance to save their lives. The following guidelines will help you with the care of your puppies and will help you understand the policies and procedures of the foster care program. Please keep the following items on this list in mind before you agree to bring foster animals into your home.

- A foster animal could potentially carry illness into your home that could affect your resident animals' (or humans') health.
- To protect people, young children should not handle the foster puppies and everyone should wash their hands after handling animals and their fecal waste.
- To protect other dogs, foster animals should be separated from household pets for at least two weeks. This means that you should also prohibit the sharing of food and water bowls and toys. IN PRACTICE, THIS IS VERY DIFFICULT AND NOT ALWAYS NECESSARY. WHILE IT IS GOOD ADVICE TO BE COMPLETELY SAFE, HEALTHY PUPPIES CAN AND SHOULD BE SOCIALIZED BY HEALTHY, VACCINATED ADULT DOGS AND CAN MINGLE IN YOUR HOME WITH THEM.
- Puppies can be bathed with a gentle shampoo and warm water.
- You should wash your hands with soap and water before handling your own animals or children and you may also want to change clothes.
- You should routinely disinfect the foster puppies quarters and disinfect the entire premises before new puppies are introduced.
- The best way to disinfect the area is to remove all organic material and fecal debris and then soak with a mild bleach solution (1 part bleach to 32 parts water) for at least 30 minutes. All surfaces, bowls, toys etc need to be disinfected (so you probably want to keep puppies in a room without carpeting, hardwood floors and so forth).
- It is best to have only litter at a time rather than constantly adding new puppies in with others.

- It is possible even with these precautions that resident dogs could be exposed to mild infections such as URI. Ask the foster coordinator for more information if this is a concern.

Supplies you will need before you bring home puppies

(You may not need all of these if you are bringing home just a couple of older puppies.)

- Crate or carrier - You may want to use the carrier in which you took the litter home. It will provide a familiar-smelling, dark, quiet home for your foster puppies. However, a bigger crate may be desirable, as it will allow you to see in, as well as provide plenty of room for the mother and the new, growing litter of puppies.
- Newspapers and pee pads - Keep several layers in the bottom of the box, and they will come in handy when the puppies start to roam around the room. A tarp can be helpful under the newspapers / pee pads.
- Water bowls - Heavy and impossible to tip. Should be stainless steel or porcelain/ceramic, NOT plastic, as plastic is difficult to disinfect because it is so porous.
- Food bowls (at least 2) - One is for the eat-at-will dry food, the other for canned food. You can use TV dinner trays, paper plates or whatever you have; any relatively flat plate or saucer will do. The larger the litter, the larger the plate should be so that no one gets crowded out.
- Food - You should have both dry puppy chow, canned dog food (any brand for adults or puppies), and all-meat baby food (must not contain vegetables or onion powder). Offer several choices to weaned puppies to determine their preferences.
- Heating pad, hot water bottle, or infrared lamp - Unless the nursery is at least 80° and your puppies are 2 weeks or older, you need to supply extra heat. BE SURE THAT THE PUPPIES HAVE ROOM TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE HEAT (leave room for mom if she is with them). For instance, if you are using a heating pad, place it under a towel so that it covers only half of the floor area of their box. The heating pad should be on "low" or "medium." If you use a hot water bottle, keep it where dog can't destroy it.
- Clean towels and blankets
- Toys - Clean tennis balls and small Kongs and Nylabones work well. Avoid toys that puppies can pull apart and potentially ingest, such as stuffed animals or soft rubber toys. Never give your puppy foster real bones; they splinter and can be fatal when ingested. Also avoid rawhides, pigs ears, or other chew treats that can be ingested in large chunks. They can swell in a dog's system and lead to blockages.
- Scale -Although not critical to success, a food or postal scale will be very helpful in monitoring small puppies growth, which can be variable among breeds.

Socialization

Part of your job as a foster home is to convince the puppies that humans are kind and loving, and that other pets do not pose any threat. Between the ages of 3—12 weeks, puppies are forming bonds towards people, dogs and other animals which will last them a lifetime. Puppies who are not exposed to and/or do not have good experiences with people, dogs or other animals during this period can end up with fear and aggression problems later on. As much as possible (and keeping the puppies' safety in mind), get the puppies around all kinds of people —and make sure they have good experiences (play, petting and treats). It's also a good idea to expose the puppies to cats to maximize their chances of growing up to like cats.

