

YOUR PUPPY'S FIRST WEEK

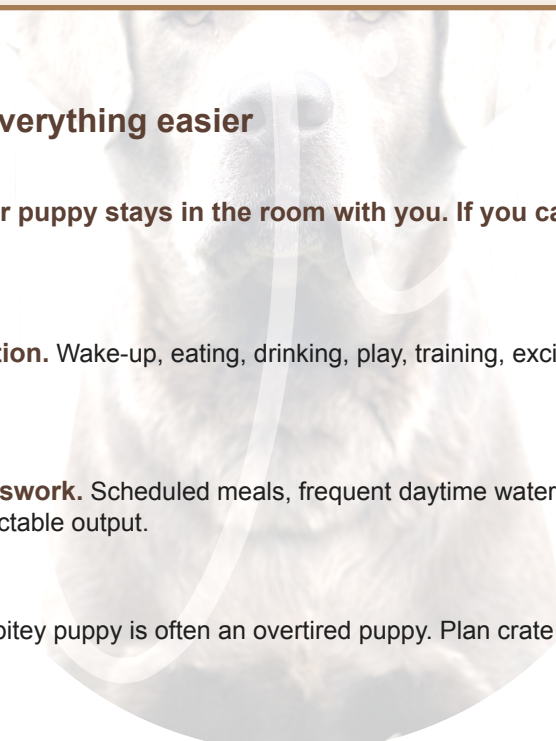
READ BEFORE PUPPY PICKUP

Please read this before your appointment. Pickup time is for meeting your puppy, reviewing paperwork, and answering anything that is still unclear. Most routine questions are answered here so our visit can stay focused, relaxed, and on time.

THE FIRST-WEEK LOOP

POTTY > FOOD + WATER > POTTY > SUPERVISED PLAY > POTTY > CRATE NAP > REPEAT

The five rules that make everything easier

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- 1** **Supervise or crate.** Your puppy stays in the room with you. If you cannot see the puppy, use a gate, pen, tether, or crate.
 - 2** **Potty after every transition.** Wake-up, eating, drinking, play, training, excitement, and coming out of the crate all trigger a potty trip.
 - 3** **Use a routine, not guesswork.** Scheduled meals, frequent daytime water access, planned potty trips, and planned naps create predictable output.
 - 4** **Rest is training.** A wild, bitey puppy is often an overtired puppy. Plan crate naps instead of waiting for a meltdown.
 - 5** **Consistency wins.** Your puppy repeats what works. Every adult should follow the same rules from day one.

EXPECT THE FIRST 24-48 HOURS TO FEEL DIFFERENT

A new home, new people, a car ride, and a new routine can temporarily change appetite, sleep, and stool. Keep the first two days calm and predictable. One loose stool may happen. Repeated watery diarrhea, blood, vomiting, marked lethargy, or refusal to drink is not a wait-and-see situation.

HOUSE TRAINING WITHOUT GUESSING

THE SIMPLE RULE

At eight weeks, offer a potty trip about every 1-2 hours while awake - and immediately after waking, meals, water, play, training, excitement, and every crate session.

- When the puppy wakes, take them out first. Do not make coffee, scroll, use the bathroom, or start another task.
- For the first several days, carry the puppy from the crate to the potty area. That short walk through the house is often where the accident happens.
- Use the same outside location and one cue, such as “Go potty.” Keep your voice quiet until the puppy finishes, then praise warmly.
- If the puppy sits and stares at you, keep slowly walking. Movement often helps produce an output.
- If you want the adult dog to use a specific part of the yard, place the puppy there every time now. Do not create a habit you will hate later.
- A potty trip is not automatically playtime. Potty first. Play can happen after the job is done.
- Watch for sniffing, circling, wandering away, suddenly stopping play, or heading toward a door. You only see these signals when the puppy is near you.

THE SUPERVISION RULE

Your puppy should not roam the house. Use baby gates, an exercise pen, closed doors, or a light house leash to keep the puppy close. Kids can absolutely help and enjoy the puppy, but the adults need to keep the house-training routine consistent.

When an accident happens

- Interrupt calmly if you catch it, carry the puppy outside, and praise if they finish there.
- Clean the area with an enzymatic pet cleaner. Regular household cleaner may leave scent behind.
- Do not punish after the fact. The puppy will not connect your reaction to an accident that already happened.
- Treat the accident as information: the interval was too long, supervision failed, or a trigger was missed. Tighten the routine.

