



# ADOPTED

A WELCOME HOME GUIDE

# *Welcome*

## TO THE VBSPCA FAMILY

Congratulations on adopting a new canine friend!

In the following pages you will find helpful information designed to support your new pet's transition into a new home environment. The first few days and weeks are critical, so please read this booklet carefully to be sure you are setting them up for success.

Thank you for adopting and supporting our mission of eliminating animal suffering while increasing human compassion. We're happy to have you as part of our VBSPCA family.

## Essential Items

Everything your dog needs to get settled in their new home

- ☐ Food & Water Dishes
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Treats
- ☐ Bed
- ☐ Leash
- ☐ Toys
- ☐ Collar & ID Tag
- ☐ Pet Carrier -or- Safety Harness & Seatbelt Connector



## *Did You Know?*

Many of the items on this list are available for purchase at the VBSPCA Pet Retail Store located inside the shelter. All proceeds support the homeless animals of the VBSPCA.

# Basic Canine Care



## Food & Water

Your dog was sent home with a bag of Purina One dog food, the same food they enjoyed during their time at the shelter. We recommend using the same brand of food at home or transition slowly to another high quality food. You should follow all feeding instructions provided on the packaging or as directed by your veterinarian.

Dogs should be fed twice a day as free feeding can lead to obesity. Any food that has not been eaten within 24 hours should be thrown away and replaced with fresh food.

Fresh water should always be readily available to your dog. Food and water dishes should be cleaned daily.

If changing brands of food, It's best to change your pet's diet gradually and systematically.



**PURINA**  
Shelter Champions



### **The Comforts of Home**

Just like humans, dogs need a place to eat, sleep, and go to the bathroom. Be sure to provide them with a bed or blankets to sleep on and a quiet place to eat. You'll find information on crate training on page 5 and tips for housebreaking on page 7.



### **Toys & Enrichment**

A busy dog is a happy dog. Providing toys and playing with your dog helps keep them physically and mentally healthy. You'll find more information on the importance of play on page 10.



### **Grooming**

Some dog breeds shed while others require regular trips to the groomer. However, all dogs should be bathed and brushed regularly to keep their coats clean and reduce shedding/matting. Consult with your veterinarian if you have questions on grooming for your pet.



### **Veterinary Care**

Follow up with all scheduled veterinary appointments as directed by your adoption counselor. Additionally, your dog should see a veterinarian once per year for an exam, vaccinations, and flea and heartworm preventatives. Seek medical care immediately if your pet is sick or injured.

**Upper respiratory infections are especially common for recently adopted animals. If your dog is sneezing, coughing, or having trouble breathing within the first 10 days of being adopted from the VBSPCA, bring your pet to the shelter to be checked out free of charge. Please check your adoption paperwork for current adoption referral hours.**

# Crate Training

Crate training your dog is a great way to introduce them to your home. Not only does it give them a safe space to go, it keeps them out of trouble as they learn the house rules. Here are some important tips to remember while crate training:



Initially allow your dog to explore the crate by tossing treats inside of it and leaving the door open. Gradually work up to closing the door for short periods of time.

Put a soft blanket or towel inside the crate to make your dog comfortable.

Build a positive association with the crate by feeding your dog inside of it and giving them a safe enrichment toy such as a Kong.

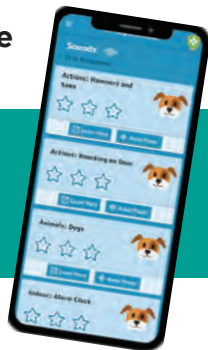
Gradually build up the amount of time that your dog is left alone in the crate.

Always provide water for your dog while they are inside their crate.

**Never use the crate as a punishment.**

## Track Your Pup's Progress

Your dog will encounter all kinds of new sights, sounds, and people. Download the Pupstanding app for ways to help make these experiences less stressful and track your pup's progress.



## Rule of 3

This is a general guideline for the adjustment period of a pet after adoption. Every pet is unique and will adjust differently. Please have patience and allow your new pet time to settle in.



### 3 Days

To Decompress

- Feels overwhelmed, afraid, or unsure
- May not be comfortable enough to be confident
- May not want to eat or drink
- May shut down or hide



### 3 Weeks

To Learn Your Routine

- Feels more comfortable
- Figures out their environment and gets into a routine
- Starts showing their personality
- Possibly shows some behavioral issues



### 3 Months

To Start Feeling at Home

- Finally feels comfortable in their new home
- Begins to build trust and forms a bond with you
- Has a sense of security with your family
- Sets into your routine



# Housebreaking 101

## Setting Your Dog Up for Success

**Start small.** Limit your dog to one or two rooms in the house. This will help you monitor them and prevent mistakes. Take them outside if you see them sniffing or circling, as these are signs that they need to go to the bathroom.

**Establish a routine.** Take your dog outside frequently and on a consistent schedule, especially after eating, sleeping, and playing.

**Praise, not punishment.** Give your dog verbal praise and a treat for going potty outside. Don't punish them when they have an accident.

**Interrupt if you catch them in the act.**

Make a noise or clap to stop your pup from going potty inside, then take them outside to finish their business.

**Keep it clean.** Thoroughly clean any soiled area as dogs are more likely to use the bathroom in a spot that still smells like urine or feces.



### Common Reasons for Housebreaking Problems

Each dog learns at their own pace, but mistakes can happen even if you have been consistent with your training. Common reasons for ongoing issues include urinary tract or parasite infections, separation anxiety, and fearful or excitement based urination. If your dog is having trouble with the housebreaking process, visit your veterinarian to rule out any medical problems.



