

Welcoming Your New Dog Home

Congratulations on adopting your new dog! Getting your newly adopted dog home and settled is an exciting time and it's important to make the transition smooth for him, for you and for your household.

BE PATIENT • During this exciting time, keep in mind that your new dog has likely experienced a lot of change. He is now coming into a new home and new family, so take things slow. Give him time to acclimate to your home before introducing him to strangers. If there are children in your home, make sure they know how to approach the dog without overwhelming him.

HELP HIM GET ACQUAINTED • If you have another dog, introductions should happen in neutral territory, like on a short walk through a park or your neighborhood. Remember to be patient, don't force interaction and keep praising good behavior. At home, remove items that might cause either dog to become possessive, like a favorite toy. Be sure each dog has his own food and water bowls and give treats and toys when the dogs are separated.

If introducing your new dog to your cat, a baby gate is a helpful tool. This will allow them to see each other

but prevents contact. Leash your dog so that you can lead him away from the gate if he becomes too focused. You can try feeding them on opposite sides of the gate to help form positive associations.

GET TO KNOW HIM • Understanding body language can help you understand how your dog might be feeling. Loose body posture (tail in a neutral position), no facial or mouth tension and ears out to the side or slightly back, can indicate that your dog is feeling relaxed. Stiff body posture, tucked tail or moving away can indicate that your dog is not interested in interacting.

HELP HIM FEEL AT HOME • Establishing a routine and creating boundaries can help your dog understand what to expect and when and when (such as meal or potty time). Be sure to give him his own space, such as a bed, crate or room where he knows he can go to rest and relax.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR DOG'S HEALTH

Becoming familiar with the signs of normal health helps you notice any changes that may signal it's time to visit your veterinarian. If you notice any changes in your dog's health or behavior, consult with your veterinarian.

EYES • Eyes should be clear and bright with no red or yellow discoloration. Discoloration, tearing, cloudiness and heavy discharge should be considered abnormal.

EARS • Ears should be free of discharge and odor. Red, inflamed, hot, foul-smelling or sensitive ear canals could be a sign of infection.

MOUTH • Healthy gums are pink, with no redness or swelling at the tooth margins. Teeth should be free of tartar build-up and he shouldn't have bad breath.

NOSE • The temperature and moistness of a dog's nose may change daily. It should be clean with no discharge, and not cracked or irritated.

SKIN & COAT • A thick, shiny and silky coat without greasiness, dandruff or bare patches is a sign of good health.

LEGS • Check your dog for swollen joints and inspect feet between the toes for excess hair, objects lodged there and the condition of his nails.

