

ManyPets®

Guide for new puppy parents



Includes tips
from our
Doggy Doula



Top 10 questions you must ask
when adopting or buying a dog 6

First protection: microchipping
and vaccinations 8

Fleas, worms and other parasites 12

Should you neuter your dog? 14

Common puppy health problems
(and how to avoid them) 16

Feeding your puppy 18

Preparing your home for your dog 20

Socialising and training for your dog 22

Top tips from our Doggy Doula 26

Pet insurance for your dog 28

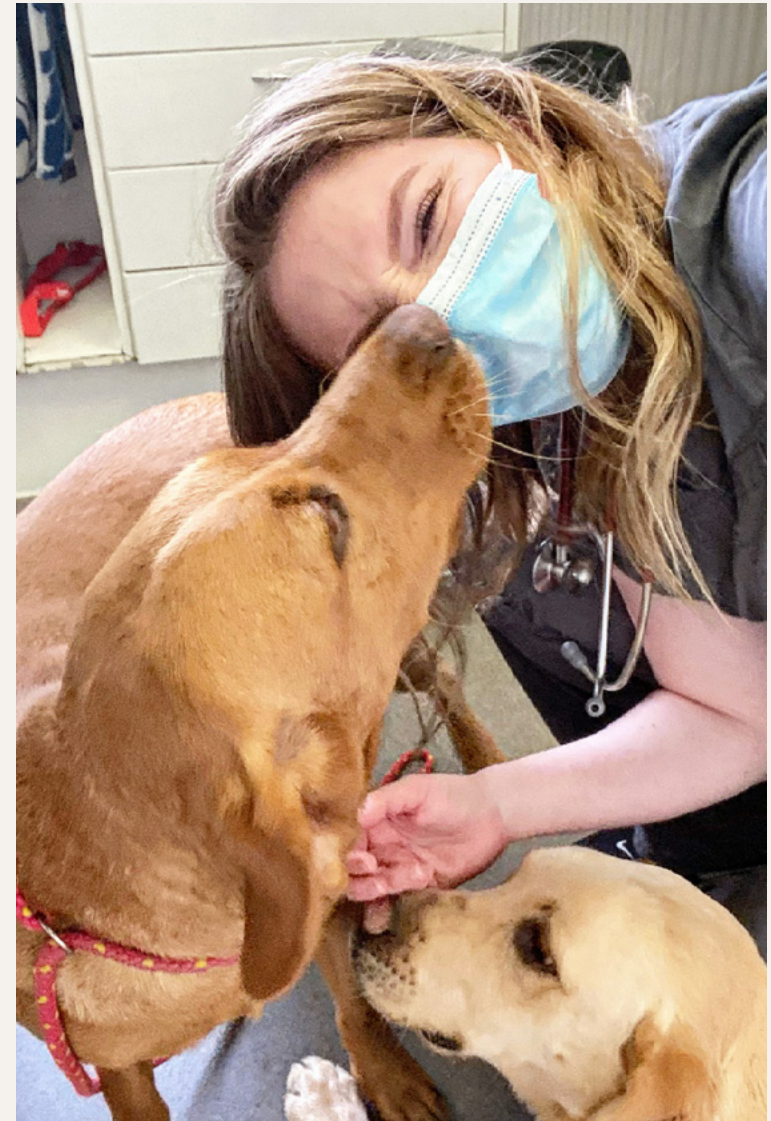
Congratulations! Welcome to the dog owner's club, which is one of the most exciting, but sometimes terrifying, clubs to be in.

Bringing home a pup is incredibly fulfilling and they have so much potential to bring joy into our lives. Dogs are downright adorable at every age, but it's important to understand they take a lot of time and effort as they settle into your lives!

Our goal in this guide is to help new dog parents, whether it's your first or eighth time, to feel more confident. We'll cover everything from the health basics like vaccines, to some deeper dives into essentials of training and behaviour.

By the end, you'll feel like a puppy pro!

Dr. Kirsten Ronngren DVM MRCVS



10 questions you must ask when adopting or buying a dog

Swept up in the excitement of meeting your forever friend? It's time to pause to gather their health stats and paperwork. Having information about your new dog's health and family will help you feel confident about caring for them in the years to come.

