



## Puppy Raising

# Your first week

Version 2.0

Updated November 2024

### Sections

There are 5 topics within this document. By following each link below you will be directed straight to that area of guidance.

#### 1. Feeding

#### 2. Toilet training

#### 3. Sleeping in the day

#### 4. Overnight

#### 5. Toileting chart



# Overview

Ideally, you have already read the guidance: 'Our four principles', 'Foundation knowledge', 'Preparing for your puppy' and 'Essential information'.

This guidance supports you in applying our principles to make the most of your first week with your puppy.

As a reminder, the principles are;



**Knowing your puppy**



**Teaching foundations**



**Managing for success**



**Being a partnership**

The main thing is that you use this time to enjoy and get to know each other. Stay close to home and don't worry about teaching cues or what they may need in the future, they are just a puppy. Alongside this guidance, we'll support you with any other information you need.

## Summary of updates to version 1.1

Guidance condensed.

Information on vets and health record card now comes with the puppy.

What to do with your puppy is now covered in Learning to play and Mouthing.

# 1. Feeding



## Knowing your puppy

Until your puppy is around 12 weeks old, you should feed them four times a day. Feed them as many meals as possible in their crate, pen or sleeping area. This will help them to learn that their bed, crate or pen is a nice place to be. The amount your puppy is fed will be on their health record card. Unless advised otherwise, please continue with this amount and diet.

## Timings of feeds

Young puppies shouldn't go any longer than 12 hours between feeds. If their last feed is at 7pm, then their first feed should be by 7am. Try to always allow some time between your puppy waking up and having their breakfast.

Any meals during the day can be at a time that suits you, but ideally you should space feeds out evenly between the first and last feed, and at least one hour before or after any exercise.



## Managing for success

## Ordering more food

Please order more food over the next few days as per the instructions found in the 'Essential information' guidance. The food your puppy needs will be the same they arrived with unless advised otherwise.



A puppy eating treats out of a KONG® toy.



## Teaching foundations

Give your puppy the opportunity to wander in and out of their crate, pen or sleeping area whilst eating in the first few days.

Once your puppy readily goes into their sleeping location for their food, start to close the door of the crate/pen or room door (if not using either of the first two) when they are eating.

Open the door before they finish all their food. Monitor their body language (refer to body language in '[Foundation knowledge](#)') to ensure they are relaxed throughout.

For further information refer to Using food to help your puppy learn in the 'Foundation knowledge', and the Toys and treats section in 'Preparing for your Puppy'.



## Being a partnership

Any food rewards should be taken from your puppy's daily food allowance. Teaching your puppy using food, toys and play will help you to develop a bond and teach you more about their likes and dislikes.

## 2. Toilet training



### Knowing your puppy

Young puppies need the opportunity to toilet frequently. How often varies between individuals. Some can hold on longer than others. To start, give your puppy the opportunity to toilet every 20-30 minutes. You can adjust this as you get to know your puppy's habits and routine.

Possible signs that your puppy needs the toilet:

- Extra/new interest in sniffing
- Any circling
- Slightly dipped posture
- Sudden loss of interest in an activity
- Always consider taking your puppy into the garden to toilet after they have:
- Woken up
- Eaten
- Had a period of play
- Engaged in some training with you.

Puppies will have their own preferences about which surface they prefer to toilet on. Use your first week to start learning about their needs and routine. Understanding this in full will take much longer than the first week you're together.



A puppy circling and sniffing the grass.





## Managing for success

When your puppy is very young, spend time close to the door that leads to the garden to help you get outdoors quickly. You can buy carpet protector and put this in any carpeted rooms your puppy will spend time in.

Use baby gates and pens to restrict access to certain areas and rooms while you're still teaching your puppy where to toilet.

