



**Helentor Amstaffs**  
*KUSA registered and Accredited*  
*Amstaff Breeders*  
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## **How to Take Care of Puppies**

You've finally received what you've been wanting for a long time - a brand new, beautiful and adorable puppy!! But the question is, "How can I take care of my puppy?" If this question is somewhere on your mind, keep on reading for helpful tips on how to take care of and raise your puppy. Remember, this page is for people who have just adopted or purchased an eight week old or older puppy. Pups are usually weaned at 8-weeks and it is unhealthy for them to be taken away from their mother before that age. When you get a puppy you should give the new pup as much attention as possible. If he/she has training problems do not resort to physical pain, take them to a training school. When they are out, play with them a lot and that's how you begin to take care of your puppy.

- **Make sure that the puppy you are getting is right for you.** Does its coat suit your climate? Is it small enough to live in your apartment or house? Do its energy levels suit the amount of exercise it will get? These are all important questions to answer to ensure the wellbeing of your puppy and the overall happiness of your household.



- ***Puppy-proof your house:*** Puppies love to explore with their mouths, so to keep your puppy and your house safe, you'll need to take a few precautions. Remove breakable items from the area where you plan to keep your puppy. Keep all electrical cords raised or covered and close all low windows. You should also lock away cleaning supplies/chemicals that are toxic to puppies. Get a trash can that is too tall for your puppy to get into and too heavy to be knocked over. Think about getting a folding gate to keep your puppy confined to a certain room or area.



- ***Buy necessary supplies.*** The kitchen or bathroom is an ideal place for the bed because they generally are warm and have washable floors. Here is a list of things you'll need to get you started:



- Two metal bowls. These are better than glass because they do not chip and stay cleaner. One for food and one for water. If you have other pets, be sure to give the puppy its own bowls to avoid conflict in your household.
  - A puppy bed. Some options are: a crate with a crate pillow, a snuggle nest, or a wicker basket with lots of towels. Whatever you choose, make sure it is always soft, comfy and dry. Also keep on hand a blanket for in case of cool weather. Make sure that your puppy has its own bed to avoid conflict with your other pets.
  - Toys. Your puppy will be a ball of boundless energy, so make sure you get plenty of toys. You should have a variety chew toys and soft toys. Make sure the toys are indestructible, if not your pup can choke and die. Also remember that you should not give rawhide to pups as a toy. It's only for treats.
  - Puppy treats. Make sure you get a variety of crunchy and soft. The soft will be good for training, and the crunchy will help clean teeth.
  - Puppy food: Do some research on dog food. Kibble, canned, home cooked, and feeding a raw diet are all options for a puppy. Make sure you buy a puppy food with no dyes, artificial flavours or preservatives in it as many dogs, like people, are allergic to these additives.
  - Basic grooming tools. Get a bristle brush, nail clippers, dog shampoo, dog conditioner, dog toothpaste, toothbrush, and towels.
  - A harness and tag. Get a nylon harness, and metal tags a traditional lead hurts their necks and can injure their throats. Remember when sizing the harness that puppies will grow.
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- **Get the puppy comfortable in your home.** It can be scary getting introduced to a new home for the first time, so make sure to give your puppy extra love and attention the first few days. Have your puppy sleep in your room at night so that they don't feel isolated or alone.



- Take a blanket or dog bed to the breeder or pound from which you will pick up the puppy. Do this a few days before you pick up the puppy so that your new companion can sleep on the blanket and begin to get accustomed to your home before it even arrives!
  - Show your puppy around the house as soon as you bring him home. Let him walk in all the rooms and backyard.
- **Pet your puppy often.** It's important to stroke your pet's body, legs, and head several times daily. This will help your puppy feel loved, as well as allow you to create a strong bond.



- **Handle your puppy with care.** Puppies, like human babies, are fragile. Gently scoop up your puppy if you need to pick it up, keeping one hand under its chest at all times.



- **Protect your puppy.** Puppies are naturally curious and even with the most attentive care they sometimes get out of the yard and lost. Make sure your puppy wears a comfortable collar—fitted at about 5 weeks and loosened gradually to accommodate the puppy's growth—with a tag listing its name and your address and/or phone number. Many jurisdictions require licensing of dogs, but it's a good idea to get your puppy licensed even if it's not required. Your pup has been micro chipped which assists in locating the pup should it ever go missing
  - Provide a safe area for your puppy to play. A securely-fenced yard is ideal and experiment a little to find which toys he or she likes best.