Even outgoing, friendly puppies should be allowed 24 hours to accustom themselves to their new home a quiet room, but if they seem content and happy after the initial "chill-out period" they can be cuddled and played with freely. Shy pets will need more encouragement. Try sitting on the floor allowing the puppies to approach you or avoid you as they please, and play freely around you. You can also tempt them with small treats and food to convince them that you are not as scary as you appear. Always praise positive interaction.

Any introductions of puppies to other cats or dogs should be made with great care and under constant supervision. It can be hard to weigh the positive effects of socialization against the risks of exposure to infectious diseases when dealing with puppies. Talk to our clinic staff or foster coordinator if you have questions.

Sights & Sounds

Puppies are cataloguing other things in their environment besides people and animals. Make sure they see and hear common household things like vacuum cleaners, TV's, etc. Praise and treat the puppies every time they come into contact with something new so they have positive associations with these experiences.

Crate training

Teach the puppies to enjoy being in a snug, comfy crate by putting them in for naps and keeping the crate close to you so they doesn't associate it with abandonment.

Housetraining

Put the puppies on the pee pads as soon as they wake up, right after eating and at last once an hour to start. Reward him with enthusiastic praise EVERYTIME he urinates or defecates on the pad. Change the pads frequently and encourage them to use it.

Handling

Handle the puppy ALL THE TIME all over his body, play with his feet, brush him, hug him and give him treats/food while you do it so he learns to love it.

There is no such thing as a "bad" puppy and it is useless to punish a "naughty" puppy. Their little minds do not grasp deductive reasoning. Puppies are easily distracted with a toy or a treat when being mischievous rather than punishment and scolding. By providing toys, chews, scratching poles etc. you can get a puppy on its right track to being somebody's well-behaved pet.

What to feed?

6-7 weeks

Feeding: By this age the puppies should be eating dry food well. Feed the puppies at least three meals daily. You can mix in some canned food. If one puppy appears food-possessive, use a second dish and leave plenty of food out so that everyone can eat at the same time. Although the puppies may not eat much at a single sitting, they usually like to eat at frequent intervals throughout the day.

Behavior and training: By this time, you have "mini-dogs." They will wash themselves, play games with each other, their toys, and you, and many will come when you call them. Be sure to take them to their papers or outside after meals, during play sessions, and after naps. These are the usual times that puppies need to eliminate.

7-8 weeks

Feeding: Offer dry food 3 - 4 times a day. Leave down a bowl of water for them to eat and drink at will. If you have a litter with a bitch, she should only be allowing brief nursing sessions, if any. *Do not feed the puppies table scraps. **Many human foods are poisonous to dogs like onions and chocolate and grapes and many others.***

8+ weeks

Feeding: Offer dry food 3 times a day. Leave down a bowl of water for them to eat and drink at will.

Behavior and training: By the end of this week, prepare yourself to find them homes or return them to the facility where they came from for spay neuter surgery.

Keeping Puppies Healthy

A healthy puppy has bright eyes, a nice coat, and a plump belly. Younger puppies are content to sleep between feedings. As they approach 8 weeks they begin to spend more time playing. Normal body temperature for a puppy is 100 - 102.5. Unfortunately, puppies do become ill and sometimes die while being fostered, so it is important to take steps to prevent disease and treat it appropriately as soon as it appears.

A note about treating your puppy: In general, if you have consulted with our veterinarian and need to treat a puppy, try to medicate him in an impersonal way. If you hold the puppy in your lap to medicate him, he will associate being picked up with being medicated and in worst case become scared every time you go to cuddle him. It is better to put the puppy up on a countertop, maybe wrapping him in a towel to administer medication. It is also worth while to give extra praise and if appropriate give him a treat before and after medicating him, as this will help ease the stress of the situation and may even result in a positive association to medication time.