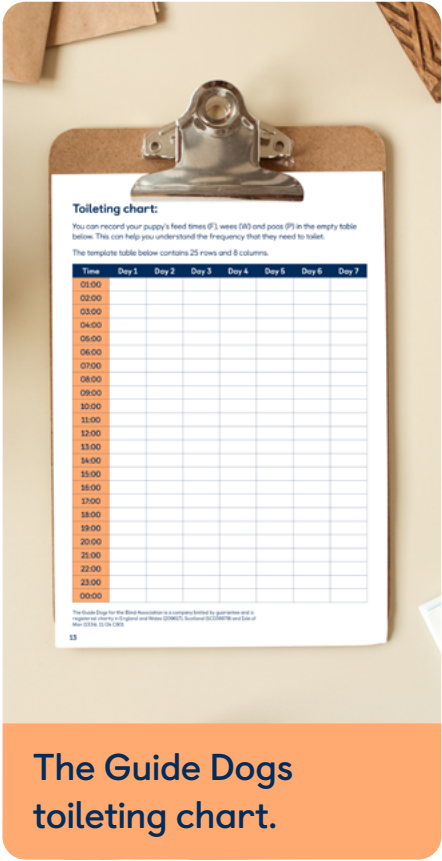
Keep the door to your garden closed and supervise them when you take them out to toilet rather than allowing them to go in and out without you.

We've created a [table](#) at the end of this document that you can use to keep a record of your puppy's toileting. Putting this on the door to the garden can help you keep a track of when your puppy last toileted. It will also help you see the progress you and your puppy are making.



## Teaching foundations

Reward any toileting in your garden with one of your puppy's biscuits from their food allowance, a game and/or verbal praise. The priority at this stage is to teach them that toileting outside leads to rewards. When you're ready you can refer to the 'Toileting routine' guidance.





## Being a partnership

If your puppy has an accident in the house, clear it up with an appropriate cleaner to remove all traces and scents that could encourage them to toilet there again.

It's very important that you don't tell them off or get frustrated. Over time, you'll spot the signs they need to go more easily and be able to get them out in time to reduce accidents.

If you're giving your puppy the opportunity to toilet in the garden but they are then toileting in the house shortly afterwards, there are a number of actions you can take:

- Reduce the size of the area in the garden they have access to, minimising distractions.
- Once they've toileted, spend a few extra minutes in the garden with them, engaging in play or another activity; you don't want them to learn to delay toileting when outside so they can extend their time in the garden.
- Avoid paying direct attention to them until they've toileted; let them take the time to sniff, investigate the area and relax.
- Once your puppy has toileted outside, reward them well.

If you're concerned about your puppy's toileting or would like some further advice then please contact us.

Always supervise your puppy when they're in the garden. That way, you'll know what they're doing, and they won't be learning to enjoy inappropriate games such as chewing plants.

### 3. Sleeping in the day



#### Knowing your puppy

Young puppies require more sleep than most people realise. They should have 18- 20 hours per day. Like young children, puppies can get overtired and give the impression that they can just keep going.

Most young puppies will generally want to be near to you for comfort throughout the day and night. Being apart from you is a skill your puppy will learn and that we'll work towards with you the over the next few months.



#### Managing for success

Think about where you and your puppy spend your time and where their sleeping area is. If you want them to sleep in a crate, pen or bed try to have one available in the room where you spend most of your time. Doing this gives them the ability to go to their sleeping area when they're tired without having to venture too far away from you.

You can either move their crate/pen/bed with you into any room where you'll both spend time or set up multiple crates, pens or beds in commonly used areas.

When left unattended in a crate/pen at this age, puppies only need access to water and bedding. If you introduce a collar, take it off in case it catches on the sides. If your puppy has arrived with a comfort blanket or toy that smells of the litter, and it's big enough, it's often a good idea to split it into a few pieces and put one piece in your puppy's bedding area. That way, if you need to clean their bedding due to any accidents, you still have a piece to give them for comfort.



A puppy getting ready for a nap.





## Teaching foundations

If you're using a crate, leave the door open so your puppy can come out when they want to. Stay with them in the room that their 'bedding area' is in. If you can stay near the crate or pen for five or even ten minutes, this can help them to feel secure should they wake.

If they do come out of the crate/pen, you can try to put them back in the crate/ pen. Sit or stand nearer to them or stay there for longer until they fall asleep.



