



What every new dog owner needs to know

A guide for pet owners from Nationwide® pet insurance

Congrats on the newest addition to your family! The simple tips in this guide can help you establish good habits from the start to keep your dog happy and healthy for years to come.

Pet-proof your home

Rule of thumb: If a toddler can get into it, so can your pet. Get on your hands and knees to evaluate your home from a dog's-eye view, and remove anything potentially harmful.

ID your dog

If your dog gets lost, proper identification can help ensure a quick reunion.

Collar and identification tags

Your dog should always wear a collar, even while inside. Make sure ID tags are clean, legible and up to date with your best contact numbers.

Microchip

Without external IDs, many pets wind up in shelters. Microchip your dog and be sure to register the chip with the manufacturer. Don't forget to update your contact info each time it changes.

Introducing new pets to your pack

Bringing home a new dog can cause stress and unwanted behavior from your other animals.

Scent introductions

Before any face-to-face intros, allow pets to grow comfortable with each other's scent. Let them sniff each other through a closed door, then through a baby gate. Also, allow the newbie and the resident pet to wander freely, one at a time, through a room where the other has already been.

Neutral ground

Reduce the likelihood of territorial behavior by introducing dogs outside in a large, open space or through an outdoor fence.

Play referee

Always supervise pets until you know how they'll get along.

Cat refuge

Establish "safe havens" for cats by creating high perches out of dogs' reach or by using a baby gate to keep dogs out of the room. Also, consider crating your dog while your cat explores.

Food faux-paws

Consult your veterinarian on the best diet for your dog, and avoid feeding table scraps and bones. Many common foods such as grapes, raisins, macadamia nuts and sugar free gum are toxic to dogs, while chewing bones can result in serious injuries.

The skinny on chubby pets

Pet obesity is a real threat to your dog's health. Just a few extra pounds can lead to obesity-related problems such as arthritis, knee injuries and diabetes. Your veterinarian can help determine the safest and most effective diet and exercise program for your dog.

Training and socialization

The number one reason pets get surrendered to shelters? Behavior problems. Teaching basic manners is essential for developing a healthy relationship.

Provide new experiences

Socialization is required for a well-adjusted dog. Enroll in a class so your dog can learn in a structured setting, or set up play dates in a neutral location.

Take a training class

Many pet stores and community centers offer group classes; ask your vet staff for a recommendation. Classes provide a rewarding challenge for your dog and help establish good communication skills.

Be consistent

Assign to each command a word, phrase or signal. Make sure all family members use the same commands clearly and consistently each time, and reward your dog when he responds correctly.

Use the best tool: Positive reinforcement

Give lots of praise to let your dog know when he's doing something right. If he's acting up, firmly say "No!" and walk or turn away; any further attention rewards the unwanted behavior.

Set a schedule

Animal development and training can be greatly enhanced with establishing a consistent schedule with things such as feeding, exercise and the most important, bed time!

Be prepared

- ✓ Program your phone with numbers for:
 - Your veterinarian
 - 24-hr emergency veterinarian
 - Pet Poison Helpline (855-289-0358)
- ✓ Save a note in your phone with your pet's weight and current medications
- ✓ Sign up for Nationwide pet insurance coverage

Potty training

Potty training requires time and patience. The most important things to remember: Be consistent and use lots of praise. Never, ever “push his nose in it” or punish your dog for accidents.

Potty commands

Use a command such as “Go potty” to indicate when it's time to go, and repeat it frequently during each elimination. Give lots of praise when your dog goes on cue.



Frequent outings

Puppies should be taken out every two to four hours, plus after every playtime, meal and nap. Use potty commands and offer praise for correct behavior.

Crate training

Make the crate a safe, positive place with treats, toys and bedding. Never use it for punishment or leave your dog unattended in it for more than a few hours.

Patience is key

Like kids, every dog learns at a different pace. Invest the time to potty train with love and patience; your dog will soon learn that potty manners are a good thing.

Veterinary care 101

Providing regular veterinary care from the start is the best way to ensure a lifetime of good health.

Healthy start

Take new dogs for a complete veterinary checkup and necessary vaccinations. Puppies are susceptible to everything from common respiratory infections to distemper.



Separate to protect

Until they receive a clean bill of health from the veterinarian, new pets should be kept away from other pets.

Spay or neuter

This simple surgical procedure has many benefits, including a reduced risk of certain cancers, better overall health and improved temperament.

An ounce of prevention . . .

Regular vet visits help your veterinarian identify potential problems before they become serious. When detected early, diseases can be simpler and less expensive to treat.



We're here to help

Nationwide[®] offers pet insurance coverage for accidents, illnesses and preventive care.
Get a fast, no-obligation quote today.

This educational pamphlet is provided by Nationwide in coordination with Pet Poison Helpline, an animal poison control center based out of Minneapolis, Minn. Driven by our shared passion for pets, our common goal is to provide pet lovers with valuable information on pet health and safety.

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