



# Guide Dogs' Puppy Development and Advice Leaflet

## No. 2 The Introduction of Guide Dog Puppy Care and Welfare



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**This document has been created to assist those involved with raising guide dog puppies and is to be used as a reference and guide for puppy walkers as well as a best practice manual for staff.**

The appropriate care and welfare of all guide dogs and guide dog stock remains the priority for the association, its staff, volunteers and supporters.

This is supported by Guide Dogs' Dog Care and Welfare policy which states Guide Dogs will ensure the health and mental well-being of all puppies and dogs within its care. This will be achieved by supporting best practice in all aspects of canine welfare and adhering to current husbandry best practice standards, as well as by providing appropriate mental stimulation to all dogs on a needs led basis. Guide Dogs is committed to continually reviewing its practices and maintaining resources to ensure its puppies and dogs are managed and cared for in accordance with the five welfare freedoms as detailed below.

## **Five Welfare Freedoms**

- 1. Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition – by ensuring puppies and dogs have ready access to fresh water and providing a diet that ensures optimum nutrition for life.**
- 2. Freedom from discomfort – by providing a suitable environment with shelter and a comfortable resting area.**
- 3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease – by implementing and regularly reviewing standard working practices which ensure good preventative care and prompt diagnosis and treatment of individuals.**
- 4. Freedom to express normal behaviour – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and standard working practices to allow appropriate interaction between human and puppy or dog. To enable the puppy or dog to freely express behaviours outside the working environment but within the boundaries permissible of the role of the working guide dog.**
- 5. Freedom from fear and distress – by providing conditions and standard husbandry methods and practices which avoid mental suffering or distress.**

## **Preparing for and settling in your puppy**

### **Preparing for your puppy**

Your supervisor will contact you when a suitable puppy becomes available and provide more details about the puppy.

A further call will follow to help us determine the equipment you require, and to inform you of an exact delivery date and the type of food your puppy will be allocated.

At this point it is advisable to start thinking about and preparing the following:

### **The spending area**

Check the suitability and safety of the designated outside relief area.

### **The sleeping area**

Source a suitable bed or indoor kennel and organise its location away from drafts or direct heat.

### **Food and water bowls**

Get two dog bowls; one for water and one for food.

### **Dog toys**

Many different toys are available, and some are more suitable than others for guide dog puppies; your supervisor will advise you on the suitability of toys.

### **Home safety**

It is essential that hazards around the home are minimized before a puppy is allowed to explore. Electrical wires, chewable objects and 'escape' exits are the usual risks.

### **Prepare family and friends**

Before the puppy arrives, ensure everyone is aware of the basic dos and don'ts with a young puppy, especially children. This will ensure the puppy is not over-awed when introduced to the household by excited family and friends.

### **The day of arrival**

Getting a new puppy is very exciting and friends and family may wish to see the puppy as soon as possible. However, it is important to allow the puppy to settle in and get used to you and your family before people visit, to avoid the puppy becoming overwhelmed by numerous visitors. Take time to get to know your puppy and build a bond by means of play, cuddles and time together. Once your puppy has settled (usually 48 hours after arrival), then begin to introduce visitors gradually. Ensure the puppy has a single individual to focus on; this will provide support for the puppy and help form a bond. Special considerations must be made with the relationship that develops between your puppy and children. Please ensure children are educated about their role before the puppy arrives (see section 'Children and guide dogs').

## Indoor kennel advice

Indoor kennels should only be used after discussions with your supervisor who will discuss suitability and appropriate size. Your indoor kennel needs to be large enough for your puppy to stand up and turn around in comfortably, but not so large that your puppy still has room to separate itself from relief waste.

### **Indoor kennels can be used to assist with the following:**

- providing a puppy with a safe haven
- allowing separate sleeping arrangements in multi-dog households
- preventing destructiveness
- developing relief routines
- providing security during transportation

## How to introduce

If you are planning to use an indoor kennel, you will need to train your puppy to go into it and feel relaxed once inside. This is fairly straightforward, assisted by a dog's natural desire to find a sanctuary to rest in undisturbed. To start the process, make the kennel a place your puppy wants to be. Line it with bedding, place plenty of toys inside, and you may even place food treats inside initially. You can even cover the outside of the kennel with a blanket to make the kennel feel cosy and den-like.

Encourage your puppy to go into the kennel itself. Throwing in toys or treats may help. Leave the kennel door open so that it can go in and out and explore of its own accord. Once in the kennel, give praise and reward. By occupying your puppy within the kennel with play you can ensure that a positive association is developed.

When your puppy appears tired or falls asleep, take it to the kennel. You can then start to close the door for short periods, particularly during rest periods, however initially, do not leave the room. You do not want your puppy to feel it is being deserted when placed in the kennel.

Do not reward any barking or whining (unless due to stress or pain) with any attention; just carry on with daily activities as per normal. Hopefully your puppy will realise that their attention-seeking behaviour achieves nothing and they will settle for some rest. We know that this can sometimes be difficult for you, but with patience your puppy should begin to relax and settle in its indoor kennel.

This process will take time and as a result, the kennel should be introduced over a staged period gradually building up the length of time in the kennel.

## Additional points to remember:

- the kennel must never be used for the purpose or intention of punishment
- do not allow other animals or children to use the kennel for play etc. This is your puppy's space and sanctuary
- although difficult, try to resist the temptation to visit your puppy when it is crying or barking (unless from pain or stress), as your puppy may see any attention, even being told to be quiet, as a reward
- persevere with this aspect of training; the benefits outweigh the initial distress which can result during the settling period
- ensure that your puppy has had a chance to relieve itself before being housed in the kennel
- other than overnight, ensure that your puppy is not left in the kennel for more than three hours in any twenty four hour period

## Safety aspects

- ensure that the kennel is not damaged or broken prior to use and continue to monitor throughout the period of use
- never leave the puppy's collar on when leaving the puppy alone in the indoor kennel
- do not allow children to play inside the kennel especially if the puppy is using it

## Withdrawal of the kennel

It is essential that our puppies learn to live without an indoor kennel in order for them to progress into formal training.

The puppy should be weaned off the use of an indoor kennel by approximately eight months of age, sooner if possible. However, this should be discussed with your supervisor as there may be times, dependent on your puppy's development, where it may be appropriate to continue or re-introduce the indoor kennel, for example during a puppy's season. It is important to remember that it will be different for each puppy, however the advice below may help with the withdrawal of the indoor kennel; it should be a gradual process.

Initially the door should be left open for short periods of time when the puppy is left alone and gradually increase this time.

Once the puppy can be left alone without the need to close the door then the kennel should be removed after a suitable length of time. The bedding used in the kennel should then be used as its bed to ensure a feeling of continuity for the puppy.

If undesired behaviours return it may be necessary to reintroduce the kennel and withdraw its use more slowly.

## Developing spending routines

A young puppy will have little control and will need to spend regularly, particularly after feeding, playing, sleeping etc. Decide on an exit point of the house for use when relieving. This will help your puppy know where to go when it needs to go! Encourage your puppy to use a specific area outside for relieving itself. Use the “busy-busy” prompt as your puppy relieves itself and praise it when it has finished. Allow your puppy to follow you back from the relief area, to help it learn the route once it has spent.

## The first few days

Once the puppy has settled in the home environment, introduce and fit the collar during play or prior to feeding. This will distract the puppy from scratching at the collar, and allow the puppy to develop a positive association with it. Always take the collar off when the puppy is in an indoor kennel, to avoid injury. The ID tag can be added to the collar once the puppy has accepted the wearing of the collar. Once this has been accepted, introduce and attach the lead to the collar. Begin walking your puppy around the house, initially using toys and play, to ensure that walking on the lead is a positive experience for the puppy. When the puppy is happy on the lead, you can introduce short training walks, however do not forget to continue with the basics, i.e. forming a bond, relief routines etc.

## Routines overnight

Your puppy will only recently have left its mother and litter mates; on its first night alone it may feel lonely and is likely to call for attention. This is instinctive for pack animals but may understandably cause you some concern and a little distress. To try and minimise this for both you and the puppy, the following advice may help:

Try to keep your puppy awake in the evening, however prior to going to bed do not excite the puppy. Ensure that the puppy has been given an opportunity to relieve itself immediately before bedtime.

Make the bedding area comfortable, warm and secure. To help the puppy settle you can ensure that your puppy has used its bed for short periods during the day, leave a radio or low night light on, and leave the puppy with a comforter or soft toy.

