



DOG ADOPTION BOOKLET

Dog care advice and information

About AAPS

The Australian Animal Protection Society



The Australian Animal Protection Society was established in 1972 by a group of people greatly concerned about animal welfare, to help address the need for an Animal Shelter in the South Eastern region of Melbourne in Victoria. AAPS helps thousands of lost, abandoned, orphaned and unwanted animals every year. We provide animals with compassionate care, food and shelter, veterinary treatment, and rehabilitation.

AAPS is a community-based, not-for-profit charity that relies upon the generous donations, volunteers, and community support, as we do not receive regular government funding. Our organisation works to increase community awareness and education on animal welfare and save the life of every animal that can be saved.

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Thank you for choosing to open your home to a rescue animal. AAPS relies on the support of you as adopters to provide enriching and loving forever homes for the animals that come into our care.

We wish you and your new family member all the best and encourage you to share any updates or happy snaps with the staff at AAPS.

Whilst some dogs adapt quickly, some might need some more time and may get stressed with too much change at once. Take it easy and try to make all experiences positive for your new family member.

This handbook is designed to provide tips and suggestions to support you and your new dog during the 'settling in' period, as well as the ongoing health for your dog.

If you have any health or behavioural concerns, please contact the AAPS Veterinary Clinic or Adoption Centre for advice.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

YOUR NEW FUR-EVER FRIEND

DESEXING

Your dog has been desexed prior to adoption. As part of your adoption paperwork, you will have received a sterilisation certificate signed and dated by the AAPS veterinarian. You will need this to obtain concessional council registration. At the time of desexing, all animals receive small sterilisation symbol tattooed in their ear.

VACCINATION

Your dog has received a C5 vaccination and may require a booster vaccination. You will receive a vaccination certificate which details when the next vaccination is due. Annual booster vaccinations are essential to keep your dog healthy.

MICROCHIPPING

Your dog has been microchipped. It is crucial that your details are kept up to date. This will give you the best chance at reuniting with your dog if they go missing. AAPS will register the in your name, this may take several weeks. You will receive confirmation from the microchip registry when this has been done. Please contact AAPS if you have not received confirmation after 4 weeks.

You are responsible for registering your pet with your local council. AAPS will notify your local council that you have recently adopted an animal, however you must follow through with the registration.

CONTINUOUS HEALTH CARE

Upon adopting your new furry friend, you will receive a vet report with any current or potential health concerns, required medications or veterinary treatment or any other information regarding your new family member's health. It is important to follow the instructions provided and monitor your dog's health continuously.

On average, pets age five to eight times faster than humans. By the age of two, most pets have already reached adulthood. At age four, many are entering middle age. By age seven to nine, many animals are entering their senior years.

Because pets age so rapidly, major health changes can occur in a very short period of time, so it is incredibly important that you do not miss their annual health check.

Regular health checks give pets and their owners the best chance of preventing, detecting and treating any possible illnesses, both immediately and in the future.



SETTLING IN

MAKING YOUR DOG COMFORTABLE

An animal shelter can be a stressful and unsettling environment for any animal and your dog may need some time to adjust to a new environment. Be patient with your new dog during the 'settling in' period while they adjust to the new home.

Steps to best settle your dog into your home:

- When collecting your new dog make sure that you keep it on a lead.
- Ensure that your property fencing is secure before your new dog is allowed off the lead.
- On arrival at home do not overwhelm your new dog, allow it time to explore its new environment and meet the other members of your family.
- Ensure that there are no snail pellets, chemicals or potentially dangerous items lying around
- We recommend having a doggy-door or some form of access so they can go outside when they please.
- We also recommend you let your neighbours know that you have adopted a new dog. They are more likely to be understanding of any settling difficulties.
- Point out things he needs to know like where his bed, water bowl and food bowls are.

DOG SUPPLY CHECKLIST

WHAT DO I NEED?

Refer to the list below to ensure you have all the supplies and equipment you need to settle in your newly adopted dog.