1. Can you see the mother and father?

If you're buying a puppy, it's best to be able to see both parents if possible. It gives you an idea about the general appearance, temperament and behaviour of your pup in the future.

2. Are the parents registered? If so, can you see a copy of their paperwork?

If you're buying a pedigree dog, the breeder will have registration information from The Kennel Club or National Breeders network. It helps you find health screenings and look at the family lines for signs of inbreeding. If you're adopting an older dog, the charity, organisation or family might also have this documentation.

3. Has the dog had any health issues? Have the parents?

Take your new dog to the vet to rule out obvious or major health issues. Breeders should be able to prove the health of the parents, including any screening for genetic or hereditary conditions.

4. Did they breed the puppy themselves? Do they have experience with this breed?

You should only purchase from the people who bred the dog. This helps decrease the likelihood of it coming from a puppy farm. If you are suspicious that a situation feels wrong (the seller is evasive or defensive, can't provide important details, can't show you the parents, has multiple types of puppies around, etc.) then you should report them to the relevant authorities.

5. Can you see the environment where your dog is kept?

Knowing your dog has been cared for in a clean, safe and regulated environment is important for several reasons. Most importantly, it increases the chances the puppies will be healthy and stimulated/ socialised. Visiting the puppies also allows you to look for possible signs of ill health, such as a poor or unkempt hair coat, bloated bellies, or runny noses.

6. Has your dog had any veterinary care, such as vaccines or parasite treatments?

Most responsible dog breeders, charities and organisations will have had their puppies and dogs evaluated by a veterinarian to ensure general health, as well as taking early steps in preventative care. This may include their first vaccination, starting a good parasite control regimen, and potentially having a microchip placed already.

7. What is your dog being fed?

It's best to keep your dog on a consistent diet when you first bring them home to help avoid extra stress and change. They need a balanced diet, labelled for the right life stage, so they get all the correct nutrients. You can absolutely change the diet once the puppy is settled, but any changes in diet should be done gradually over 7 to 10 days to help avoid gastrointestinal upset like vomiting or diarrhoea.

8. Is your dog socialised with other dogs?

Puppies learn the most about social cues up to about 14-16 weeks of age, so safe and controlled exposure to new experiences up to that point is extremely beneficial to helping shape a well-adjusted dog in the future. If you're adopting an older dog, they might be nervous around other dogs. If you're aware of their quirks, you can keep them calm and comfortable.

9. What is the dog's temperament?

Puppies can absolutely show their personalities early on, so asking the breeder about the puppies' behaviours can massively help you to decide if the puppy is happy but also if the puppy is right for you. For example, quieter or more reserved puppies may not be best for homes with young children. This isn't always the case but it gives an idea of things you should be considering.

10. Are you expected to sign a contract for the sale?

While a contract of sale may sound serious, it's actually a great way for both breeders and buyers to hold themselves accountable during a purchase. A good contract protects both parties, but most importantly, promotes the welfare of the dog. Some important things to look for in a contract include stipulations on returning the dog if there are any problems (behavioural or medical), stipulations on breeding the dog, a health guarantee for the dog and parents, listing the registration details of the parents, and whatever the monetary commitment is and how/when that is expected to be paid, among other details. Be sure to read the fine print carefully and ensure you are comfortable with all aspects. Keep a signed copy on file at home.



First protection: microchipping and vaccinations

If your dog is coming to you from a breeder or you're adopting them, it's highly likely they will organise microchipping and the FIRST SET of vaccinations. Your dog's age determines their record of vaccinations, so use this timeline to make sure your dog is fully protected and up to date.

6 TO 8 WEEKS OLD - FIRST VACCINATION

The law says every dog must be microchipped by 8 weeks old and their first vaccination dose is given at six to 8 weeks.

Microchipping is a way to increase the likelihood of a reunion if your pet goes missing and it's how pets are identified during travel.

10-12 WEEKS OLD - SECOND VACCINATION

The second vaccination is USUALLY given 4 weeks after. That means this is likely to be your first vet appointment with your puppy.