If the puppy starts crying immediately after going to bed, wait a few moments to see if it will settle, unless it is a cry of pain or stress, otherwise this will teach your puppy to seek your attention in this way. If your puppy starts crying after being settled for a few hours it may be appropriate to offer the puppy a chance to relieve itself, however try to keep interaction to a minimum in order to allow the puppy to resettle quickly.

If you continue to have difficulties with your puppy settling beyond the first few nights, please contact your supervisor for further advice.

## Children and guide dogs

The first time a puppy enters your home is a very exciting one for children. It's very difficult to restrain children from running up to their new friend and instantly embracing it in a heartfelt hug. But the puppy will have just entered an unknown environment when it comes home to you, so it's best to give it a little time to get used to its new environment.

### Take your time

Although it is an exciting time for the family, it is also important to give the puppy some 'quiet time' to adjust to its environment, at least for a few hours when it first comes home before meeting the family. After it has had a chance to examine things and get comfortable, it's time to introduce children.

### Keep it calm

Prior to the puppy arriving, take the time to explain to any children in the family or visiting your home that the puppy is a working dog, not a pet, and there are special expectations of the puppy and rules to be followed.

Please ensure you discuss the information contained in your placement pack 'keeping children and dogs safe' with any children that live or will be visiting the home.

Advise them to try their best to stay calm, quiet and seated while meeting the puppy for the first time, as some puppies may be scared of loud noises, or quick and sudden movements.

Wherever possible, children should let the puppy come to them and sniff their hands and clothing to become used to the scent before attempting to touch the puppy.

### Proper handling

No child under sixteen years of age may be responsible for the puppy. You must ensure that any child over the age of sixteen handling the puppy when on a walk or free run, has been instructed on how to correctly walk and control the puppy in accordance with Guide Dogs' policies and procedures.

Make sure any child who may pick up after the puppy understands the correct hygiene procedures to be followed.

### Feeding 'titbits'

Be sure that children understand that guide dog puppies have a specially designed diet and they should not be fed any inappropriate 'titbits' or 'treats'.

### Alone time

Ensure that children leave the puppy alone when it is in its bed, eating, or going to the toilet.



## General hygiene

### Basic hygiene measures must always be used when caring for a puppy.

#### These include:

- washing hands after handling the puppy, preferably with an antibacterial soap, and advising others who have contact with the puppy to do the same
- preventing and discouraging puppies from licking hands and faces
- not eating, drinking or smoking during the handling of the puppy
- wearing, whenever possible, disposable gloves when handling faecal matter or other bodily fluids and ensure proper clearing and disposal of faecal matter and body fluid. You must always 'pick up' after your puppy goes to the toilet. Faecal matter should be bagged, and the bag tied and placed in a suitable waste receptacle. If the waste bag is to be put into your general waste receptacle, Guide Dogs recommends you 'double-bag' the waste
- using a suitable disinfectant (your supervisor can recommend one). Ensure the puppy's spending area is regularly inspected and cleaned with an appropriate disinfectant
- cleaning any soiled bedding as soon as possible and washing it separately in the washing machine
- ensuring the area used to prepare the puppy's food is cleaned appropriately after use
- washing the food bowls after use and ensuring any spills are cleaned from the feeding area

### Procedures for treating human (i.e. puppy walker or family) exposure to mucus / saliva / blood / faecal matter:

#### Should you or a family member be exposed to the above, the following may help:

- splashes in mouth – wash out mouth with running water
- splashes in eye – clean out with a saline solution or warm water and seek medical attention if required
- on hands – wash hands with antibacterial hand soap
- on clothing or other material – wash in normal hot wash in washing machine

## Creating a safe environment for your puppy

The highest priority when looking after a puppy is security. Puppies are very good at finding, and getting through, small spaces and so we ask you to ensure your home and garden are safe and secure.

### Home

Always make sure that medicines, cleaning products and chemicals are stored out of reach of the puppy. Also ensure that food is kept well out of reach, especially grapes, raisins, chocolate and macadamia nuts as they are all poisonous to puppies and dogs. Check that your puppy is secured before you open any external doors.

### Garden

Gardens are wonderful exploring areas for young puppies, however before you let the puppy into the garden, always ensure that all gates to the garden are securely closed. Make certain they are high enough to prevent the puppy jumping over, and low enough to prevent the puppy from squeezing underneath. Return springs on gates are a good idea. Also check that the garden fences and walls are secure and that there are no holes or damage which will allow your puppy to escape. Check, for example, that the gaps between slats of a fence are small enough so that the puppy cannot squeeze through or get its head stuck. The puppy should be prevented from entering ponds or streams.

Also, it is important to ensure that any hazardous objects are removed. For example, do not use rat poison, slug pellets, weed killers, fertilizers or insecticides which are harmful to animals around the puppy. Keep the puppy away from areas which you know have been recently treated.

It is important not to use cocoa shell mulch as this is poisonous to dogs and can result in death if eaten by the puppy. Other soil treatments such as bark chippings can also be dangerous due to the pre-treatment and preparation they receive, so read the label to ensure these products are pet safe.

Numerous plants are also naturally toxic to dogs. Most need to be ingested but caution is required with the following list of plants:

Potentially harmful plants to puppies and dogs		
ivy	mistletoe	lily of the valley
foxgloves	morning glory	lupins
hemlock	nightshade	yew
hyacinth	oleander	various fungi
delphiniums	poinsettia	lilies
day lilies	rhododendron	laburnum
daffodil bulbs	rhubarb leaves	hydrangea
cyclamen	sweet pea	azalea
tulip bulbs	asparagus fern	umbrella plant
amaryllis bulbs	wisteria	

## Feeding and weight control

**Guide dog puppies are fed on specific diets. Please ensure you feed only the diet allocated to your puppy. If a change of diet is required this must be done following consultation with your supervisor and dog care and welfare advisor (DCWA).**

Your puppy will require a balanced diet in order to provide it with the energy required for growth. Puppies have small stomachs so cannot cope with large feeds in one amount, and as a result they require several feeds per day. The amount you feed will depend on your puppy's requirements but as a guide we suggest the following feeds per day:

Age	Feeds per day
From six weeks	Four
From 14 weeks	Three
From 24 weeks	Two
From 12 months	One

As a puppy matures, its growth rate naturally slows down. To ensure appropriate weight control, regular weighing and feed adjustment in consultation with your supervisor is essential.

Excessive weight gain can result in health risks to your puppy, increasing the risk of orthopaedic problems. Risks to organ development can be present and recovery during routine or non-routine surgery can be inhibited. By balancing feeding and exercise, preferably via lead walking and socialisation, it is possible to maintain your puppy's weight in line with its natural build.

Finally, consideration must be given to feeding times in relation to exercise. Energetic exercise on a full stomach can result in gastric dilation/torsion – a potentially fatal condition. To help minimise the risk, only allow your puppy to free run at least two hours after it has been fed, and ensure that one hour has elapsed after a free run before feeding.

In addition, puppies require free access to fresh drinking water at all times. Denial of water can lead to very serious health implications.



## Vaccinations and parasite control

All our puppies require early and complete protection against five potentially fatal diseases to enable us to start their socialisation at an early age. The diseases we routinely vaccinate against include distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus and para-influenza. Our puppies are given their first vaccine at six weeks of age before leaving the breeding centre. They then require two further vaccinations at twelve and sixteen weeks of age, followed by an annual booster vaccine. To offer the best level of protection against Kennel Cough we also request puppies receive a separate vaccine against this at approximately seven months of age.

## Control of worms and fleas (endo/ecto-parasite control)

Guide Dogs have established protocols for prevention of endo (internal) and ecto (external) parasites. These are reviewed regularly to ensure they are current and in line with best practice. You will be advised by your supervisor on current best practice.

## Worming

Puppies are wormed at two and five weeks of age with 'Panacur' or 'Drontal Puppy Suspension', whilst in the nest. At eight and twelve weeks of age they should again be wormed but this time with 'Drontal plus'. A further dose of Drontal plus is required when your puppy reaches the age of six months and then twelve months.

Your supervisor will weigh your puppy at these times in order to help you determine the appropriate dosage required by your puppy. Guide dogs will supply you with the medication you require when your puppy is placed with you. This pack will contain all the information and medication you need to treat your puppy up to the age of fourteen months.

