



# New Dog Owner Kit

The Ultimate Guide  
on What to Do  
Before you Get a Dog  
and the Next 12 Months



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## The Ultimate Guide on What to Do Before You Get a Dog, and the Next 12 Months

**Did you know** that your dog does its best to understand what you're saying? Researchers from the Duke University in North Carolina affirm a study using brain scans done by another university on the ability of dogs to understand humans.

If you are planning to get a dog, it will be to your benefit to understand why this study is significant. According to the study, dogs react differently to how you talk to them, not just what you say to them because, like humans, they use the left side of their brain to process the words and the right side of their brain to process tone and pitch.

However important it is to know how to bond with your new dog, there are other equally crucial aspects to ponder before you bring home your new furry pet –and then know, more or less, what to expect in the months to follow.

# Before You Bring Home Your New Dog

## RESEARCH BREED

If you have decided to dog breed you want, **read as much as you can about the dog's history, breed, and temperament.** For instance, the beagle is a hunting dog and although even-tempered, tends to be frisky, energetic, and not the kind that enjoys being dressed and carried around. In short, they are lovable but can be a handful and demand a lot of time, patience, and training.



## UNDERSTAND COSTS





**Next, study the finances** involved in owning a dog. It's a wonderful idea to have a dog in the home because you get companionship, loyalty, and unconditional love but dogs need care especially in their first year. According to the American Society for the prevention of Cruelty (ASPCA) to Animals, you can spend up to **\$1,843** a year for the upkeep of a dog. However, the ongoing differ slightly depending on the breed, size, health, and the age of the dog. It is for this reason, many pet owners take out pet insurance in case of expensive medical emergencies.

ASPCA adds that the first year is one of the most expensive years because of all the accessories, equipment, vet check-ups, and monthly vaccinations you will have to pay for. After the first year, the costs go up to about \$875 for large dogs



because they eat more. Other bills that can jack up your expenses include dog gear, pet sitting, dog training, emergency vet visits, teeth cleaning and other grooming services.

You can prevent unexpected bills by paying more attention to:

-  Daily exercise
-  Getting the right dog food
-  Spending on teeth brushing
-  Protect your pet from ticks and fleas

In addition, some breeds tend to be more delicate than others like mixed breed, the Doberman pinschers, Rottweilers, Bernese mountain dogs, Newfoundlands, and the English cocker spaniels, which are medically the most expensive breeds.

## ENSURE FAMILY MEMBERS ARE ALLERGY TESTED






**The third aspect is making sure everyone in the house is allergy tested and okay with the idea.** Hypoallergenic dogs are a myth. They do not exist according to professionals from the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. However, early exposure to pets may help a child be less allergic to dogs than a child who already has been diagnosed as having a dog allergy.

In addition, there are some dogs that don't shed or shed very little. They are called "hypoallergenic" because the protein from urine and saliva that sticks to the dog's skin



and hair and known to be the cause of allergies do not get released into the room in quantities large enough to trigger an episode.

You can also do the following to prevent an allergic reaction:

-  Get a smaller dog
-  Do not allow the dog inside bedrooms and rooms you do not vacuum at least once a week
-  Give your dog bi-weekly baths
-  Remove carpets if you can't stick to a strict vacuum and/or carpet shampoo schedule
-  Invest in a HEPA air purifier



## UNDERSTAND RESPONSIBILITY

Fourth, understand the responsibility. ASPCA has created a brief 5-point advice on the responsibility of every dog owner:

- 1. Provide food and water.** During cold months, water should be heated; not allowed to turn into ice. Unconsumed water should be thrown and replaced with clean water.
- 2. Provide adequate accommodations.** Give your dog suitable place to sleep and rest with a roof and 4 walls – whether it is inside your house or a doghouse.
- 3. Take your dog to the vet.** Protect your dog with vaccination shots, de-worming, and protection against fleas, ticks, and other parasites. Bring your dog to the vet once a month on his first year and at least once a year on the second year and onwards for annual shots.