The exact vaccinations your pup gets will depend on what your vet recommends

for their lifestyle and where you live, but all dogs should have a set of core vaccinations for:

DISTEMPER VIRUS: This deadly virus can affect the respiratory, neurologic and gastrointestinal systems. It is spread quickly by respiratory secretions or bodily fluids from dog to dog, and can also be spread by contaminated environments. It can cause long-term health issues but is commonly fatal.

PARVOVIRUS: Highly contagious and can be fatal. Parvo is spread in faeces or contaminated environments, and can cause severe bloody vomiting and diarrhoea, and can damage the pet's immune system.

ADENOVIRUS (CANINE INFECTIOUS HEPATITIS): Less common than parvo and distemper but it is also easily spread by bodily fluid and can cause severe disease in the liver, lungs and eyes.

LEPTOSPIROSIS: Spread via the urine of mammals and can cause organ failure, particularly of the kidneys and liver. People can also be infected.



“Make sure you keep your contact information up to date on the website for your pet's microchip so that you can be reached in an emergency.”

Dr. Kirsten Ronngren DVM MRCVS

YOUR VET MIGHT ALSO RECOMMEND INCLUDING SOME NON-CORE VACCINATIONS BASED ON INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS:

RABIES VIRUS: If your puppy will be travelling internationally, they'll need a rabies vaccination. It's usually given for the first time after 12 weeks of age. The next dose will be due a year later, then every 1-3 years after that.

KENNEL COUGH (BORDETELLA):

The kennel cough vaccine isn't just for dogs that go to kennels, although that's one place where outbreaks are common. Any dog that has regular prolonged exposure to other dogs benefits from being vaccinated for kennel cough.

This includes dogs that go to dog parks, groomers, dog shows, doggy daycares, etc. The vaccine can be given as early as 6 weeks, with no initial boosters needed. It's then given annually.

There are a few other vaccines out there that can be given for diseases like Lyme disease, leishmaniasis, etc. but are usually only used in high-risk areas.



ANNUAL VACCINATIONS

Once your pup has had its first initial set of vaccinations, usually around 12 weeks of age, they will need a top-up every year (regardless of their age) to stay immunised. If you adopt after their annual vaccinations, make sure you have a health card with the last immunisation date so you know when to book back in. If you drift beyond the 12-month mark, you may need to restart the vaccines series, so it's best to check with your vet to assess your pet's individual risk factors.

Vaccinations aren't covered by your pet insurance, so ask your vet's practice about fees and make a note in your calendar to book back in. If you don't stay up to date with your vaccines you could risk invalidating your insurance.



Fleas, worms and other parasites



Parasites aren't just gross, they can make your dog – and possibly your family – sick. Get parasite prevention sorted early on to keep your puppy healthy and comfortable from the start.

Parasites include both external bugs like fleas and ticks, as well as internal bugs, such as worms.

Puppies are extremely susceptible to parasites, especially worms. They can be infected directly in the uterus from their mother, or once they're born they may accidentally consume other animals' faeces (gross, but true) then become infected.

Most parasite preventative products are safe for use over 8 weeks of age, but be sure to check with your vet about what's best for your dog and their lifestyle. There are lots of options on the market, and it's easy to get overwhelmed.

Products can come in a spot-on that goes on the skin at the back of the neck, or as an oral tablet. Most flea and tick preventatives need to be given once per month to be effective.

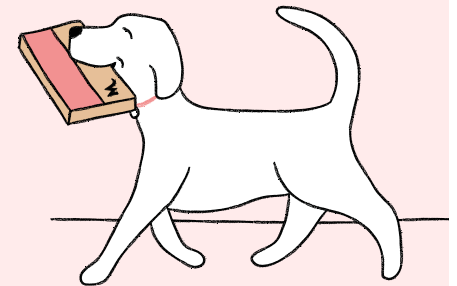
Wormer should be given every 1-3 months depending on age, lifestyle, diet and other risk factors.



The ManyPets Flea, tick and worm plan

The ManyPets Flea, tick and Worm Plan is safe and proven non-prescription parasite treatment from £7.49 per month.

It's tailored to your dog and delivered to your door every month. ManyPets customers get an exclusive discount in My Account.





Should you neuter your dog?