Please ensure you read all the information supplied with these products and contact your dog care and welfare advisor or supervisor if you have any questions.

To ensure our protocol is effective, we randomly perform faecal analysis on a percentage of our puppies, training dogs and breeding stock.



## Faecal sample collection

It is likely whilst caring for a guide dog puppy that you will be asked by your vet or Guide Dogs to collect a sample of your puppy's faeces. This may be either to help with the diagnosis of a condition, or as part of our routine procedures to check levels of bacteria and endo-parasites within our stock.

We would ask that this task is carried out in line with the following advice; not only to ensure your safety but also to ensure we work within the law and protect and preserve the samples being collected.

A faecal sample collection container should be provided for your use which will have a small spatula attachment connected to the lid. Please do not use anything else to contain samples. Disposable gloves should be worn when collecting a faecal sample, and gloves should be disposed of after use. Hands should be washed prior to the task and again on completion.

The sample should be collected from newly passed faeces. The remainder of the faeces should be disposed of as per usual.

Samples for routine faecal analysis should be taken from puppies that are not currently on treatment (for example antibiotics or current worming preparations).

Ideally, collect the sample on a Monday or Tuesday. This allows for the lab to receive the sample prior to the weekend.

Collect a small amount (approximately the size of a pebble/walnut). Use the spatula lid attachment to take the collection and secure the faecal pot with the lid.

After collection, the sample should be packaged appropriately and sent to the vet or laboratory as soon as possible (see below). In the event of any delay in sending the sample, it should be stored in a cool area, out of the reach of children and away from food preparation areas.

Under no circumstances should a faecal sample container be stored in the refrigerator or in the vicinity of any food preparation or food storage areas.

### **The sample should be appropriately labelled with the following information:**

- date of collection
- puppy's date of birth
- puppy's name
- sample details

## Sending samples in the post

It is a legal requirement that diagnostic samples are packaged appropriately.

Each sample container should be wrapped in absorbent material (tissue or cotton wool is adequate) and placed in an individual plastic bag.

The sample should then be placed in the envelope which will normally be provided. These are pre-addressed laboratory envelopes and are labelled with a safety notice.

If a plain jiffy bag is to be used, the wording 'Pathological specimen – fragile. Handle with care' should be clearly written on the outside.

Always label the reverse of the envelope with your name and address prior to dispatch. Regular postage can be used and ideally the envelope should be dispatched in time for the laboratory to receive it before the weekend.

Finally, please contact your supervisor or dog care and welfare advisor if any further information is required.

## Fleas

Studies show that puppies in the nest are covered by an 'umbrella effect' of protection provided by their mother. Unless puppies are showing signs of a flea infestation or have been bred externally to Guide Dogs, they are not treated at the breeding centre.

Once living in a home environment, puppies should be treated monthly with a Guide Dogs approved product against fleas and ticks.

Again your Puppy Training Supervisor will weigh your puppy when treatment is required to help you determine the appropriate product and dosage. Guide Dogs will supply you with the medication you require when your puppy is placed with you, and once again this pack will contain all the information and medication you need to treat your puppy up to the age of 14 months.

Please ensure you read all the information supplied with these products and contact your dog care and welfare advisor or supervisor if you have any questions.

If you find evidence of fleas in your house, a suitable household treatment can be collected from your vet. Other pets within the household MUST also be treated regularly with a veterinary licensed product.

For the treatment of other ecto-parasites you should contact your dog care and welfare advisor who will advise you about which treatments can be used.

## Administering medicines or treatment to your puppy

**You will be asked to worm and apply flea control to your puppy on a monthly basis, however occasionally there may also be a need to administer other medications or treatment to your puppy. Guide Dogs asks when doing this you ensure that you, your puppy and others around you are as safe as possible. To help you do this Guide Dogs advises that you should always:**

Keep medicines and treatments in their original containers. Ensure they are identifiable and the original label is kept on the package. Read the information label on the medicine or treatment.

Follow the instructions given to you by the vet or your dog care and welfare advisor; make sure any prescribed course of medication is completed, even if your puppy's health appears to be better.

Only use treatments supplied to you by your vet or dog care and welfare advisor. Do not use any treatment purchased from a pet store or home remedies.

Check the 'best before' date before using any medication and only medication prescribed for your puppy should be used; never share medication between animals.

Ensure that all lids are replaced on containers after use and that medicines and treatments are kept out of the reach of children.

Wear any personal protective equipment (gloves, aprons etc.) advised in the manufacturer's instructions, by the vet or your dog care and welfare advisor.

In the event of a spillage of a medical substance, follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding clearing of spillages and disposal. Any material used to clean wounds should be bagged; then the bag should be tied and may be put in your normal waste bin. It is advised that you wear suitable disposable gloves when there is a possibility of coming into contact with blood or other bodily fluids.

If at any time your puppy becomes distressed while you are administering medicine or giving treatment, stop and seek guidance from your vet, dog care and welfare advisor or your supervisor.

Please return any surplus medications to the source of supply, that being either your vet or Guide Dogs. This will ensure it is disposed of correctly.



## Grooming and checking

Grooming and checking your puppy from an early age helps to prepare your puppy to be relaxed and comfortable when being examined or groomed by the vet or by the puppy's future guide dog owner and vet etc. Your supervisor will cover a practical session with you in order to show you how this should be done, especially at different stages of your puppy's development (during teething, hormonal changes or following any previous injuries).

Small puppies may not require a lot of grooming, but they will need opportunities to get used to the brush, comb and associated handling when they are young. To ensure a positive association is developed, the introductions to grooming exercises should initially be kept as short sessions that should be built upon gradually. This exercise is not to allow you to identify any injuries or health issues, but is the opportunity to build a closer bond with your puppy.

The chart below has been designed to help you through this process covering all aspects of the puppy's health check. Where possible try to build this exercise into your training and bonding time. Unless suggested otherwise, it is easiest for your puppy to be in the sit position when conducting these exercises.

Start from the tip of your puppy's nose and work backwards towards its tail. While you may be able see an injury to the puppy it is important to remember that a guide dog owner will also be dependent on their other senses so don't forget to look, feel and smell!

Puppy Health Check			
Position	Action	Examine	Check for
<b>Sit</b>	Look	Eyes	Discharge, wounds or discolouration
<b>Sit</b>	Look	Nose	Discharge, wounds or discolouration
<b>Sit</b>	Look and smell	Ears (inside and out)	Discharge, build up of wax, wounds or discolouration
<b>Sit</b>	Look and smell	Mouth/ teeth (inside and out)	Tartar, sore gums, wounds, broken or missing teeth
<b>Sit</b>	Look and smell	Lips, folds around its mouth	Wounds or inflammation
<b>Standing</b>	Feel and look	Body and under abdomen	Feel for lumps or wounds
<b>Standing</b>	Feel and look	Each leg, between toes and pads	Feel for lumps or wounds
<b>Down and roll over</b>	Look and feel	Abdomen and insides of legs (male dogs – sheath and testicles)	Wounds, sore areas or lumps, discharge from sheath (green/creamy colour is normal) and both testicles (descended)
<b>Standing</b>	Look and feel	Skin and coat on back	Dandruff, flea dirt, parasites or redness
<b>Standing</b>	Look and feel	Tail	Lump or wounds
<b>Standing</b>	Look	Under tail (females – vulva)	Discharge, sore areas, wounds or swelling



## Bathing

Regular grooming will prevent the need for bathing your puppy. Not only may bathing be unpleasant for your puppy but may be hazardous for you especially if you have a large adolescent. Excessive bathing also removes your puppy's naturally occurring protective coat oils. However, if your puppy has rolled in something unpleasant it may be necessary to wash that specific area of the coat.

Start by removing as much as possible of the debris present in the coat with a comb before wetting, washing and rinsing the area with a weak solution of canine shampoo in line with the manufacturer's recommendations. Ensure where necessary you have someone available to help you and that you rinse the area well so that no shampoo remains on the coat. Finally, the coat is dried thoroughly with an old towel, not a hairdryer.

Fox faeces, a favourite for some dogs to roll in, can leave a lingering odour. A useful tip for this is to treat the area with tomato ketchup before washing; this reduces the smell.



## Care of puppies in hot weather

Puppies do not have the ability to adjust the temperature of their environment, nor do they have the ability to regulate their body temperature as efficiently as we do. As a result, it is the handler's responsibility to see that puppies do not overheat and suffer the numerous health complaints this can produce.