- 4. Love and care for them.** Provide a caring environment and training that will not unduly stress your dog or encourage aggressive behavior, fear, anxiety, and isolation.
- 5. Provide ample exercise.** Allow your dog to enjoy his or her life with enough exercise, freedom, love, and companionship needed to sustain a healthy and happy lifestyle.



# Handling the First Year as a Dog Owner

## VET VISITS

You will need to bring your new dog to the vet for his first check-up. There is usually a list of diagnostic tests that will be done including:

-  Physical exam to check for fleas, ticks, general health, vital signs, and to look for any abnormalities
-  Heartworm test if your dog is over 6 months
-  Fecal test to check for parasites
-  Blood tests to check for anemia
-  Urinalysis, CBC, blood pressure, thyroid, and blood chemistry for older dogs
-  Annual vaccination shots



## VACCINATION SCHEDULE

The 4 core vaccinations that you should **never** forget to have done are:

1. **Rabies** with booster shots every once or three years (depending on your state's regulations)
2. **Distemper**
3. **Hepatitis**
4. **Parvovirus**

The first combination shot is given at 6 weeks followed by the second combination at 9 weeks. The third combination shot has to be given at 12 weeks together with the rabies shot with the last combination shot at 16 weeks. It is only after the fourth combination and rabies shot that your dog should be allowed to walk in public places.

**Some dogs experience side effects from shots like swelling, fever, diarrhea, or weakness. If this or any other unusual behavior happens, consult with the vet as soon as possible.**



For more information on caring for your dog, visit [iHeartPup.com](https://www.iHeartPup.com)

**Disclaimer:** At iHeartPup.com, it is NOT our intention to provide veterinary advice, diagnosis, treatment or care. Should you have any questions or suspect that your dog requires medical assistance, contact your Veterinarian. See our [privacy & disclaimer policy](#) for details.



# Checklist

## Before Bringing Home Your New Dog

- ❑ Dog food (buy small bags first because your dog might not like the brand you buy) and storage bins. Exposed dog food can get contaminated.
- ❑ Dog dish (one for food and another for water), collar, leash, ID tag, walking stick, towel, poop bags, vitamins, soap, dog shampoo, clippers, brush, odor neutralizer, non-toxic cleaning materials for accidents, sleeping mat, toy, baby gate or dog house.
- ❑ Prepare a record book although some vets give this free when you go in for your first visit.
- ❑ Prepare a living space for your new family member. Pet proof your home by keeping anything valuable and breakable in a safe place (vases, jars, shoes, bags, baskets, rugs, etc.)
- ❑ Get a bag of diapers for the trip home.
- ❑ Assign responsibility to everyone in the house: feeding, training, walking, playing, cleanup.
- ❑ Know the other dogs in the neighborhood and their temperament.
- ❑ Dog or chew toys.
- ❑ Lots of old newspapers or pee pads.

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# Checklist

## The First Year as a Dog Owner

- ❑ Puppies need to be fed 4 or 6 times a day while older dogs need 2 to 3 times daily.
- ❑ Bring the dog to the vet for first round of shots and clean bill of health.
- ❑ Follow vaccination schedule although you should make your own decision about all the noncore shots that may be recommended to you by the vet. There are some studies that show these to be unnecessary, even harmful. You should however be strict about annual toxic vaccines because these might compromise the immune system of your dog.
- ❑ Hairy dogs need daily grooming of about 29 minutes per session so the hair does not start matting.
- ❑ Start training as soon as possible.
- ❑ Limit interaction for the first weeks.
- ❑ Introduce dog to children carefully reminding the children to approach with caution and care.
- ❑ If using canned dog food, do not leave uneaten portions out for more than a four-hour period. Any food left over should be stored in a dedicated well-labeled container in the refrigerator.
- ❑ Cover sofa and chairs with removable and washable furniture covers.
- ❑ Ask your vet about a first aid kit for your dog which you can assemble and keep at home for emergencies.
- ❑ Play with your dog and make it a commitment to spend at least one hour a day bonding and talking to your dog.

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