The veterinary profession tends to favour neutering, unless you plan to use your pet for breeding or showing purposes.

There are a few very good reasons for this, especially for females who have a few more time-sensitive and life-threatening issues associated with remaining intact.

MALES

We know there is an increased risk for testosterone-based testicular tumours later in life when they are left intact.

Intact males are at increased risk of developing bacterial infections of the prostate and prostatic tumours.

We also see increased behavioural issues such as urine marking, resource guarding such as food or territory, or even aggression. That being said, some nervous or timid males may benefit from remaining intact from a behavioural standpoint.

FEMALES

Female dogs that are not spayed are not only at risk of producing more puppies, but also have an increased risk of developing aggressive mammary cancer later in life.

These dogs may also develop a condition called pyometra, which is a potentially fatal bacterial infection within the uterus. So, when should you have your dog

neutered? The answer is, it depends! Timing of neutering depends on factors like breed and lifestyle.

For smaller and medium breed dogs, anytime after 6 months of age is likely safe in terms of allowing them to have grown a little and handle general anaesthesia.

There has also been discussion about waiting closer to one year of age, at which time many females may have already had their first heat cycle (oestrus cycle) to allow for more growth, which is also very low risk in terms of health problems.

In particular, waiting until closer to 12-24 months of age for larger and giant breed dogs is often recommended in order to allow for more complete joint formation and to potentially decrease risks of other types of cancers such as bone tumours (osteosarcomas).

It's safe to have your older dog neutered too, but it's a conversation worth having with your vet to decide what's best for your dog.



“It’s a common misconception that general anaesthesia isn’t safe, but complications in young healthy dogs are extremely rare. And vets take many precautions to keep pets safe during anaesthetic procedures.”

Dr. Kirsten Ronngren DVM MRCVS



Common puppy health problems (and how to avoid them)

Puppies are go-go-go the first year of their lives. Let's be honest, sometimes longer than that! That also means they are prone to a few more activities that might warrant a trip to the vet.

Some common reasons our young furry family members may need medical care include:

ACCIDENTS/TRAUMA

Puppies like to have fun, sometimes too much fun! We see lots of wounds and broken bones in young animals.

While we can't predict everything a puppy will do, supervision is a must for young pups. This means keeping them from jumping off high surfaces and keeping them on the lead in unfamiliar areas. If you start recall training, it can help prevent them running out into the road or into a barbed wire fence.

POISONING/TOXICITIES

Puppies think everything has the potential to be a snack. This means anything from human food and medication to household cleaners.

Being diligent about keeping potential toxins stored safely is an absolute must with a puppy in the home. Keep your own medication stored in the bathroom or kitchen cupboard, and only open them over the sink in case any spillage happens. Keep things like cleaners, laundry pods and the rubbish bin secure in a cabinet. You may even want to consider child-proof cabinet locks to prevent unwanted exploration.



Lastly, don't feed your puppy human food! Yes, there are some foods that are OK if you want to use them as a treat, like plain boiled chicken breast, but things like grapes, garlic, onions and chocolate are extremely toxic to pups.

FOREIGN BODIES/GUT BLOCKAGES

Once again, puppies like to chew and put things in their mouth all the time.

Being diligent about keeping the house a little more tidy when you have a puppy at home is a good way to help prevent accidents. Puppies should not be left unsupervised with toys, or other potentially chewable items.

Some other commonly destroyed household items include shoes, power cords, rubbish bins and clothing. Playing it safe in terms of keeping things tidied away unless you're having a supervised play session with your pup can be crucial when it comes to preventing consumption of unwanted objects.

Feeding your puppy

Working out what to feed your newly invited dinner guest is overwhelming for new owners. Dogs have a reputation for eating almost anything, but they can also be incredibly picky. There's so much information out there about dos and don'ts of what to feed them.

Here are five tips when it comes to feeding your dog:

1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT LIFE STAGE:

One of the most important things when choosing puppy food is just that: choosing a diet that is made for puppies. Puppies have a specific nutrient requirement needed for growth, so it's important to pick a food that says it is formulated for 'puppies' or 'all life stages'.