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## Feeding

- **Choose your dog food wisely.** While it's tempting to go for the cheap stuff, this is generally not the best choice for your dog. Look for foods that incorporate high quality proteins from fish, chicken, lamb, and/or eggs. Also look for a way to feed your dog's fatty acid needs to keep its coat shiny and healthy. Generally, you'll want to feed your dogs a ratio of 5:1

omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids. This can come in your food or in supplements such as salmon oil specially designed for dogs.



- **Feed your puppy properly.** Feed your puppy small amounts of specially-formulated puppy food several times a day. Dry food is best as it cleans their teeth and lessens gum disease. The amount of food for each feeding depends on the breed; look up the recommended amounts for your specific breed. Feed your puppy only the smallest amount recommended for its breed, age, and size, and increase this if the puppy seems to be too thin or as directed by your veterinarian. The number of daily feedings depend on the puppy's age:



- 6-8 weeks: 4 times daily
  - 12-20 weeks: 3 times daily
  - 20+ weeks: 2 times daily
- **Avoid buffet-style feeding.** While it may be easier for you to just throw out a bunch of food for your puppy to eat when hungry, this is not a healthy way to feed your dog. Dogs, especially puppies, will generally eat the food that is available; they don't stop just when they're full.



- Make sure your puppy always has adequate fresh water available. Unlike food, you should leave a full bowl of fresh water out for your dogs at all times. Be aware that they're going to have to pee shortly after they drink large amounts of water. Take them outside so that they don't have accidents in your house.
- **Watch your puppy eat.** Watching your puppy eat is a good way to gauge their health; if they seem uninterested in their food, something is wrong. In addition, feeding your puppy some of their food out of your hand and/or being extremely present during their feeding process will help better the puppy/owner bond.



- **Avoid harmful foods.** It's tempting to feed your puppy table scraps, but remember that human food can make your dog unhealthy and overweight. Even more serious; grapes, raisins, tea, alcohol, garlic, onions, avocados, salt, and chocolate are some of the things that are toxic to your dog.



- In addition to posing a serious health risk, feeding your dogs table scraps can train them to beg. Begging is one of the hardest habits to break. To ensure good health, only feed your dog food that is specifically designed for dogs and ignore them completely while you're eating at the table.

## Health

- **Keep your puppy's environment safe.** An unsafe or dirty environment can be detrimental to the wellbeing of your puppy and later, can be financially draining in veterinary bills.



- Air out your puppy's bedding daily, and wash or replace it weekly. [House-train](#) your puppy when appropriate, and immediately replace your puppy's bedding if he or she has an accident in it.
  - Get rid of harmful plants: There are a number of household plants that are actually toxic to puppies who like to chew. Keep lily of the valley, oleander, azalea, yew, foxglove, rhododendron, rhubarb, and shamrock far away from your puppy.
- **Make sure your puppy gets plenty of exercise.** Different breeds require different amounts of exercise (this is a factor you should consider when choosing a puppy). As puppies' bodies are still developing, try to avoid any sort of rough play or strenuous exercise such as long

(over 1.5 km) runs. Take the puppy into the yard or garden after meals, and begin taking your puppy for short walks about a week after its second round of vaccinations.



- Try to give your puppy about an hour of walk time a day, broken into 2 to 4 walks. Allow them to interact with other (friendly) dogs they meet (assuming your puppy has had its shots) and to leave scent markings. This is important for your dog's confidence, especially if male.
- Socialize your puppy. Once vaccinated, puppies should be encouraged to play with friendly puppies, grown dogs, and other animals. Make sure the other animal tolerates the puppy well, and do not leave the animals alone for even a minute at first.



- **Schedule a visit to the vet.** Choose a vet. Like with physicians, it's a good idea to ask your friends for vet recommendations. Get a few choices and visit each clinic. Find one that is friendly, well managed, and smells clean. Ask questions to the vet and the staff—they should always answer to the best of their ability. Be sure you feel comfortable with whichever vet you choose.