A GOOD DAY IS NOT “NO ACCIDENTS BY LUCK.”

A good day is one where the puppy had so many planned opportunities to succeed that an accident was unlikely.

CRATE TRAINING + PLANNED NAPS

What crate should I use?

- A 42-inch metal crate with a divider is a practical long-term choice for a Labrador.
- Use the divider to keep the space snug. Your puppy should be able to turn around, curl up, and stretch out, but there should not be six extra inches available for a bathroom corner. As the puppy grows, move the divider back.
- Place the crate in a calm, low-traffic area and keep it off valuable rugs while house training. Think of the crate as the puppy's bedroom and planned rest space.

The before-and-after rule

POTTY BEFORE THE CRATE. POTTY IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CRATE.

Exercise or a short calm play session before crating can help. Keep the release boring until you reach the potty area.

My puppy is whining. What do I do?

- First ask one question: did the puppy have a real opportunity to potty immediately before going into the crate?
- If not, take the puppy out for one quick, boring potty trip. No play, no tour of the yard, and then place the puppy right back into the crate.
- Once you know the puppy's needs are met, do not talk to them, touch the crate, stand beside it, or take them out during barking, whining, or howling. Wait for quiet. Otherwise the puppy learns that making noise brings you back.
- Some protesting is normal. Stay consistent. The more often your puppy practices going into the crate and settling, the faster the adjustment happens.

Build the skill before you need it

- Practice while you are home: potty, crate for 5 minutes, release when quiet, and repeat. Work up to 10-15 minutes and then longer naps. Make it a routine before you actually need to leave.
- Taking a week off does not mean avoiding the crate for a week. It is the best time to teach the routine in small, successful pieces.

PLAN REST BEFORE "SHARK MODE"

Most young puppies need several naps throughout the day. Start with at least 2-3 scheduled crate naps of an hour or more, plus bedtime. If your puppy suddenly becomes frantic, mouthy, zoomy, or impossible to redirect, try potty and a nap before deciding you have a behavior problem.

FOOD, WATER + POOP

STARTING FEEDING AMOUNT

Begin with 1 1/4 cups, twice daily, unless your individual take-home instructions say otherwise. Offer the meal for about 15 minutes, then pick it up. Use the puppy-food bag chart as your starting guide and adjust for growth, appetite, stool, and body condition.

Meals

- Two meals or three meals. Pick a schedule your household can repeat every day.
- **Growing puppies have hungrier weeks. If your puppy is cleaning the bowl and still looking genuinely hungry, offer a little more. Do not ration every morsel because you are afraid of making a growing puppy overweight.**
- **Skipping a meal after travel can happen. Stay on schedule. Do not immediately begin adding toppers, changing foods, or turning one missed meal into a whole production.**
- Do not start a cycle of toppers and constant food changes because one meal was skipped. Sudden changes often create more stomach upset.
- Use kibble as training treats whenever possible during the first months. Too many rich treats or new ingredients can loosen stool.

Water

- **Offer water after waking, meals, play, exercise, and time outdoors. Let the puppy drink, pick the bowl back up, and plan the potty trips afterward.**
- **Keep water intentional and supervised. Offer it in sessions throughout the day (DO NOT keep the water bowl accessible), then plan for at least one or two potty trips afterward. Pick it up for the night after the final evening water session.**
- **Use common sense in heat, after hard play, or if the puppy is unusually thirsty or not feeling well. The goal is a predictable routine, not withholding water from a puppy who genuinely needs it.**

What poop is normal?

- Food, movement, excitement, and stress can speed the GI tract. A second poop after a meal or play may be softer than the first, even a bit of liquid at the very end.
- A loose stool or two during the first 24-48 hours can happen during the transition. Keep food consistent and avoid adding treats.
- **If you have three stools in a row that are ice-cream soft or worse, or you see blood or repeated mucus, send me a clear poop picture and tell me what the puppy ate, drank, and did beforehand. We will walk through it.**

NUVET

If you ordered NuVet wafers, give one whole wafer once daily. Morning is usually easiest.