Abnormal signs to watch for in a puppy:

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is common in puppies and be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes (too concentrated formula, new brand of formula, etc), stress, overfeeding, and other causes. If the diarrhea is mild and the puppy is otherwise alert and playful, you can try giving it less food but more often and monitor closely. Also ensure that the puppy gets a lot of fluid as they are prone dehydration if not. This can be done by diluting the formula with extra water, or providing the puppy with clean water either in a saucer or in a bottle/syringe if the puppy does not yet drink from a saucer. If the diarrhea is severe, lasts more than 3 or 4 feedings, or contains blood or obvious parasites, you should call a veterinarian; if possible you should also bring a sample of its feces in a Ziploc bag.

Vomiting

If your puppy is vomiting, it is possible that the puppy is eating his meals too quickly. You should watch him when he eats and not allow him to eat too much too quickly. If your puppy vomits 2-3 times in a row, it should see a veterinarian as this could be a sign of an infectious disease.

How to Control Fleas

It is essential that your home be free of fleas before bringing home a small puppy. If your foster puppy already has fleas, it is important to remove them without harming the dog. One safe way to remove fleas from very young puppies (less than 6 - 8 weeks) is daily flea combing. If the puppy is less than 6 weeks old and is heavily infected, a flea bath may be necessary to save its life. The puppy must be kept warm at all times. Use warm water and immediately towel it dry afterwards. Then follow up with a heating lamp or warm hair dryer until the puppy is completely dry, be careful not to burn the puppy. Use a shampoo labeled as safe for puppies.

All bedding needs to be washed in hot soapy water as soon as fleas are spotted. The most effective way to remove eggs from the house is by using a vacuum cleaner. The vacuum bag should first be treated by placing flea powder, a piece of flea collar, or flea spray inside it. The bag should be emptied immediately after vacuuming. To kill adults and larvae, the house can be treated with flea foggers or sprays, boric acid products, or other commercial products.

Kennel cough

Kennel cough is an extremely contagious respiratory disease that is often seen in animal shelters. Puppies with kennel cough typically cough or sneeze, and have nasal discharge. Kennel cough is often

difficult for puppies to overcome, any puppy that is coughing or sneezing repeatedly, or has nasal and/or eye discharge requires veterinary attention.

Ringworm

Ringworm is actually caused by a fungus, related to athlete's foot. On people and dogs, ringworm is most often shaped in a regular ring. The dog's fur will often fall out, leaving a round bare spot with a visible ring. Ringworm causes little distress and is not an emergency, but it is contagious to cats, dogs, and people. If you or your pets contract ringworm, you will need to seek treatment from your doctor and veterinarian (respectively). Everything the puppies touched while in your home will need to be disinfected with a bleach solution (at least 1 part bleach to 10 parts water, equivalent to 1+1/2 cup of bleach per gallon of water) or steam cleaned, it is recommended to repeat cleaning as ringworm spores are very hardy and can easily spread among other dogs and re-infect their hosts. If you have fostered a litter with ringworm, you should thoroughly clean and disinfect the area they were kept in and if you decide to foster another litter it is recommended to keep them in a different room than the ringworm infected litter.

Medical Concerns

While the shelter checks puppies over to make sure they appear healthy upon arrival, most illnesses have an incubation period between exposure and the onset of symptoms. Please watch your fosters carefully for any changes in their normal behavior or habits. If your foster animal shows these symptoms, please call!

- Diarrhea — If stools are soft but not watery, monitor for two days. If there is no improvement, call the third day. If stools are watery, call that day.
- Vomiting — If foster vomits food two or more times, call that day. If foster vomits bile or liquid, please call that day. If vomiting is frequent, call immediately.
- Loss of appetite — Can be normal the first day as foster adjusts to a new home. If foster is not eating the second day, call that day.
- Dehydration — Dehydration is generally associated with diarrhea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, pinch the animal's skin gently. If the skin springs back slowly (takes more than one second), the puppy is dehydrated. Call immediately.
- Sneezing - More than three times a day, call that day.
- Coughing — Call immediately.
- Hair loss — Call immediately.
- Watery, goopy or red eyes — Call that day.
- Itchy/dirty ears — Call that day.
- If your foster animal is on medication but is getting worse or not getting better as expected, please call immediately.
- Some animals do not show traditional signs of illness. They may be less active than normal, or avoid other animals or people. Please call us if you notice any of these changes.