- When your puppy is 6 to 9 weeks old, you'll want to take it to the vet to get vaccinated. Make sure you talk to your vet about distemper, Para influenza, canine hepatitis, and parvovirus. They may have suggestions for other important vaccines as well, depending on the risks of your particular dog.
  - Make sure to get deworming medication during your first vet visit. This is not only a good idea for your puppy's health, but also for your own: many of the parasites that infect your puppy can be passed to humans and cause health problems in your family.
  - In addition to your first visit, you'll want to go to the vet when your puppy is 12 to 16 weeks old to get a rabies vaccination.
  - Begin thinking about whether you want to spay or neuter your dog. This is usually done when your dog is around 20 weeks old. Unless you foresee wanting to have puppies, it's a good idea to spay and neuter; thousands of unwanted puppies end up in animal shelters each year.
  - Schedule a vet check-up for your puppy at least every six months. Also, schedule vet appointments for the proper vaccinations. Teach your puppy that going to the vet is an enjoyable (or at least tolerable) experience by bringing treats with you while you are there.
- **Watch for health problems.** Keep an eye on your puppy to catch any problems that may arise. The eyes should be bright, and the eyes and nostrils should be free of discharge. The puppy's coat should be clean and shiny; watch out for matting or thinning. Watch out for bumps, inflammation, or rashes on the skin, as well as signs of diarrhoea around the tail.



## Grooming

- **Brush your puppy daily.** Brushing keeps your pet clean and healthy and allows you to check its skin and fur for any problems. The type of brush and other grooming and washing requirements vary by breed, so check with your veterinarian or breeder for more information. Brush all over the puppy, including its belly and hind legs. Start when your puppy is young so that they are not afraid of the brush.



- **Trim your puppy's nails.** Start clipping your puppy's nails early on. Ask your vet to show you the proper nail cutting technique to use so as to avoid hurting your puppy. Nails that are too long can cause strain to your dog's wrists as well as damage floors, furniture, and possibly people. Plan to trim your puppy's nails weekly unless directed otherwise by your vet.



- **Keep your puppy's teeth and gums healthy.** Chew toys help a puppy to keep its teeth healthy. Toothbrushes and toothpaste made specifically for dogs are also very helpful in keeping your pup's teeth clean and healthy. Be sure to condition your puppy to having their teeth brushed so that it is a positive experience for them.

- **Only bathe your puppy once every 3 weeks or so.** If they smell bad, use dog scent spray instead, and look into what could be causing the odour. Washing more than that can dry out dog skin and strip important oils from their coat.



## Training

- **Housebreak your dog.** Start housebreaking your dog the first day you bring it home. The longer you wait, the more mess you'll have to deal with, and the harder it will be to train your dog. Consider using training pads for the first few days. While these should not be used instead of taking your dog outside, they're useful as an intermediate stage, especially if you don't have a backyard.

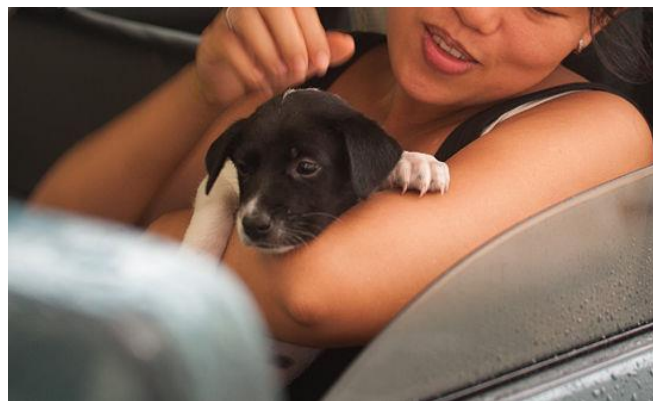


- **Consider crate training your dog.** Crate training is helpful for many reasons. First of all, it curbs destructive behaviour, allowing you to sleep and leave your dog alone without worrying. Second of all, it is a very effective method of potty training (when used correctly).

- **Teach your dog basic commands.** Your puppy will be most able to learn commands while he is young, so begin teaching as soon as possible. In addition, you can use basic commands as a basis for more complicated tricks later.



- **Get your dog used to car rides.** Take your puppy on regular car rides to get him used to traveling with you; otherwise every time you get in the car he will think he is being taken to a vet.



- **Enter in an obedience class.** Not only will this help you to train your dog more effectively but it will socialize your puppy; helping him learn how to act around unfamiliar dogs and people.