BITING, KIDS, EXPOSURE + BASIC CARE

All puppies mouth. Hands are not toys.

1

Stop it immediately. Every time teeth touch skin, clothing, ankles, hair, or a face, calmly take hold of the puppy's snout, close it briefly, and say "No biting" in a firm voice.

2

Hold for about two seconds, release, and say nothing else. Do not turn it into a lecture, a wrestling match, or exciting attention.

3

If the puppy does it again one second later, repeat the exact same correction like a broken record. Consistency is what teaches the rule.

4

Then redirect the puppy to a toy or chew. Toys are for biting. Hands, ankles, shoelaces, clothing, and children are not.

THE RULE IS SIMPLE

A brief, firm snout correction is not aggressive and it is not mean. It interrupts the bite, much like a mother dog would correct a puppy that bites too hard. Briefly close, say "No biting," release, and move on. Do not squeeze, shake, hold the mouth shut, or keep escalating after the puppy stops.

Children and the puppy

- Kids can absolutely cuddle, hold, play with, and enjoy their puppy. The adult simply needs to step in when play becomes too wild or teeth start landing on skin, clothing, or ankles.
- Keep toys nearby and teach the same rule to everyone: hands and bodies are not chew toys. When teeth land on a child's ankles, clothes, or hands, step in, use the same brief correction, and then hand the puppy a toy.

Safe exposure before the vaccine series is complete

- YES: Calm visits with healthy, vaccinated dogs you know, in a clean private home or yard.
- YES: New people, household sounds, car rides, different surfaces, handling, and a clean, responsibly run puppy class.
- NO: Dog parks, shared pet-relief areas, pet-store floors, busy public dog areas, or greeting unknown dogs.
- For Home Depot, PetSmart, or the veterinarian lobby, carry the puppy or use a clean cart/liner. A floor can look clean and still carry infectious material.

Bathing and ears

- Bathe as needed with a mild puppy shampoo. Monthly is a reasonable routine for many Labradors; more often may be needed after swimming or getting dirty, but rinse thoroughly and avoid drying the coat.
- Handle paws, mouth, ears, and body briefly every day so grooming and general handling become completely normal.
- Clean the ears about monthly and after swimming when needed. Use a good maintenance ear cleaner and cotton balls, and clean beyond only the outer flap. If the ear is red, painful, smelly, or full of discharge, that is when it needs attention.

A FEW TRUE RED FLAGS

Call your veterinarian if the puppy is clearly sick or weak, repeatedly vomiting, unable to drink, having repeated watery or bloody diarrhea, struggling to breathe, collapsing, or may have swallowed something dangerous.

THE FRIDGE SHEET

YOUR FIRST-WEEK CHEAT SHEET

THE LOOP

POTTY > FOOD + WATER > POTTY > SUPERVISED PLAY > POTTY > CRATE NAP

TAKE THE PUPPY OUT

- Immediately after waking
- After meals and drinking
- After play, training, or excitement
- Before and after every crate session
- About every 1-2 hours while awake

FEEDING

- Start: 1 1/4 cups twice daily
- Offer for about 15 minutes
- Use kibble for treats
- Keep the same food during transition

WATER

- Offer in planned sessions throughout the day
- Potty once or twice after drinking
- Final evening water session, then pick it up
- Use common sense in heat or illness

CRATE

- 42-inch metal crate with divider
- Keep the space snug; move divider as puppy grows
- Potty before and immediately after
- Do not release during barking or whining
- Plan at least 2-3 daytime naps

BITING

- Briefly close the snout
- Firm "No biting"
- Hold about two seconds and release
- Repeat every single time
- Redirect to a toy

SAFE EXPOSURE

- Known healthy vaccinated dogs: yes
- Unknown dogs and dog parks: no
- Public pet floors: carry or use a lined cart
- Clean, responsibly run puppy classes are fine

TRUE RED FLAGS

Repeated vomiting, repeated watery or bloody diarrhea, marked weakness, trouble breathing, pale gums, a swollen painful abdomen, refusal or inability to drink, collapse, or a suspected toxin or swallowed object.

For ordinary transition questions or a questionable poop: send Monica a clear photo and a short description of what the puppy ate, drank, and did beforehand.

Keep this guide somewhere easy to find during the first week. Most first-week questions come back to the same simple routine.