## Being a partnership

High levels of excitement, and biting or mouthing, particularly in the evening, are often signs that your puppy is tired and/or hungry. If you regularly see this happening, try one or more of the following:

- Review your feeding schedule.
- Encourage them to settle and sleep by sitting down with them.
- Predict when you think it will happen and give them a chew before the excitable behaviour starts. If it's already happening, get a chew, calmly and gently interrupt the behaviour, and keep them occupied with the chew or food toy instead.



A puppy in a crate with an open door.

## 4. Overnight



### Knowing your puppy

Some puppies struggle with being separated from their mum and siblings, being in a new environment, and then being separated from you at night. Other pups settle quicker.

Based upon your puppy's reaction (refer to body language in 'Foundation knowledge') to any separation during the day, decide whether you'll try them overnight in a different room or whether to have them in the same room as you.

It's normal for your young puppy to wake at least once in the night to toilet due to the size of their bladder. This means wherever they sleep should be somewhere you can hear them and take them outside quickly.

Once they have toileted, you can then settle them straight back to bed. Keeping the toilet trip very calm and having minimal interaction with them should help them settle quickly again but, you may need to sit by their bed or crate quietly until they fall asleep.

As they grow, the number of times they wake should either reduce or the time between each wake should extend. It's also likely that your puppy will wake early to begin with. For some puppies 6am is the start of the day. 'Lie ins' take time to establish.



A puppy sleeping in their crate.



## Managing for success

The first few nights are about learning what works for both you and your puppy. Aim to start your nighttime routine half an hour earlier than you would usually head to bed.

If you plan for your puppy to sleep overnight in another room, make the room familiar to them by spending relaxed time there during the day and just prior to putting them to bed. You can put on background noise but avoid music with symbols or drums in case they startle your puppy. Choose talk shows, lullabies or similarly calming sounds instead.

If you plan for your puppy to sleep in the same room as you, remember they should not sleep on sofas or human beds. Use their crate, pen or bed instead.

Putting a cover over the top of a crate (if you're using one) can make the crate snug and cosy like a den and encourage them to fall asleep. Some puppies also benefit from a source of warmth such as a heat pad/bag, but be aware that your puppy could chew it. The cover or product you choose will need to be suitable for young puppies.



A puppy playing with their favourite toy.



## Teaching foundations

As already mentioned, feeding your puppy in their bed/pen/crate will help them associate good things with their bed. Providing them with chews and KONG® toys in their bed throughout the day will also help them enjoy being in their bed and associate it with restfulness and relaxation.

- Reduce the level of play with your puppy as you get towards bedtime; encourage them to quieten down and start to rest.
- Provide an opportunity for them to toilet shortly before putting them down for the night. Leave them with a small chew or a few pieces of kibble in their bed.
- If necessary, sit by the crate or bed until they fall asleep, then leave quietly.

## ★ Being a partnership

If your puppy struggles to settle within five minutes (generally whining, crying or barking), then you should go to them. Try to wait for a small pause in crying before going to your puppy but don't leave them if they're continuously vocalising. Puppies left to cry can develop longer term issues with being left alone.

When you go to them, keep things calm and relaxed, so that nighttime toileting is not a fun game. Offer the opportunity to toilet again. If they toilet, you can reward with verbal praise and go through the bedtime routine again, putting a few food rewards in their bed as you leave them.

If your puppy is clearly distressed, you should move your puppy into the same room as you (either by sleeping downstairs yourself or moving your puppy upstairs with you) or closer to you if already in the same room. In these scenarios, move any equipment you might need first and then carry your puppy to their bed, crate or pen. Puppies should not sleep on sofas or beds for people. You can gently rest your hand near your puppy while they fall asleep and then remove it once they are settled.

Over the course of the next few nights or weeks, you can slowly move yourselves further apart overnight by moving the pen, crate or bed a few steps at a time. Please speak to your Puppy Development Advisor for further advice on how to do this.



**A puppy raiser comforting her puppy.**

# 5. Toileting chart

You can record your puppy’s feed times (F), wees (W) and poos (P) in the empty table below. This can help you understand the frequency that they need to toilet.

The template table below contains 25 rows and 8 columns.

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
01:00							
02:00							
03:00							
04:00							
05:00							
06:00							
07:00							
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