**What to Expect When You’re Expecting (a dog)**

So, *you've* found the dog of your dreams and you're excited about bringing a new family member into your life. What can you expect when your new dog *moves* in, and how can you be prepared for the new arrival?

**Essential Supplies**

**Food:** Changing a dog's rood abruptly can cause diarrhea, sometimes for several weeks. To avoidthis, continue feeding the same food provided by the humane center, or mix the old with the new to gradually adjust your dog to a new diet.

**Food and Water Dishes:** Pick a spot and leave them in the same place so your dog knows exactly where to go for water. Make sure the water bowl is clean and always has fresh water.

**Crate:** Crates make the adjustment period less stressful for you and your new fur baby. The crate should be big enough for your dog to stand up, turn completely around, and lie down comfortably in.

**Toys**: Safe toys help dogs ease stress and have fun! Having toys available will ease the adjustment period. Always supervise your dog when playing with toys. You can leave him alone with heavy duty toys, such as Kongs, but check for damage periodically to avoid choking.

**Puppy Proofing**: Even if your dog is older, curiosity can get the better of him/her. Make sure your home is a safe place for them by putting yourself in their paws. Crawl around on the floor and check out any potential dangers. Electrical cords, poisonous houseplants, and any item small enough to swallow are just a few of the things that should be out of his/her reach. Veterinarians perform more surgeries to *remove* strange objects that a dog has swallowed than for anything else. Dogs will swallow anything, like the dog who swallowed 28 golf balls! Even after puppy proofing, it's a good idea to not leave him/her unsupervised in the house until he/she has learned what is off limits. That way, they won't have the chance to develop any bad habits while you're not looking. You'll also avoid having to buy all new shoes because he/she chewed up one from each pair. If your dog destroys something that is valuable to you, it is your fault for making it available to him/her. Dogs have no concept of how much something costs, and they don't chew things to spite you. They do it because it is fun. Dogs also chew to *relieve* stress, so a dog who normally doesn't chew things may do so when under stress. Make available appropriate chew toys and keep items you don't want chewed out of reach.

**Meeting the Children**: The kids are probably beside 'themselves with excitement about the new dog. They can't wait to play with him/her and show him/her just how much they love him/her. Prepare your children ahead of time so that they understand the boundaries.

* Let your children meet the new pet BEFORE he/she comes home.
* When the new pet comes home, keep them on a leash and have your children sit to say hello. Sitting will keep things calmer and keep your dog more relaxed.
* Always supervise children with dogs, no matter how small the dog. This is for the safety of your dog and your child.
* Teach your children not to pinch, pull, or squeeze the dog.
* If your dog is nervous, ask the children to give them a break until they gets comfortable with them.
* Don't let children feed the new pet until he/she is settled in.
* Don't let your children take the dog’s toys, and don't let your dog take the children's toys.
* Set up a "safe" place for your new pet that is off limits to children. A crate is great for this.
* Instruct the children not to try and play with them when he/she is in their· safe place.

**Meeting the Other Pet(s)**

Hopefully, the pets you already have are just as excited about the new addition as you are. Here are some tips to help make sure all goes smoothly.

* Let your pet(s) meet the new pet BEFORE they comes home, if possible.
* When the new dog does come home, re-introduce all pets with the new dog in a crate for safety. Wait until all pets are calm and relaxed, even if that takes several hours, before introducing each pet on leash. Watch for signs that either pet is stressed, and separate if necessary. Do not try to push them to be friends too fast. Slower is better!
* Don't change the routine for the resident pet.
* Crate the new dog periodically to give your resident pet a break, especially if he/she seems stressed or annoyed with the new pet. Your new dog may spend a lot of time crated in the first week or two, but a slow introduction is better in the long run for everyone.
* Spend time individually with the new pet and the resident pet.
* Supervise playing with toys to prevent spats. Providing one more toy than there are dogs is a good practice. This way, if one dog gets tired of a toy, there is an option other than stealing from the other dog. Wait a couple of weeks before giving them something of high value such as a stuffed bone or rawhide.
* Enforce the rules right away with the new pet. Dogs thrive on rules and consistency. It can make them anxious if another pet breaks the rules.
* Even if the resident pet is not a dog, many of the same tips apply. Supervise all interactions.
* Observe all pets for any signs of stress and separate them to give them a break. Cats should always have a quick escape route!

**Adjustment Period**

Moving to a new home can be stressful for dogs. It's an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people. Some dogs experience stomach upset and diarrhea. Housetrained dogs may regress and have accidents. Some will shy away from you for a while until you earn their trust. Be patient with your baby.

It may take a while for him/her to adore you as much as you adore them. How long it takes is different for every dog. It could take anywhere from 3 days to 3 months for your new pet to settle in. Just be patient with them and show him/her in all your actions that he/she is safe with you. If you are having any problems or have any questions during the adjustment period about a dog you adopted from P.A.W.S. Humane Center, please do not hesitate to call us at 812-577-0829. We will do everything we can to help ease the adjustment period for both of you.