A Few Words on Puppy Mouthing

- It's important to discourage mouthiness — what's not so bad at 6 weeks can become a real problem at 6 months.
- If the puppy wants to mouth you or your clothes, gently close your fingers around the puppy's muzzle, and firmly tell her "off."
- You can also employ "time-outs" if the puppy becomes over-excited and mouthy. Leave the room or ignore the puppy for a while, perhaps giving the puppy something acceptable to chew instead.

A puppy or dog who hasn't learned bite inhibition with people doesn't recognize the sensitivity of human skin, and so he bites too hard, even in play. Some behaviorists and trainers believe that a dog who has learned to use his mouth gently when interacting with people will be less likely to bite hard and break skin if he ever bites someone in a situation apart from play-like when he's afraid or in pain. Puppies usually learn bite inhibition during play with other puppies. If you watch a group of puppies playing, you'll see plenty of chasing, pouncing and wrestling. Puppies also bite each other all over. Every now and then, a pup will bite his playmate too hard. The victim of the painful bite yelps and usually stops playing. The offender is often taken aback by the yelp and also stops playing for a moment. However, pretty soon, both playmates are back in the game. Through this kind of interaction, puppies learn to control the intensity of their bites so that no one gets hurt and the play can continue without interruption. If puppies can learn how to be gentle from each other, they can also learn the same lesson from people.

When you play with your puppy, let him mouth on your hands. Continue play until he bites especially hard. When he does, immediately give a high-pitched yelp, as if you're hurt, and let your hand go limp. This should startle your puppy and cause him to stop mouthing you, at least momentarily. Praise your puppy for stopping or for licking you. Resume whatever you were doing before. If your puppy bites you hard again, yelp again. Repeat these steps no more than three times within a 15-minute period. If you find that yelping alone doesn't work, you can switch to a time-out procedure. Time-outs are often very effective for curbing mouthing in puppies. When your puppy delivers a hard bite, yelp loudly. Then, when he startles and turns to look at you or looks around, remove your hand. Either ignore him for 10 to 20 seconds or, if he starts mouthing on you again, get up and move away for 10 to 20 seconds. After the short time-out, return to your puppy and encourage him to play with you again. It's important to teach him that gentle play continues, but painful play stops. Play with your puppy until he bites hard again. When he does, repeat the sequence above. When your puppy isn't delivering really hard bites anymore, you can tighten up your rules a little. Require your puppy to be even gentler. Yelp and stop play in response to moderately hard bites. Persist with this process of yelping and then ignoring your puppy or giving him a time-out for his hardest bites. As those disappear, do the same for his next-hardest bites, and so on, until your puppy can play with your hands very gently, controlling the force of his mouthing so that you feel little or no pressure at all.

Substitute a toy or chew bone when your puppy tries to gnaw on fingers or toes. When your puppy mouths / bites, give him a replacement! Rope toys or Nylabones or similar puppy teething toys are fine. Small good quality rawhides are okay too. Puppies should be supervised with most toys.

Puppies often mouth on people's hands when stroked, patted and scratched (unless they're sleepy or distracted). If your puppy gets all riled up when you pet him, distract him by feeding him small treats from your other hand. This will help your puppy get used to being touched without mouthing.

If your puppy bites at your feet and ankles, carry his favorite tug toy in your pocket. Whenever he ambushes you, instantly stop moving your feet. Take out the tug toy and wave it enticingly. When your puppy grabs the toy, start moving again. If you don't happen to have the toy available, just freeze and wait for your puppy to stop mouthing you. The second he stops, praise and get a toy to reward him. Repeat these steps until your puppy gets used to watching you move around without going after your feet or ankles.

Provide plenty of interesting and new toys so that your puppy will play with them instead of gnawing on you or your clothing. Be patient and understanding. Playful mouthing is normal behavior for a puppy or young dog!

Letting Go

Your foster puppy is ready to come back when she is at least 8 weeks if she was underage, or healthy if she was sick, or more sociable if she was shy. It is normal to feel sad when you return your foster puppy. You need to remember what a wonderful thing you did for your little foster. You gave her your time, your attention, and your love, and you made it possible for her to go to a new loving home with a family of her very own. You are a very special person to have done all that for the little stranger who came to your door.