Chin of Touché

CARING FOR YOUR NEW PUPPY

The first 48 hours are the most critical hours in your new relationship. While it is fun to show off your new puppy, watch them run around crazy and have everyone snuggle and play with them, puppies will play and play until they sugar crash. **Puppies MUST eat whether they want to or not.** An “it’ll eat when it’s hungry” mentality may work for a Labrador or Shepherd puppy, but not small-breed puppies, who can get into serious trouble quickly with just one or two missed meals. **It is imperative that they eat the first day you have them.** Put them in their small space with food. If they don’t eat before bed, give them the Cesar food included in your bag. If they don’t eat that, try plain, cooked, boneless chicken or lean steak. **They MUST eat before bed the first night.** If they continue refusing food, contact your veterinarian promptly. Encourage eating; do not force-feed.

Remember, even though your puppy is weaned, he/she may not like eating in a new environment, especially without littermates. **You are now both a littermate and mother to this puppy. ALWAYS confine the puppy to its small area, with food.** A baby playpen such as a Pack ’n Play works well for meals and naps. New puppies are very infantile in their development and don’t have sufficient focus to locate food and eat properly without aid.

FEEDING

Toy-breed dogs should **ALWAYS have food available.** They are not the chow-down type of dog but rather a nibble-throughout-the-day type of dog.

WATERING

NEVER PUT WATER OR OTHER LIQUIDS IN PUPPY’S MOUTH!!! Your puppy should have a small, clean crock of water or water bottle available at all times. Please remember that an ill dog may still drink water, so drinking alone does not mean your puppy is well. **Never force fluids.** Doing so could cause puppy to aspirate, choke, develop pneumonia or die. If you feel your puppy is dehydrated, **rush to a veterinarian** who may administer SQ or IV fluids. Follow your veterinarian’s instructions for any prescribed oral medication.

STOOLS

Check your puppy’s bottom for stool sticking every day. Some puppies will develop a loose stool from the stress of leaving his/her familiar home and family, and/or have giardia or coccidiosis. Giardia and coccidia are infections; stress alone does not cause them. This does not mean your puppy came from an unclean environment or “bad” kennel. These common maladies can be treated with medicine from your veterinarian. Contact your veterinarian about diarrhea, especially with vomiting, blood, poor appetite or low energy.

VETS

A good rapport with your vet is paramount. We are happy to help you find a reputable veterinarian who will honestly represent his/her services and have your puppy’s best interest at heart. Please be aware that veterinarians differ greatly in philosophies and practices and even from human doctors. After all, your human doctor doesn’t try to sell you shampoo or food. Veterinary clinics are a business at the end of the day, and most truly want what’s best for our pets. On the other hand, you needn’t be victimized or guilted into unnecessary procedures or products. **If you are not comfortable for any reason, move on.** Your veterinarian is your best ally in your pet’s health and wellness. **Be choosy!**

POTTY TRAINING

Our puppies come used to a litter box with pellets. The best way to potty train a puppy to the outside is to **control the potty area.** A folding round exercise pen set up on your lawn, which clips together at each end to form a circle, is helpful to keep puppy focused on his/her “job.” Dogs naturally sniff out an area’s perimeter before going potty. If you keep the area small, this process will go much faster, and with fewer distractions than running a whole yard may impose.

Every time you pick up your puppy, take him/her outside first. Some people take their baby out every hour or so. If your puppy has been napping, take him/her out **immediately upon waking.** First thing in the morning and last task before you go to bed are important “out” times. **Above all, patience.** Puppies are unpredictable and have accidents just like human babies. The younger the puppy, the more frequently they potty. Just remember that this too shall pass. All puppies grow up to be dogs, who only potty a few times per day.