If you're adopting a puppy rather than an adult dog; expect an adjustment period for yourself, too! Adopting a puppy is like having a baby. There will be lots of potty breaks because their bladder isn't yet fully developed. Expect to get up a couple of times during the night for potty breaks. If you work, plan to come home every day at lunch let your puppy outside to potty. If you can't come home, consider hiring a pet sitter to ensure your puppy can go potty several times a day and plan accordingly. Puppies will also chew on everything available, so don't make anything available that they shouldn't chew on.

**Establishing the Rules**

It can be tempting when you bring home a new dog to lie a little lax on the rules. Resist the

temptation now to avoid problems later. It's much easier to prevent a bad habit from starting than it is to break one. Not only that, but dogs, like children, like rules. It makes them feel more secure to know exactly what is expected of them and exactly what happens if they don't follow the rules. It also keeps order in the household. If you have other pets who already know the rules, they can get quite stressed out by an unruly newcomer. Whatever you do, do NOT feel sorry for your poor little rescue dog. Nobody wants pity, dogs included. For your dog's best interest, put whatever sad past he/she may have had behind them and live in the current moment. They are with you now, happy and cared for; there is no need for pity. Couple key tips:

* Do not leave your new dog unsupervised in the house unless he/she is crated until he/she has learned the rules. This way, you can prevent bad habits from forming. If you don't see him/her, you can't stop him/her!
* Crating also helps with housetraining. If he/she doesn't have a chance to make a mistake, the bad habit won't form.
* If you don't want dogs on the furniture, don't let them on the furniture just because he/she's new.

Expect your dog to break the rules frequently in the beginning. He/she is not being stubborn or difficult. Dogs have a hard time generalizing, which means that something he/she learns in the living room will have to be learned all over again in the kitchen. It's easy to get frustrated when you feel like they should understand already, but he/she still doesn't. It helps to have a sense of humor. It can take 30-50 or more perfect repetitions before a dog truly "gets" a command.

**Licensing & Identification**

If your city or county requires dogs to be licensed, get this taken care of right away. Licenses can usually be purchased at the Vet's office or through Dearborn County. Even if your

city does not require a license, it's a good idea to provide contact information on your dog's collar. If your pet is lost or stolen, microchipping is a good way to ensure a safe return. Collars can come off, but microchips are there to stay. Dogs adopted from P.A.W.S. Humane Center are microchipped prior to adoption. You will want to change the contact information with the microchip company to you.

**Training & Behavior**

Just like children, dogs need to be taught good behavior. Whether you're bringing home a puppy or an adult, you can expect that he/she will do some things that you don't approve of and maybe have some bad habits. Your dog will need to be taught how you want him/her to behave. The easiest and most fun way to teach your dog is to take them to school. You both get to meet other people and dogs. You get the benefit of expert knowledge and immediate feedback. Your dog gets socialization. Both of you may even make a new friend there.

You can also work on teaching your dog yourself. There are lots of resources available, but it can be difficult to determine which information is bad and which is good. Trust your gut. Ask yourself what kind of relationship you want with your dog and if the advice you are reading lends itself to building that relationship. If your dog has habits you would like to break, don’t give up on him/her. Teach them instead!

Training also makes dogs happy. Studies on the brain show that animals like to have their brains challenged. If you use positive methods to teach your dog, he/she will LOVE learning. Training also helps your dog understand that they are supposed to take direction from you. Many people remain frustrated that their dog "refuses" to listen, is "stubborn", or just plain stupid. They have not taken the time to formally train the dog and think he/she will automatically know how to take orders. It doesn't work that way, but experience with dogs shows that formally teaching just one command switches on their brains, and they get that they are supposed to listen to you. It’s amazing how in tuned dogs are to us. All we need to do is push the right button to "turn it on".

**To Sum it Up . . .**

1. Take it slowly.
2. Do not give your dog free run of the house right away. Wait until he/she is used to you, your home and your rules. Keep anything dangerous out of reach!
3. Establish and enforce your rules right away.
4. Expect and adjustment period. It can take anywhere from 3 days to 3 months for your dog to settle in. In the meantime, he/she could have housetraining problems even if he/she's already housetrained, behavior problems even if he/she's already obedience trained, and/or shy away from you at first. Give them time to adjust.
5. Establish a "safe place" for your new dog where he/she can go when he/she doesn't want to be bothered by anyone, including children or other pets.
6. If your resident pets become stressed by your new dog, crate or otherwise confine the new dog to give them a break. This will lead to better relations between them in the long run.
7. Do not change your new dog's food right away. If you want to change their food, do it gradually by mixing with the old.
8. Your best chance at having a wonderful relationship with your new dog is to enroll in an obedience class together. Even if he/she's already trained, you're not!
9. Do NOT pity your dog or treat them differently because he/she is a "rescue". Treat them like a normal dog, and he/she will be a normal dog. Treat them like a poor, pitiful dog, and he/she will be a poor pitiful dog.
10. Enjoy your new family addition! Dogs are fun!