2. THINK ABOUT WHAT TO FEED: While we're talking about nutrient requirements, let's touch on home-cooked pet diets and raw diets. While these have gained a lot of traction over the years, they aren't recommended for puppies. Puppies need certain nutrients as they grow, and are also more susceptible to infections and parasites – so sticking with a specifically formulated commercial diet is typically the safest and most reliable way to avoid those risks.

3. FEED MULTIPLE SMALLER MEALS

PER DAY: Puppies need a more constant stream of calories as they grow, so feeding their daily calories split into 3-4 meals over the course of the day is a helpful way to do that. As puppies grow and age, you can slowly phase out middle of the day meals and split their total needed calories into something more easily maintainable like twice daily feeding. A rough target age to do this is between 8-12 months (closer to one year the larger breed you have).

4. AVOID BIG CHANGES: If you're going to change their diet, do it slowly. Abruptly changing a diet has the potential to cause gut upset, so slowly transitioning over a period of 1-2 weeks makes it less likely for them to vomit or get diarrhoea.

5. IT'S OK TO USE BOTH WET AND

DRY FOOD: It's common for pup owners to think that wet food is bad for puppies, but it's actually perfectly safe for puppies to eat a combination of wet and dry food as long as both are labelled for puppies or all life stages. Just remember tip 4 if you're adding or changing foods.



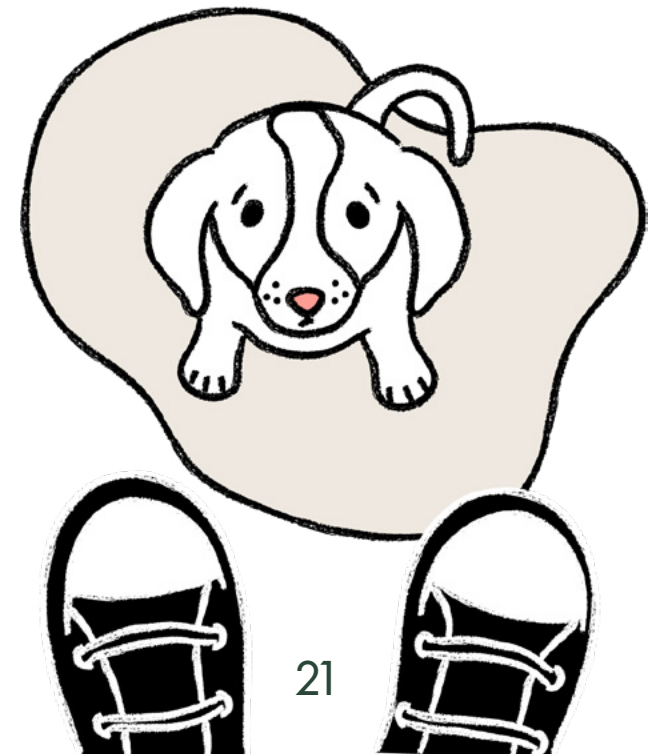
“I like to use food in three different ways throughout a puppy's day – scatter feeding, in food dispensing toys, and for training. Food is an essential resource and lure that can help us to build important bonds with our puppy as well as allow them to express natural behaviours.”

Dog behaviourist and trainer Adem Fehmi on feeding



Preparing your home for your dog

1. Puppies should always be supervised unless they're in a secure area (like a crate or a gated-off corner of the room).
2. Puppies and children should also be supervised at all times. Even the happiest and sweetest pups are still learning about boundaries. It's just as important to train your kids how to behave around your puppy as it is to train your dog with your kids.
3. Everything has the potential to be a chew toy or a foreign body. Keeping your house tidy is helpful to avoid unwanted trips to the vet – or the loss of your favourite trainers. Keep shoes, hair ties, pillows, backpacks and other items off the floor.
4. Keep the bin in a cupboard to remove the temptation for rummaging and consider cupboard locks if you have an extra curious or determined dog.
5. Baby gates are a great way to keep dogs out of areas you don't want them in, particularly stairs.





Socialising and training for your dog

Many new pet parents find this one of the most frustrating parts of having a puppy. We get it. One day, it feels like you're making progress and the next, they're tearing around the house ignoring you.