Not only do puppies have thick fur covering their bodies, but they also have only a limited ability to sweat to assist cooling. Puppies use their tongues to regulate their temperature; this is why they pant during exercise.

During hot weather great care must be taken to ensure that your puppy does not overheat. Extra care will be necessary with small puppies and those with dark coats. The following points may help:

Always ensure fresh drinking water is available to your puppy. Restrict energetic exercise and games.

Puppies must never be left in vehicles or parts of buildings which can become hot quickly, such as conservatories or summer rooms. Adapt accommodation so that your puppy has ventilation and shade.

Exercise your puppy at the beginning or the end of the day. Staying out of the midday sun will prevent your puppy's temperature rising. Consider also that pavements can become so hot that the tar surface can melt.

When travelling, ensure ventilation or air conditioning is available to your puppy.

Do not fit puppy coats as these will contain heat and only increase your puppy's body temperature.

## Signs of heatstroke

If your puppy does overheat, it may exhibit the following symptoms:

- excessive drinking
- excessive panting
- collapse
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- high temperature
- convulsions and seizures

Heatstroke is an extremely serious condition which will require immediate veterinary attention. It is also advised that you try and cool your puppy down using tepid water or covering the puppy in wet towels and moving it to a cool place to try and reduce the puppy's temperature. **DO NOT hose or immerse the puppy in cold water.**

## Documentation

### Vet books

Each puppy will have a green 'health record' book. This book contains white slips for your vet to complete if your puppy is seen by a vet for any reason. Each time a slip is completed, your vet should tear off and keep the top copy; this should be attached to their invoice and sent to the address on the inside of the first page. Once these are received payment will be arranged and sent directly to them.

### Health record cards

When placed each puppy has a white 'health record card'. This is used to record all its health records, treatments and information which must always be kept up to date. The front of the card should be kept for recording vaccination details, and every time your puppy receives a vaccine it is important that your vet completes this page. You should take this to the vet's every visit and ask the vet to fill in the details of their consultation. If your puppy ever comes into kennels it will need to have the health card brought with them to kennels. Your supervisor will usually ask to see it on their visits.

#### **The health record cards may contain other information on the front page including:**

- PBS (prospective breeding stock) – these are puppies that may in the future be selected for breeding future guide dogs. It is important these puppies aren't neutered until you are advised to do so by the breeding centre
- BMBT (buccal mucosal bleeding time) – this means the puppy will need a small test done under sedation or anaesthetic before being neutered to check how quickly its blood clots. Your dog care and welfare advisor or supervisor will arrange this when the neutering operation is booked

### Reclaim cards

When your puppy is vaccinated this can be claimed back directly from the manufacturer by your vet. In the back of your puppy's green book there are white 'reclaim cards'. Once completed your vet needs to send them to their vaccine manufacturer who will replace the vaccine. If your vet has any questions they should contact the dog care and welfare advisor responsible for your puppy.

If your vet is unsure of how to claim payment for treatment or vaccines they should contact your dog care and welfare advisor who can send them an information pack.



## Dog law

**When in charge of a dog or puppy, it is important that you are aware of the laws that affect you and the dog or puppy that you care for. The following list covers some of the laws which may directly affect you and your guide dog puppy, however please also check local or district bylaws as these vary depending on location.**

### Identification

The Control of Dogs Order (1992) says that: 'Every dog while in a highway or in a place of public resort shall wear a collar with the name and address of the owner inscribed on the collar or on a plate or badge attached to it but that this does not apply to dogs or puppies registered with The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.'

This is because Guide Dogs uses a separate identity system, which protects the details of our service users. It's therefore essential the ID disk provided by us with your puppy is worn by your puppy when on any public highway.

### Clearing up after your dog

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 can now be used to enforce fines of up to £1,000 for those who fail to pick up after their dogs. Guide Dogs' best practice requires this to be done at all times.

### Keeping dogs under control

The Road Traffic Act 1988 states that: 'It is an offence to allow a dog on a designated road without it being held on a lead.' As a result, a guide dog puppy should be on the lead at all times when carrying out socialisation walks.

In addition, the act also says dogs travelling in vehicles should not be a nuisance, or in any way distract the driver during the journey, and so we ask that you adhere to our travelling and transportation instructions and advice.

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 states that: 'It is a criminal offence for the owner or person in charge of a dog to allow a dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place.'

'Out of control' can be defined as causing injury to someone or the perception that it may cause injury. This would apply to behaviours such as barking, jumping up and chasing etc. This can be avoided by applying control techniques correctly and consistently, if your puppy should start to misbehave.

### Protection of livestock

The act passed in 1953 says that your dog 'must not worry (chase or attack) livestock on agricultural land'. It is essential that your puppy is kept on a lead when close to livestock and that free running is carried out in areas far away from any such animals.

The owner of livestock has the right to stop a puppy or dog; shooting the puppy or dog if necessary.

## Noise nuisance

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 can now be used by local authorities to serve noise abatement notices to the owners of noisy dogs. This can result in the payment of costly fines and in some cases the removal of the offending animal. Care when teaching your puppy to be left can reduce the risk of this problem occurring.

## Protection of animals

The act passed in 1911 clarifies that it is a criminal offence to cause or allow unnecessary suffering to an animal. By following Guide Dogs' training and dog care advice you can ensure your puppy has a happy life free from suffering.

If Guide Dogs' procedures and routines are adhered to, it is unlikely that you will fall foul of the law; however if you have difficulty complying with the law as a result of equipment and facilities or your dog's behaviour, then please contact your supervisor for assistance.



## Dog attacks and incident reporting

Though rare, there have been instances where a guide dog or guide dog puppy has been attacked by, or been involved in, aggressive displays of behaviour with a third party dog.

**There are some basic guidelines that you should know which may help you to identify aggressive behaviour, prevent a dog attack and also to try and stop a fight.**

### Identifying aggressive behaviour in dogs

**The following are signals which may be displayed by dogs or puppies which may be considering aggressive behaviour:**

- standing tall on tips of the toes, leaning slightly forward with ears pointing forward and up
- long stares and refusal to break eye contact
- raised hackles (hair between shoulders) although it should be noted that raised hackles on their own do not always imply aggression
- growling from deep within the body as opposed to a throat growl
- showing teeth
- stiff slow movements that include a strange wag with the tail held high
- biting at the air

### How to avoid a dog fight or attack

- never approach a dog which is not on a lead or not under the control of a responsible person
- if a dog shows aggression to you or your puppy, ensure your puppy is on its lead; do not run away as this can provoke an attack. Try to walk away slowly
- do not scream or shout, try to stay calm
- never stare down a dog as this can be interpreted as a challenge

### Stopping a dog fight or attack

There is no truly safe way to intervene in a dog fight and Guide Dogs insists that you never put yourself at risk of injury.

Most dog fights or attacks are not serious; often ninety per cent is sound and ten per cent fury.

Even though it may be hard, if you cannot break up the fight without putting yourself at serious risk, you must not intervene.

**NEVER REACH INTO OR TRY TO STEP BETWEEN FIGHTING DOGS** – you could get bitten by mistake.

## Suggestions for breaking up a dog fight (if it occurs in a home environment)

- always shout for help
- hose down the puppies or dogs with water; try to aim for the face, nose and mouth. Spraying this way with water can often shock them into a ceasefire. It needs to be a good amount to make an impact
- find a broom or something with a long handle that you can wrap with a towel to separate the animals without getting yourself in the middle
- loud noises (but not human shouts) like a vacuum cleaner, two pots clashed together or a slamming door can also startle animals into stopping
- drop a blanket or towel on one animal to protect it and shield it from view

Basically, anything that you can use to get between the two animals without hurting them or yourself is helpful. Be aware at all times that the aggressive dog may turn its attention to you. If you are attacked, try to protect your face and neck with your arms, keeping your fingers curled up in a fist, and stay tight in a ball.

Also remember that any dog or puppy that has been involved in a canine attack or display of aggressive behaviour may be scared and in pain and could bite you out of fear.

If your puppy has been involved in a fight or attack ensure that you take it to the vet, even if you cannot see any injuries. You must also ensure that you inform your supervisor within forty eight hours in order that an incident investigation form is completed.

## Reporting accidents and incidents

If you (while carrying out puppy walking duties) or the puppy (at any time) is involved in an incident that causes an injury to you, the puppy or any other person or animal, it must be reported to your supervisor at the earliest opportunity.

