

Caring for your dog



People and dogs have lived together for over 10,000 years. Dogs are kept for companionship, guarding, herding, and also as assistance dogs for people with sight, hearing or physical difficulties.

How to care for your dog

In order to stay healthy and happy, a dog needs:

- a balanced diet
- veterinary care
- exercise
- a bed with a clean blanket
- to be groomed regularly, especially if they have long hair
- to be trained
- to be registered if available
- to be looked after if you go on holiday
- companionship – dogs are social animals and will be unhappy if left alone for long periods of time.



Where your dog lives

- A dog that lives outside needs a shelter to give protection from hot or cold weather.
- A dog needs comfortable and clean bedding.
- If your dog has to be tethered, use a long running line (pictured above). Fixed chains or rope can become tangled around the dog causing injury.
- A dog should wear a collar with an identity tag in case of escape.

Food and water

- A dog needs a balanced diet. Household scraps will not be sufficient to maintain good body weight or strong muscles.
- Sharp bones can be dangerous, as they may become stuck in the throat or cause problems if swallowed.
- Fresh water should always be available in a clean bowl.



Exercise

- A dog should not be permanently tied up: dogs need regular exercise to prevent boredom, obesity and over-grown claws.
- A walk each day, and perhaps a game with a stick or ball, will help to keep your dog alert and active.
- A bored dog may bark excessively, annoying neighbours.

Hygiene

- A dog that is kept in dirty conditions can become infested with worms, ticks, fleas or lice. Ask your vet for advice.
- Keep your dog and the dog's living area clean.



Vaccinations

- Dogs are vulnerable to many diseases (e.g. rabies) that can also be dangerous to humans.
- Vaccination helps prevent illness and reduces the risk of infection to other dogs.
- Dogs need regular de-worming.



Grooming

- Regular brushing helps to keep your dog's coat clean and free of tangles and provides an opportunity to check for parasites.
- Grooming helps to get your dog used to being handled.

Breeding

- Every year hundreds of thousands of dogs are destroyed because there are not enough suitable homes.
- Female dogs can produce many puppies every year. In six years a pair of dogs and their offspring can produce 67,000 puppies.
- By constantly producing and rearing puppies, the health of a female dog can suffer.
- Pregnant and lactating female dogs need extra food.
- Puppies generally suckle from their mothers for about three weeks, gradually starting to eat additional food.
- A female dog is naturally protective of her young and can be aggressive at this time. A quiet place should be provided for them.
- Puppies should stay with their mother until they are at least eight weeks old.
- **To prevent unwanted puppies, have your dog spayed/neutered – an operation performed by a vet.**



Spaying/neutering

- Modern veterinary equipment and drugs make surgery safe and recovery quick.
- Ask your vet when to have your dog spayed/neutered.
- Your dog does not need to have a litter before she is spayed.
- Early age neutering from eight weeks of age is now accepted as a positive action.
- Once a female dog has been neutered she will never come into season again and male dogs will not bother her.
- In a female, spaying can reduce the risk of mammary tumours.
- In a male, neutering can help to reduce aggression and roaming.



Consult your vet

Remember your vet can advise you on:

- the type/breed of dog that would best suit your life style and expectations
- diet
- training your dog
- treatment against parasites
- vaccination
- spaying/neutering
- any other health concerns.



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