To help you give your dog the best start, we asked dog behaviourist and trainer Adem Fehmi to create a year-long socialisation and training plan.

BIRTH-2 MONTHS

For the first 8 weeks, the breeder may organise some light socialisation activities such as exposure to everyday household noises and perhaps different textures through enrichment toys and stimuli.

When you visit, you might also wish to build on this and introduce them softly to:

- Family members in your home.
- Smells from your home by bringing items with you, e.g. the smell of your kitchen via a tea towel, or the smell of another pet from a toy that belongs to them.
- Their carry case or harness and, if possible, mode of transport you will be using to take them home by.

TOP TIPS:

- Stay calm and composed around your puppy, no matter how excited you are and how adorable they might be.
- Use a reassuring voice to talk to and praise them.

- Ensure you and other family members handle your puppy gently and respectfully.
- Use high-value treats appropriate for their age and size to create positive associations.
- Introduce any items and new experiences slowly and over time.

2-4 MONTHS

Now that your puppy has arrived home, you can start to structure your days to provide mental and physical enrichment as well as introducing your puppy to their new life.

TOP TIPS:

- Have a toy box with a range of exploratory toys in it – think different textures, shapes, sizes and sounds.
- Have a range of age-appropriate food dispensing toys in your toy box.
- Present and rotate exploratory and food dispensing toys throughout the day. This will help to keep your puppy mentally and physically stimulated and can prevent unwanted behaviours such as mouthing.
- Start to slowly introduce them to their lead and collar or harness within the home.
- Begin positively teaching actions such as 'sit', 'down' and 'come' while at home.
- Slowly introduce items that they might encounter on their first vet, visit e.g. a stethoscope.

- Start to handle them as your vet might – around their neck for a vaccination, down their legs to check joints and ligaments, and so on.
- Carry your puppy in your arms or use a puppy carrier to gently and safely expose them to the outside world, e.g. the walk you might take together once they have been fully vaccinated.
- Continue to use high-value treats appropriate for their age and size to build positive associations with their new surroundings and life.
- Socialise with the right dogs, not every dog. Read other dogs and their owners carefully, choose calm and well-mannered dogs to socialise with to create positive associations.
- Join a well-respected training class where training is positive, progressive and teaches your puppy valuable skills that will help them throughout their life.
- Tailor your training to your dog's life stage. Depending on their breed, they will be nearing adulthood by 12 months and their training needs will change throughout this time as they mature.

4-12 MONTHS (AND BEYOND!)

Now your puppy is fully vaccinated and physically fit to enjoy the outside world, you must also ensure they are mentally prepared for the next step of their socialisation journey.

The training you undertake should build on that carried out already and be consistent and valuable to your everyday life together.

TOP TIPS:

Take things slow and steady! Simply exploring the path outside your home is likely a good start on day one.

- Start at a distance from new places, experiences and animals and allow your dog time to find their feet, e.g. exploring the very edge of a busy town before making your way in over a number of weeks or even months.

3 SOCIALISATION MISTAKES TO AVOID:

- Doing too much too soon. It is better to take things slower than necessary and not rush the process, which will create negative associations and potentially overwhelm your puppy.
- Not using positive reinforcers. Negative reinforcement will likely create negative associations (and even behaviour issues) and without a positive reinforcer, such as a treat or favourite toy, it is harder for your puppy to learn our language and that the world is not a scary place.
- Quitting training classes after the six-week puppy course has ended. Truly useful training will take months, if not years.



“Puppies’ prime time for absorbing information about socialisation and behaviour is up to around 14-16 weeks. This doesn’t mean puppies can’t learn lots after this timeframe, it just means that if your pup is home with you prior to this time it’s an amazing opportunity to help them develop. By getting them used to new people, dogs and scenarios in a safe, positive way, you can provide essential building blocks for a happy, well-adjusted dog down the road.”

Dr. Kirsten Ronngren DVM MRCVS

Top tips from our Doggy Doula

Feeling a little stressed as a new puppy parent? You're not alone. Pet ownership can bring on a complicated jumble of joy and sadness, which some have coined 'the puppy blues'. That's where our Doggy Doula, TV vet Dr Scott Miller, steps in.