Following a report by you, your supervisor will carry out an investigation with you. It is important to note that this is not done to apportion blame; it is done because we need to know why the incident happened and if there is anything we can do to prevent it happening again.

If the injury is to a member of the public, Guide Dogs asks you take as much information from the injured person as possible, including their name, address, contact number and any other information you may feel relevant. This is for Guide Dogs' records, and also allows us to follow up with the injured person.

**If you are unsure if something should be reported, do not hesitate to ask your supervisor.**

## The role of Dog Care and Welfare Advisors

There are fourteen dog care and welfare advisors covering England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. They are responsible for liaising with vets on all aspects of care and welfare of our dogs, from puppies to working dogs. If any of our dogs are ill, the dog care and welfare advisor will liaise with the treating vet to ensure they are aware of our treatment protocols and our options for referral. They also make sure our dogs are receiving the best care possible.

If your puppy requires any non-routine procedures, e.g. X-rays, anaesthetics, surgery or diagnostic tests, we request that your vet contacts your dog care and welfare advisor first, unless it is an emergency situation.

The dog care and welfare advisors are also able to give you advice on routine preventative healthcare, and whether your puppy requires a visit to the vet if you are unsure.





## When to take your puppy to the vet

For many, the decision about whether to seek veterinary treatment can be a difficult one. Some conditions require immediate veterinary treatment, and others require no treatment at all.

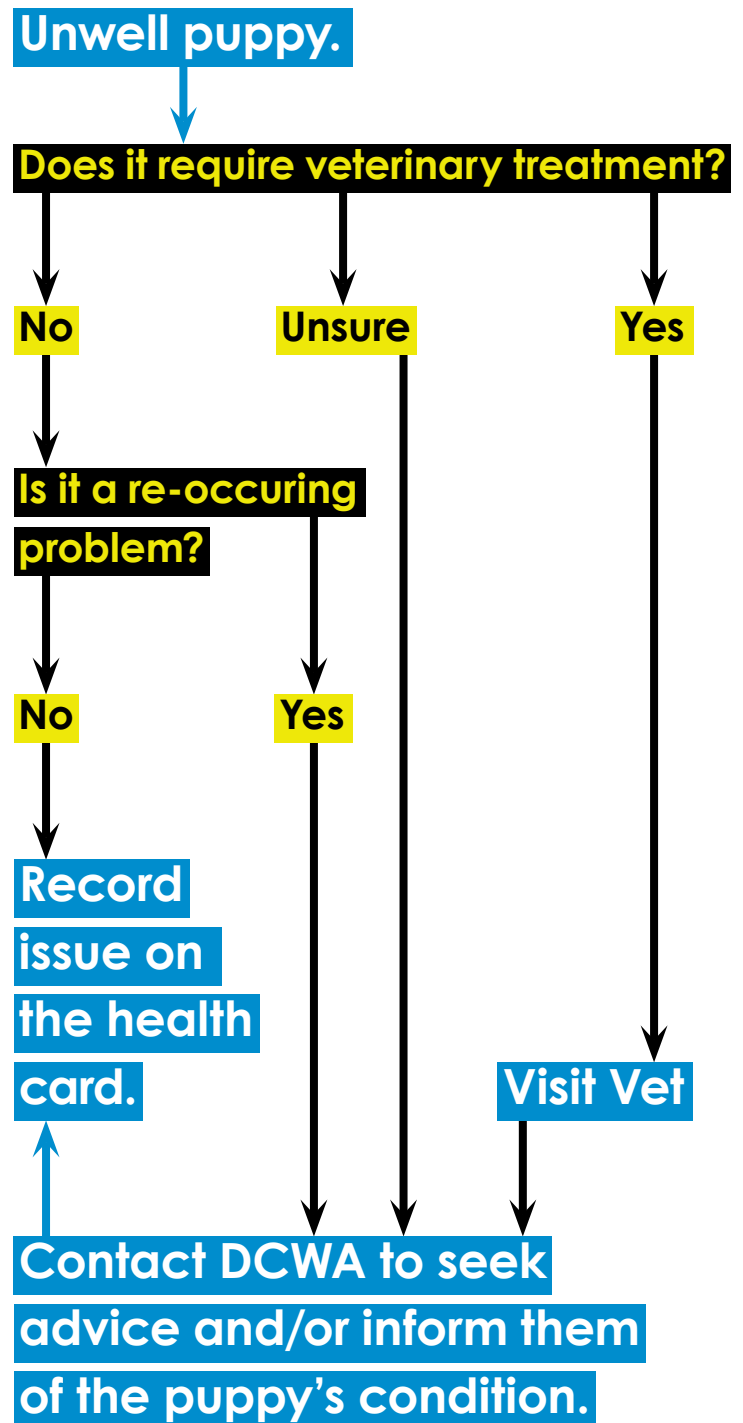
The following lists have been compiled to help you make an informed judgement. However, if in doubt and you are unable to talk to a Guide Dogs' member of staff, take your puppy to the vet.

If your puppy becomes unwell there are a number of options available to you. You can contact the Dog Care and Welfare Advisor for your area; their number is in your puppy's health book.

You may also contact the Guide Dogs duty manager if the incident has occurred out of normal working hours; the duty manager has access to a duty dog care staff member during this period. The out of hours telephone number is **0870 609 2219**. You can also obtain this number if you call your local Guide Dogs' office or training site out of hours.

Finally, you can also call your vet for advice without necessarily making a visit.

Make sure if you do have a health issue with your puppy, that you communicate with both your dog care and welfare advisor and your supervisor, as well as completing the puppy's health records.



<b>Condition/Issue</b>	<b>Action required</b>
<b>Lumps and swellings (away from airways)</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Discharge from ears, eyes and skin</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Scotting</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Sneezing or coughing</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Limping (see notes below)</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Bloated abdomen</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Blood in urine</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Breathing difficulties</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Burns</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Broken bones</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Choking</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Collapse</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Convulsions and seizures</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Damage to eyes</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Excessive blood in faeces</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Excessive blood loss</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Electrocution</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Heatstroke</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Any road traffic accident</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Stings in and around the mouth or throat</b>	Immediate veterinary treatment
<b>Vomiting and diarrhoea (young pups)</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Persistent loss of appetite</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Bad breath</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Blood or mucus in faeces</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Scratching, chewing and biting self</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Loose motions/ diarrhoea (temperament unaffected)</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Excessive thirst or urination</b>	Contact DCWA
<b>Unexplained lethargy</b>	Contact DCWA

## Lameness

**It is very important that we diagnose and treat any causes of lameness promptly and that all details are recorded on the health record card.**

For all occurrences of lameness, please rest your puppy immediately for 24 hours. You should inform your supervisor and dog care and welfare advisor immediately and they will advise you regarding the appropriate course of action. It is important that all incidences of lameness are reported, regardless of severity or duration.

**There are many causes of lameness in puppies, including:**

- trauma – fractures, dislocations, falls or fights
- foreign bodies – thorns, glass or grass seeds
- soft tissue injuries – strains, sprains or bruising
- orthopaedic – panosteitis, elbow/hip dysplasia.

## Symptoms of lameness

- limping
- signs of pain or vocalisation when the affected area is touched
- reluctance to jump in or out of a car or go up or down steps
- reluctance to sit or lie down
- stiffness on rising from sit position or lying down
- regular licking or chewing of an area of a limb
- swelling



## Vomiting and diarrhoea

All puppies are susceptible to changes to their normal routine. Unfortunately, these can cause gastrointestinal upsets e.g. diarrhoea. This problem is not new and is commonly experienced when breeders place puppies into new homes. It is suspected to be caused by a number of factors, including stress, changes in diet, new routines and exposure to new micro-organisms in the puppy's new home.

Enclosed with your puppy's health record card is a faecal score chart, keep this safe as your supervisor or dog care and welfare advisor may ask you to use this if your puppy has diarrhoea.