# Pet-to-Pet Introductions

Introducing your new pet to other pets in the home should be a gradual process. Slow introductions are critical in establishing successful relationships, as they help prevent fearful, territorial, or aggressive behavior. Every pet's time frame is different, so please be patient.

## Keep Pets Separate

Keep your new pet confined to their safe space.

Feed your pets on either side of the door to the safe space so they can get used to each other's scents and associate them with something positive (food). Start off with the food bowls a little farther away from the door, and gradually move them closer as your pets become more comfortable.

## Swap Scents

Swap blankets and beds between your pets. Rub a towel on one animal and put it underneath the other's food dish. Do not swap items between two pets if one of them is sick.

## Switch Spaces

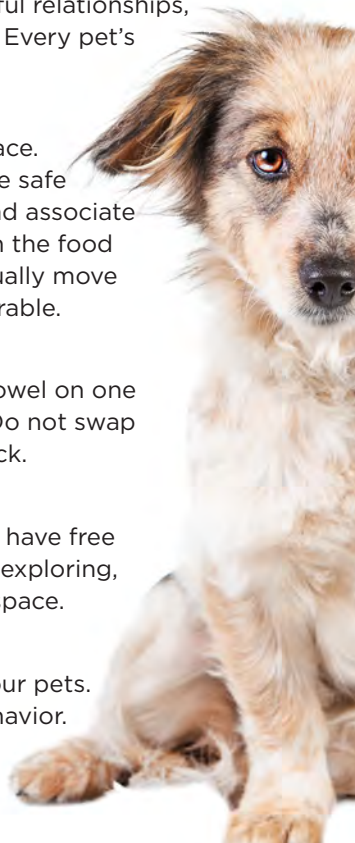
Once your new pet is feeling comfortable, let them have free time in the rest of the home. While your new pet is exploring, place your resident pets in the new pet's safe space.

## Supervised Meetings

Facilitate short, supervised meetings between your pets.

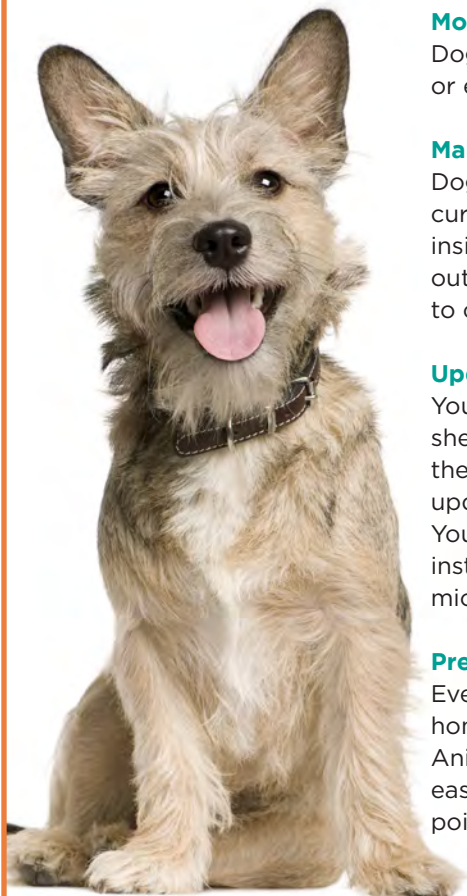
Increase their time together based on their behavior.

If your pets become fearful or aggressive during these interactions, separate them and start back at the first step.



If you are introducing your new dog to a cat, make sure your dog is leashed. Continue with leashed interactions until both animals are comfortable and calm.

# Keeping Your Dog **Safe**



## **Monitor Your Dog Outdoors**

Dogs should either be on a leash or in a fenced-in or enclosed area when they are outside.

## **Make Sure Your Dog is Carrying ID**

Dogs need to wear a collar and ID tag with your current contact information even when they are inside your home. If your dog accidentally gets out, it is important that whoever finds him is able to contact you.

## **Update Your Dog's Microchip Information**

Your dog was microchipped before leaving our shelter. It is important to register your pet with the microchip company and keep your pet's file updated with current contact information. Your adoption counselor provided you with instructions on how to update your pet's microchip information.

## **Prevent Pet Poisoning**

Everyday items found inside and outside your home can be toxic to animals. Download the Animal Poison by ASPCA app so that you can easily reference whether a particular item is poisonous to your pet.

# Enriching Your Dog's Life

Dogs need exercise, play, and social interaction to be happy. By providing your new pet with enrichment items and quality time, you will keep them physically and mentally stimulated - and out of trouble!

**Toys:** Give your dog a variety of toys such as squeak toys, balls, and chew toys.

**Food/Treat Dispensers:** Puzzle toys, Kongs, and other dispensers keep your dog occupied and rewards their efforts.

**Walks:** Take your dog for walks and vary the route when you can. This not only gives your dog exercise, but also allows them to discover new sights and smells.

**Structured Play:** Playing with your dog every day is as important as feeding them every day. Try games like fetch and tug, but always stop play if your dog becomes overstimulated or mouthy.

**Training:** Whether you are working on proper behaviors or teaching them new tricks, training exercises your dog's mind and body as well as improves obedience.



Even appropriately sized toys can be hazardous because of the way they are made. Be sure to supervise your pet with any toy that could become a choking hazard.



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For additional information to help you care for your pet,  
visit our online Pet Care Resources Center at

**[vbspca.com/pet-care-resources](https://vbspca.com/pet-care-resources)**