

ALDAR'S BULLDOGS

THE HOMECOMING

One of the most important steps is the pre-puppy planning session which should include all members of the family. This is to establish the ground rules. If mom doesn't want the dog on the furniture and dad coaxes the pup on the sofa to watch the big game with him, there is bound to be trouble. This meeting is the time to settle all such matters beforehand. Where will the puppy sleep? Will he be allowed free run of the house or be excluded from certain areas? Who is in charge of feeding the new pet? Who will do the walking, training, grooming? Once the rules are made and the duties assigned, stick to them. Puppies don't understand inconsistency. If one person scolds them for something which another allows, they can hardly be expected to know which behaviour is acceptable.

Just as parents become very aware of the potential trouble areas in their home when baby first becomes mobile, so should new puppy owners. It's a good idea to have a puppy-proof area or crate where puppy can stay when there's no one around to supervise his activities. In order to preserve your own sunny disposition, you might want to remove breakable, chewable ornaments and items from low areas such as cords: many pups have been killed or severely burned because of chewing on them.

You've laid down the ground rules for your new pet and puppy-proofed your home. Now it's time to go shopping! Your list includes: a feeding bowl, a water bowl(stainless steel), a lightweight collar and lead, safe toys, a rubber brush, nail clippers or a dremel drill and a crate. Don't forget the food!! Your pup has enough new things to get used to without a possible digestive upset.

Now you are ready for the homecoming. When you pick up your puppy try to do it earlier in the day. That way, he will have the entire day to get acquainted with you and his new home before facing that scary first night away from his family. Take along an old towel, plastic sheeting or newspaper just in case motion sickness strikes. He'll be less likely to barf up breakfast if held in someone's lap and reassured during the trip.

Once he's at his new home, let him explore. He'll feel more at ease as things become familiar. Just keep an eye on him to hopefully avoid puddles. Remember that young pups need a lot of sleep, so let him nap all he wants between those bursts of energy. Don't wear him out with rough play or constant attention. Loud noises are upsetting too. This is all an adventure for him, so take it easy.

Try to adhere to the feeding schedule. Remember puppies usually need to go to the washroom within 20 minutes after eating so keep an eye on them, or take them to the designated spot right after eating. You should begin housebreaking procedures right from the start.

The first night in the home can be a traumatic experience for the pup and an endurance contest for the bleary eyed new owner. The easiest way is just put the pup in the crate or basket by your bed. Then you only have to speak to him or reach out to reassure him should he voice his loneliness. Later, when he feels at home, you can move his sleeping quarters elsewhere if you like.

Puppies demand a lot of time-frequent meals, housebreaking, training etc...however, the hours you invest in the early days really pay off as your puppy grows up.