**However, there are some things that you can do to help minimise the severity and incidence of diarrhoea. These include:**

- keeping your puppy as quiet as possible for the first three days. Avoid visitors, travelling or taking the puppy out. Allow it time to settle into its new environment and new routines
- offering your puppy Oralade on arrival. (This is supplied.)
- only feeding the food provided with your puppy unless advised otherwise by your dog care and welfare advisor or vet. If your puppy will not eat, contact your dog care and welfare advisor. Puppies should NOT be fed for three hours after arriving, and after this time they should be given half their normal food allowances
- ensuring visitors wash their hands before and after handling the puppy
- if the puppy vomits, just offer small amounts of electrolyte solution every few hours, and do not let the puppy gorge on water even if it seems thirsty as this can cause vomiting

If diarrhoea occurs, and only if the puppy remains bright, alert, active and keen to eat, the puppy should be starved for eight hours and offered an electrolyte solution to drink. However if the diarrhoea occurs immediately after arrival and the puppy has had nothing to eat it may be given its first half feed three hours after arriving. If the diarrhoea continues it should then be starved for eight hours. After starving, feed little and often using its normal food. In many cases this is all it takes to allow gastrointestinal function to return to normal.

It should be stressed that if there is blood in the puppy's faeces, or if the puppy vomits immediately after drinking, or becomes lethargic and depressed, or off food for more than twenty four hours, you should consult your vet straight away.

If your puppy develops diarrhoea and you need some advice, or are unsure if it needs to see the vet, contact your dog care and welfare advisor.

All this information and more is supplied with your puppy at time of placement on the information sheet 'Guidelines for treatment of puppies with diarrhoea'.

## What to do if you lose your puppy

### The first piece of advice is don't panic!

There are usually two situations in which dogs or puppies get lost: when out during free running exercises, or when straying from the home.

#### During free running

Your puppy may have lost you during your walk and may be trying to find you. As a result it is advisable to return to the last place you saw it and stay in that place, calling your puppy's name and using the recall whistle. With luck your puppy will hear you and return.

Try to avoid roaming the free run area and calling from a number of locations. Ask others to help search and stay in the area.

Ensure somebody returns home. Often puppies make their own way home, especially if it is within walking distance.

Ensure the telephone is manned. Your puppy should be wearing identification and is micro-chipped so if it has been found, you may be contacted.

#### Straying from home

Ensure someone stays at home to be there if the puppy returns.

Ensure the telephone is manned. Your puppy should be wearing identification and is micro-chipped, so if it has been found you may be contacted.

Search the local area. A door to door search can be useful as people often take puppies in and feed them if they are found loose.

Look in places that may interest your puppy, e.g. local parks, areas with other dogs or places where it knows food is available, and search your property again – outbuildings are frequently hiding places for pets.

On all occasions of loss or straying, please ensure you contact your supervisor or the puppy walking department. In out of hours situations contact the duty person on 0870 609 2219. In most situations found puppies are reported to us directly very quickly.

If you cannot find your puppy within the first 30 minutes, then please contact the local police, dog wardens, rescue shelters, local Veterinary practices, etc. to see if it has been handed in.

## Types and use of toys

It is essential that puppies have access to toys as they grow and develop, however the types and use of toys must be closely regulated to prevent behavioural and health issues.

Toys can help a puppy to fulfil a number of natural behaviours and needs, for example chewing during teething, carrying objects and presenting items to the handler. However they can also be a catalyst for inappropriate behaviours such as possessive aggression, chasing and barking etc. As a result, toys must be used appropriately and consistently.

Be sure not to encourage uncontrollable chase behaviours when playing games with toys. Always ensure that your puppy is not allowed to go and find a toy which you have thrown until it has stopped rolling or bouncing, and only when you have given a command to "go free".

Try also to avoid over-use of tugging games, as these can become a battle of will and strength. Always ensure your puppy will leave a toy when asked to "leave it" and not take it until instructed to "take it".

Toy selection is crucial to your puppy's safety. Small toys can get stuck in a puppy's throat and others can be ripped up and reveal dangerous objects inside.

**Your supervisor will advise you regarding appropriate toys.**

## Dogs and fireworks

**Thousands of pets suffer every year as a result of the firework festivities.**

Dogs and puppies have a high hearing sensitivity, which means that the bangs, whizzes and explosions of fireworks are significantly amplified which contributes to the fear, distress and discomfort.

Each puppy reacts differently towards fireworks and other sudden sounds. Your supervisor can give advice and support on a variety of products and techniques that are available to ease the stress and fear of fireworks. Due to the unique nature of the work that guide dogs undertake, it is essential that any potential treatment is the most appropriate for your individual puppy.



## Signs of stress

Observe your puppy carefully and look out for any signs of stress and anxiety.

**These can include although may not be limited to:**

- pacing
- panting
- whining
- barking
- trembling
- restlessness
- attention seeking
- shaking
- destructiveness
- hiding
- escape behaviour
- loss of house training

Remember it is instinctive behaviour for any animal to try to avoid and escape from sudden, frightening noises. However, by following these simple guidelines, you may help your puppy to manage better.

**You can support your puppy by:**

- making sure that the puppy's environment is safe and escape proof
- if your puppy seems restless or displays any of the signs of stress, ignore this behaviour but reward any calm, relaxed behaviour
- preparing an artificial den area, away from windows. Cover a table with a blanket or place the puppy's bed behind a sofa, where the puppy will feel safe, secure and comfortable. Your puppy may choose its own area where it feels safest and if so, it is best to leave it there
- closing curtains to remove the likelihood of flashes and turning on the TV or radio
- feeding your puppy and allowing an opportunity for relief well before the likely start of the fireworks
- not leaving your puppy alone in the home. As dogs are pack animals the security and confidence provided by others is essential. The companionship of a confident dog can provide reassurance to a fearful puppy
- occupying the puppy with food filled toys or other fun activities

## Always:

- keep your puppy securely indoors whilst fireworks are set off
- remain calm, relaxed and confident yourself; this will help your puppy to feel more secure
- ensure that your puppy is wearing a collar and identity disc at all times
- ignore any fearful behaviour and engage your puppy in some type of fun activity
- choose safe times for relief and exercise during the firework period
- provide a safe, secure and comfortable area for your puppy to hide in

## Never:

- let your puppy outside when fireworks are sounding, even if it does not display signs of stress
- exercise or walk your puppy when fireworks are likely
- punish your puppy for being frightened
- leave your puppy alone during the firework period
- fuss or try and reassure your puppy when frightened, as this rewards the fear behaviour

## Kennel cough

**Kennel cough is a contagious, canine, upper respiratory tract disease, similar to colds and flu in people. The cause of this disease is still unknown, and is felt to be caused by many different pathogens. It is passed on by direct dog-to-dog contact, or by dogs inhaling the airborne infection from other dogs. Your puppy will be vaccinated at seven months of age to try to prevent infection, however this does not ensure immunity as there are numerous strains of the disease.**

## What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms can vary in severity, as does the duration of the illness.

Your puppy may start sneezing or have a watery discharge from its nose. A harsh, dry cough and possibly a mucous discharge can accompany it. The puppy may also have a sore throat or a discharge from its eyes. The symptoms are usually more obvious when your puppy is excited.

While most puppies normally remain relatively well in themselves while coughing, some can have a high temperature or a loss of appetite, or may just seem generally 'off colour'. If your puppy is obviously unwell, seek veterinary advice.



## What is the treatment for kennel cough?

As kennel cough is often a viral infection, we normally have to wait for it to run its course. If a puppy has an increased temperature, a productive cough or a mucous discharge consult your vet who will usually advise a course of antibiotics as required.

## What precautions should I take?

As kennel cough is easily passed on from dog to dog, it is important that you keep your puppy away from other dogs while it is coughing or sneezing. The disease can also be transferred by contaminated objects such as food bowls, or on hands and clothing etc. We would advise that you don't take your puppy out into highly dog populated areas such as parks while it is coughing, to avoid the spreading of the disease. It is actually illegal to knowingly mix your dog with other dogs if you know it has a contagious infection. Strenuous exercise e.g. free running is not recommended while your puppy is affected – this can cause long-term health problems.

Your puppy may be feeling the same as you do when you have a cold, so it will need plenty of rest to enable it to get better quicker. If you have small children, make sure they know that the puppy isn't feeling well, and ensure that they allow the puppy plenty of rest periods.

If your puppy is off its food due to a sore throat or a reduced sense of smell, try adding a little warm water to the feed. You can also try feeding less quantity, more frequently.

Although kennel cough is not contagious to people, it is important for you wash your hands after handling your puppy, as you could pass the infection on to any other dogs you meet.

If you are at all worried about your puppy while it is coughing then contact your supervisor or your dog care and welfare advisor for advice.