Doggy doulas explained

There are lots of amazing professionals dedicated to taking care of your pet. But who takes care of pet parents? A doula is there to support your emotional needs, offering a much-needed shoulder to cry on when your puppy decides to howl all night, or they refuse to stop destroying the furniture.

Here are six top bits of advice from Dr Scott:

When you feel exhausted

"Luckily, your puppy will get through the sleepless night phase far quicker than a human baby would! To see yourself through this trying time, start sleep training as soon as they arrive, and set firm ground rules and routines. But remember, bad nights are totally reasonable. We have them ourselves, so it's no surprise a young canine will have them too."

You're frustrated by training

"First of all, don't feel bad. Dogs develop a brain age of roughly a two-and-a-half year old human... how many toddlers do you know who excel at listening? Every pup is different, but within breeds how individual dogs react can be surprisingly similar. Reach out to other owners for training tips and advice, or to simply vent your frustrations!"

You feel judged by others

"As your Doggy Doula, I'm here to lend a non-judgemental ear to your puppy problems. But other people might not be as mindful. This can make you feel alone, but it's important to remember that you're not! Even though you might feel embarrassed or scared to admit how hard you're finding it, a great starting point is to seek out support (from professionals and dog parents alike) when you're struggling."

You're upset by chewing


"Chewing is a normal and natural behaviour, but it's still completely normal to get frustrated or upset if your pup ruins something at home. Know these feelings will pass and that they don't reflect on you as a pet parent one bit. In the meantime, puppy-proof your home, invest in some interesting chew toys, and use deterrent spray on prized possessions."

You feel bad about an injury

"Fact: accidents happen. Another fact: parenting is hard. So, you should absolutely cut yourself some slack if your puppy gets hurt on your watch. Rather than beating yourself up, act logically and calmly to get your pup the help they need. Arm yourself with some basic puppy first aid knowledge, keep your local vet's number to hand, and be prepared for when they inevitably do something silly. They are furry toddlers after all."

Your lifestyle has changed

"All new puppy parents have a moment when they question their choice to take on a pet. Parenting has its ups and downs, but at the start of your journey, much of it can feel uphill. Remember it's normal to doubt yourself, and no matter how much prep you do, the responsibility can still be a shock."

Want more from our Doggy Doula? Head to manypets.uk/doula  for tips and advice.



"We're not perfect, and nor are puppies, but with patience, understanding and time, you can be assured of one of the most incredible and meaningful relationships of your life."

Dr Scott Miller, ManyPets Doggy Doula

Pet insurance for your dog



Take care of your puppy by setting them up with pet insurance as soon as you bring them home.



You might think that a young, healthy puppy is unlikely to need too many vet trips, but as Dr Kirsten says, “Puppies are go-go-go” – and sometimes, they race straight into trouble. In fact, in 2021, more than a quarter of all ManyPets’ dog insurance claims were for puppies under one year old.

From taking a tumble to eating something they shouldn’t, your pup can go from healthy to in need of a vet in the blink of an eye.

If you’ve got pet insurance in place already, you’ll have the peace of mind that you’ll have help paying for an unexpected vet trip when you really need it.

But if you hesitate before taking out cover and your pet gets sick in the meantime, that could mean that their illness or injury becomes classed as a ‘pre-existing condition’, meaning it probably won’t be covered by any pet insurance you take out afterwards.

Not all pet insurance is created equal. Some policies put limits on how long you can claim for a particular condition or how much you can claim for it. This makes them less suitable for covering your puppy for their entire life, as you could end up running out of cover.

All ManyPets policies offer lifetime pet insurance – that means they have an annual vet fee limit that refreshes each year when you renew the policy. Our Complete policy has up to £15,000 a year in vet fee cover and includes dental illness.

Our policies also include unlimited free video vet calls so you can speak to a qualified vet about any worries you have 24/7. Our policies cover behavioural treatment and complementary therapies so you can be confident that help is at hand for anything that puppy life throws at you.

Find out how much your cover will cost at [Manypets.com/uk](https://manypets.com/uk) [↗](#)

ManyPets[®]

[MANYPETS.COM/UK](https://manypets.com/uk)