## Teething

A puppy will use its mouth to explore its environments, and will usually begin to lose its first set of teeth between fourteen and twenty weeks of age. This can cause the puppy some discomfort and you may find some bleeding from the mouth and missing teeth. Behaviour changes can also occur and can include increases in incidents of chewing, a reluctance to eat and occasional irritability.

It is rare that a puppy will need to visit a vet when teething but there are some steps you can take to reduce discomfort. These include softening food, and giving soft hide chews or dog teething rings. You may give ice cubes to your puppy to chew on.

By 20 months of age your puppy's adult teeth should be fully visible. It is a good idea when checking your puppy to look into its mouth for any irregular teeth growth.

**If you are unsure about the condition of your dog's teeth please speak to your supervisor.**

## Lifting puppies

While caring for your puppy you may have to lift it for a number of reasons, for example to put it in your car. It is essential that when lifting your puppy, your safety, and that of your puppy and the public, remains your first concern.

Whenever you lift anything, not just a puppy, it is important to think of your own safety, and be particularly careful to avoid hurting your back.

### Best practice when lifting your puppy

- Think before lifting and plan the lift.
- Consider where the puppy is going to be placed, whether you need help, and if there are any obstructions that need to be moved or negotiated.
- Keep the puppy close to your body for as long as possible during the lift.
- Adopt a stable position – feet apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance.
- Get a good hold of the puppy.
- Start lifting with a good posture – keep your back as straight as possible and bend your knees.
- Avoid twisting your back or leaning sideways.
- Keep your head up when lifting, look ahead not down.
- Move smoothly, try not to jerk. Do not lift or handle more than you can easily manage.
- Use help whenever it is available.

### Before handling or lifting your puppy you need to assess the task, and consider the following:

- The reasons for or against lifting or carrying the dog.
- The size of the dog and the nature of any medical needs.
- The distance and ground to be covered during lifting.
- The capabilities of yourself and your helpers.
- Guide Dogs recommends you use the following methods when lifting puppies and dogs.

### Lifting puppies aged between six and twelve weeks

It is essential that you follow the correct procedure for lifting and holding a young puppy to ensure that it is safe and comfortable, both for the puppy and yourself. This will help give the puppy a positive association with the action and ensure it is confident when being handled.

Place one arm around the puppy's bottom and support the hind legs. Use your arm to hold the puppy against your body. At the same time put the opposite hand between the puppy's forelegs, thereby supporting its chest.

Hold the puppy firmly and confidently close to your body as this will help the puppy to feel happy and confident and will ensure it is less likely to struggle. This should result in the puppy's weight being supported on the arm that is under the puppy's bottom.

## Lifting your puppy into a car

Please ensure you have read the development documents (Transport and Transportation No.9) before travelling with your puppy. The following section describes how you should lift your puppy at various ages and in particular, how to lift it safely into a car.

### Puppies aged between six and 12 weeks and lifted by one person

Bend down to the puppy, bending both knees (one leg can be lowered to the ground if necessary) and place your arm either around the puppy's chest or through its front legs and take hold of the collar to ensure you have a safe hold. Place the other arm around the puppy's back legs, taking hold of the stifle area.

Firmly hold the puppy against your body by pulling your forearms inwards and bending your elbows. Gently raise yourself into a standing position, ensuring that the puppy is held close to your body, and place the puppy into the vehicle.

### Puppies aged 16 weeks and older

At around 16 weeks of age it is likely that your puppy has grown and that, as a result, it is difficult for you to lift it into the car. At this stage the puppy's skeletal system is developing rapidly and it is important that the puppy is not allowed to jump in and out of the vehicle unaided. This will prevent possible damage to the developing joints and bones, which can occur during takeoff and landing.

Before attempting to put the puppy in the rear of the car, remember to switch off the engine! The puppy will be reluctant to get into the car if it can smell exhaust fumes.

### Entry into boot area

Open the boot and encourage the puppy to approach and put its front two paws into the back of the car.

Loop the lead through your arm, so your hands are free and able to help the puppy into the vehicle. Place one arm around the rear of the puppy and the other under the tummy. Gently lift the puppy's rear end up and into the back of the car. Remember to keep your back straight as you lift the puppy into the boot area. Once the puppy is in the car, use its name to encourage it to turn to face you, and remove the lead in preparation for travelling.

## Lifting your puppy out of a car

### Exit from boot area

- Open the boot and ensure the puppy sits while you attach the lead to the collar.
- Encourage the puppy to come to the edge of the tailgate. Put your arm through the lead to ensure your hands are free and that you still keep control of the puppy.
- Place one hand on the front of the chest to prevent the puppy from lunging to the ground, the other hand under the puppy and gently support the puppy to the ground.

**There will be times when two or more people are required to safely lift a puppy especially once they are an adolescent.**

In this case one person should stand at the puppy's shoulder with one arm curled around the front of the shoulder, holding the puppy's head, and the other arm beneath the chest. The second person should stand at the hindquarters and hold the puppy's stifles or knees and support the pelvis. Communication between one another is important for a safe and comfortable lift.

## Care for bitches in season

### The oestrus cycle

A bitch usually comes into season approximately every six months, and this lasts on average of 21 days. The first season usually occurs between six and twelve months of age. However, all bitches are individual and these timescales are averages, so variations will occur.

Prior to, and during the season, your puppy's temperament and behaviour may change considerably, also at the time of her first season she may not be aware of what is happening and may find it traumatic.

There are four stages to a bitch's cycle:

**Anoestrus** – Lasting approximately four months, this is the period of sexual inactivity.

**Pro-oestrus** – This is when the bitch comes into 'season' and lasts around 10 days. At this time the bitch may be receptive to a male but will not usually yet mate.

**Oestrus** – This occurs during the season and is when she ovulates and becomes receptive to males. This usually lasts around 7-10 days.

**Metoestrus** – This is when the season ends and she is no longer fertile. This period lasts around 63 days and would be the time she would be pregnant.

### Signs of a season

**When coming into season, your puppy may exhibit some of the following signs:**

- she may become excitable, attention seeking or irritable
- she may become destructive and start chewing (even if she has never chewed before)
- you may notice her urinating more frequently (marking territory)
- she may start showing more interest in other dogs
- there can be a breakdown in house training habits
- you may notice a breakdown in her obedience responses
- she may mount other dogs or allow them to mount her irrespective of the other dog's sex. She may curl her tail and arch her back, particularly if pressure is applied to her back
- there is usually a blood discharge (but not always)
- after being in season the blood discharge may become cream/clear in colour
- her mammary glands may become swollen

**Please record the start and finish dates of your puppy's season on the health record card as this information is needed to calculate an appropriate neutering date.**

## Security

You will need to ensure that your puppy cannot escape from the house or garden. Some bitches will go to great lengths to get to a male! She may dig up the garden or try to jump walls/fences etc. The local dog population may be just as keen to get in and in extreme cases may set up camp at your front door!!

## Exercise

You should discuss this with your supervisor as it may depend on the area you live in and the temperament of your puppy. If your supervisor is happy for you to exercise the puppy away from the garden, you should take her to an exercise area in the car. Avoid walking her directly from your home to avoid leaving a scent for local dogs.

Do not free run her in an open environment as she may run off or be caught by a male. She must be kept on a lead until her season has finished. Even if your puppy is on a lead, this will not keep unwanted males away and therefore you need to be vigilant. Select an area where you know there will be fewer dogs around.

## Accidents

If you know or even think that your bitch has been mated by a male whilst in season, you should contact your supervisor or the dog care and welfare advisor immediately. If your puppy is mounted, never pull the dogs apart as this may result in harm to the dogs and possibly yourself. In some cases an injection can be given to prevent her becoming pregnant.

## General care

During your puppy's season she may have temperament changes, such as becoming insecure, and there may be a breakdown in her obedience responses. This is all due to the temperamental and physical changes she is going through, but her behaviour will revert to normal once the season has ended.

## False or phantom pregnancy

On occasions the hormone imbalance that results from a season can result in a bitch believing that she is pregnant, and this can occur any time within the twelve weeks after a season. Symptoms can be both physical and behavioural. Physically you may see enlarged mammary glands, the production of milk and a loss of coat condition. Behaviourally you may see changes in temperament, appetite loss, nesting behaviour and the nursing or protection of toys.

If you suspect your puppy is experiencing a phantom pregnancy please contact your supervisor or the Dog Care and Welfare Advisor who will provide you with specific care advice.

## Neutering

**Your supervisor will advise when the time is right for your puppy to be neutered. This depends on several different factors:**

### Bitches

The operation is called an ovariohysterectomy, commonly known as 'spaying'. It includes the surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus. It is carried out under general anaesthetic and on average the procedure lasts forty-five to sixty minutes.

The operation is carried out twelve to sixteen weeks after the end of the bitch's season. However in some circumstances this window may be missed, and if this happens your dog care and welfare advisor will arrange an alternative time with the vet.

If the puppy does not have a season by twelve months of age, then the dog care and welfare advisor may arrange for her to be spayed before she comes into season after consultation with the breeding centre and an examination by the vet.

### Dogs

The operation known commonly as 'castration' includes the surgical removal of both testicles. The timing of the operation will be decided by your supervisor. It depends upon both physical and temperamental factors. Ideally the castration will not be done before eight months of age.

Some puppies will require a buccal mucosal bleeding time (BMBT) test prior to neutering, and if required, this will be arranged by either your dog care and welfare advisor or your supervisor. This test measures the clotting time of the puppy's blood.



## Pre and post-operative home care

**This information is for guidance only and should not be used to contradict or over-rule your own veterinary surgeon's advice or instructions.**

Guide Dogs will determine the most appropriate time for neutering and will ensure that the identified veterinary practice has the necessary information regarding Guide Dogs' neutering protocol.

On occasions, a pre-operative veterinary check may be required – your supervisor or dog care and welfare advisor will notify you accordingly if this is the case.

### Booking the appointment and 'nil by mouth'

Using the time-frame advised by Guide Dogs, you may be asked to book the appointment for the puppy's neutering operation. When making the appointment, please take the opportunity to find out the current practice policy on food and water intake prior to the date of the operation.

It is usual for food to be withheld prior to an operation, as this prevents vomiting whilst under anaesthetic. As a general rule, food is usually withheld for a period of 12 hours prior to the operation and water may also be limited – it is important that you check this information and adhere to the policy of your veterinary practice.

### Pre-operative care – on the morning of the operation

**The following general advice should be followed on the morning of the operation:**

- do not feed the puppy (and ensure no one feeds the puppy by mistake)
- supervise the puppy when out in the garden to ensure nothing is eaten
- if the puppy is coprophagic, very careful observation is particularly important
- prior to transporting the puppy to the vet's, give your puppy adequate relief opportunity
- should the puppy show any signs of being unwell prior to the operation, for example, vomiting, diarrhoea or lethargy, please telephone your vet for advice
- please remember to take the health card with you and provide your vet with a contact number which you will be contactable on all day

### Post-operative care

In most cases, the puppy will be able to return home the same day. The veterinary surgeon or nurse will check the puppy prior to discharging it from the practice. This is a good opportunity for you to look at the puppy's wound/dressing and to ask the veterinary staff any questions you may have.

During the recovery period, it is perfectly normal for the puppy to be a little quieter than normal and sleep more frequently – this is nothing to worry about.

Make sure the puppy has a comfortable bed to rest and convalesce in. This should be warm, clean and dry. The bed should be situated in a quiet, draught free area of the house, away from disturbances but placed where the puppy can be quietly observed.

## Exercise

Careful exercise management is very important and helps to promote good post-operative recovery. Consideration should be given to ensuring that the wound is properly healed. Special consideration is required for post-spay bitches to allow time for internal healing of muscles.

Free running should not be permitted for two weeks post-spay or ten days post-castration (subject to veterinary advice). In addition, going up/down stairs, jumping up or into/ out of the car and playing with other pets or children should be discouraged for two weeks post-surgery.

Care should then be taken to gradually introduce normal exercise and free running routines, and consideration should be given to the puppy's reduced level of fitness following this period of convalescence.

## Feeding

The puppy should return to you on its normal diet and should be fed as usual. Your veterinary surgeon will inform you if there is any special feeding advice. It is not uncommon for some initial loss of appetite, which can be associated with anaesthesia. This should resolve in a couple of days. Please contact your supervisor or dog care and welfare advisor for advice if this is a concern. Ensure that the puppy has access to fresh drinking water, and that the bowl is placed close to its bed to prevent it from having to move too much.

## Wound care

The wound should require little attention and cleaning is not usually required. Check the wound frequently (at least two to three times daily) for any signs of swelling, which may indicate infection, any discharge or bleeding. Please make sure that your hands are clean whenever the wound is checked. It is very important that the puppy doesn't lick, chew or scratch at the wound. Any evidence of this, for example redness, swelling, wetness of the skin and hair or constant cleaning of the wound should be noted and the puppy must be prevented from irritating the wound. The bacteria from a dog's mouth and tongue can do a lot of damage to the wound and may cause it to break down. It may be necessary to fit an Elizabethan collar ('bucket collar') to the puppy, which will prevent it from licking the wound. Although the puppy will dislike wearing an Elizabethan collar, this is preferable to the wound damage that can be caused by the puppy.

An Elizabethan collar can be obtained from the veterinary practice. If you have any concerns regarding post-operative care, please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor or dog care and welfare advisor. Alternatively, you may wish to contact your veterinary practice for advice.



## Changes to health, medical conditions, pregnancy etc.

Puppies can carry certain bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi that can cause illness if transferred to humans. Some animal-borne diseases can be transferred to humans if they have contact with the puppy's waste, saliva or dander. In particular, very young children and infants (especially under-fives as their immune system is still developing), pregnant women, and people whose immune systems have been compromised by illness or disease, are at higher risk of being affected. We therefore ask that you please ensure that you inform your supervisor when you become aware of any changes to your health, medical conditions or if you are pregnant or have given birth within the last six months.

**We also advise that you inform your doctor about your duties as a puppy walker and seek their advice if you develop any health issues.**

## Hazardous substances

Although the risk is low, we would request that you do not apply ecto-parasite (flea) control due to the toxicity of some substances, if you are pregnant or your immune system has been compromised.

If you are asked to administer any medication or treatment to your puppy, please advise the veterinarian that you are pregnant or that your immune system has been compromised.

We must stress how important it is to follow the guidance notes on hygiene to reduce possible transmission of infection. We would also recommend appropriate disposable gloves are worn at all times when clearing up after your puppy.

## Following birth of a baby

There is always a possibility that your puppy may experience jealousy, so it is advisable for you to introduce your new baby to your puppy gradually.

Never leave the baby unattended with your puppy.

Report any new habits displayed by your puppy that may be a concern following the birth of the baby e.g. licking the baby, stealing the baby's toys, or jumping up near the cot, baby carrier or pram. Your supervisor will discuss the best way to deal with these behaviours.



## Commonly used veterinary terms and abbreviations

While caring for a puppy, you may come across some of the following veterinary terms - some of the more common terms or abbreviations can be found below:

<b>SID/UID</b>	Once daily
<b>BID</b>	Twice daily
<b>TID</b>	Three times daily
<b>QID</b>	Four times daily
<b>Itis</b>	Inflammation
<b>Conjunctivitis</b>	Inflammation of the conjunctiva
<b>Gingivitis</b>	Inflammation of the gums
<b>Cystitis</b>	Inflammation of the bladder
<b>Panosteitis</b>	Inflammation of the bone, which results in painful lameness. The dog should be rested and treated with anti-inflammatory drugs for the duration. It is more common in fast growing male dogs, but they can grow out of it.
<b>Otitis</b>	Inflammation of the ear (can be prefix to another part of the ear to explain where the inflammation is e.g. otitis externa).
<b>Pruritus</b>	Symptom of itching – irritation
<b>Atopy</b>	Allergic skin disease
<b>Alopecia</b>	Hair loss or baldness
<b>Erythema</b>	Redness
<b>Urticaria</b>	An immune based response to an irritating substance, commonly seen as raised areas of skin
<b>Pyoderma</b>	Bacterial skin infection
<b>Demodicosis</b>	Demodectic mange
<b>Entropion</b>	In-turning of the eyelashes, which then rub against the eye and therefore make it sore with a discharge from the eye
<b>NAD</b>	No abnormalities detected – nothing abnormal
<b>Acute</b>	A condition which starts suddenly and only last a short time, although it may reoccur
<b>Chronic</b>	A condition which starts slowly and lasts longer but with less pronounced symptoms
<b>Zoonotic</b>	Disease which can be passed between animal and man

**The points in this leaflet must be followed at all times to support the agreed training process within the Puppy Walking Department of Guide Dogs. Copyright © 2014**

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