- Dry food
- Wet food
- Food Bowl
- Water Bowl
- Collar and ID tag
- Harness
- Dog toys
- Training treats
- Warm bedding
- Grooming brush
- Doggy poo bags
- Car safety attachment/harness
- Dog shampoo & conditioner
- Worming treatment
- Flea treatment



 *The Australian Animal Protection Society adoption center, op shops and vet clinic sell a variety of these products, so please keep us in mind for your pet needs. All proceeds from AAPS animal product purchases help to support all animals in need.*

FEEDING

If your dog requires a specific diet, you will be made aware. We recommend high quality commercial dry food, you can also incorporate wet food into their meals; If fed a wet food only diet, your dog may experience dental issues later in life.



Feeding Advice:

- Feed your dog separately from any other pets.
- Do not leave food out if your dog does not eat it after 15 minutes.
- If you plan on preparing your own food such as raw bones or meat, please consult first with your vet. Never feed your dog cooked bones.
- Continual refusal to eat or changes in eating habits may be a sign of a health problem so a visit to the vet may be needed.
- Treats should be kept to a minimum and used for training or enrichment.

EXERCISE, ENRICHMENT & TRAINING

EXERCISE

Providing adequate exercise and environmental enrichment is important in the maintenance of a healthy dog, this in conjunction with training, helps to provide stimulation for your dog. This will reduce the incidence of boredom, which is a significant factor in the behavioural problems of dogs.



Exercise Guidelines

- Most dogs need regular daily exercise, but the length and duration of exercise varies. Some dogs require more exercise than others.
- For the first few months do not let your dog off-leash.
- Always make sure that they are wearing a collar and a name tag with your contact details.
- Be cautious of off-lead dog parks. Your dog may be very social, but problems can arise. Even the most well-mannered and socialised dog can be unpredictable if a strange dog bounds up to them.

ENRICHMENT

Enrichment is a fantastic way of providing your new dog with mental stimulation. This not only helps keep them entertained, but also helps to tire them out. Walking and exercising are great and absolutely essential, but providing enrichment is just as important!

See below for different types of enrichment and some examples to get you started:



Slow Feeder: These help slow your dog's eating and also require them to use their brains to figure out how to reach their food. You can put treats in a slow feeder, or you can use it for their dry kibble at mealtimes.

Puzzle toys: There are several puzzle toys that you can consider that provide brain training. KONG have lots to choose from but there are other brands as well.



Snuffle mats: Snuffle mats can be found online or hand-made yourself. Scatter some treats amongst the fabric and watch as your dog 'snuffles' to find them.



Bubbles: Some dogs will really enjoy chasing and catching bubbles. Please make sure that if you decide to provide this type of enrichment, that the bubbles are safe to be consumed by dogs.

Sprinklers: Some dogs will enjoy chasing water and playing in a sprinkler system. Just make sure you are prepared to give them a good bath and dry afterwards!



Balls and Ball Pits: Some dogs absolutely love to play catch with a ball. When you are confident with your dog off leash, dog-friendly parks or large ovals are a great way to use up their energy and have fun with a ball. You can also fill a shell pool with plastic balls or tennis balls for hours of play.

Sand/dirt pit: Although these can be quite messy, some dogs absolutely love to dig and play in the dirt.



Durable Treats/chews: Items such as dog-safe bones, bully sticks, pigs' ears, beef tendons, shark cartilage, deer antlers and goat horn will keep your dog busy and actually benefit their teeth.



Obstacle courses: Agility is a great way to keep dogs entertained and to contribute to their training. You can take them to a professional training school that provides one or set up a simple one at home to use.

Hidden treats: Hide treats in the house, in the grass, in boxes filled with newspaper, under cups, in snuffle mats etc. Your dog will have to sniff them out and use their brain to get to the treats.



Kongs: Kong classics are great toys to stuff yummy food inside and keep your dog busy. You can use wet food, meat or even dry food, peanut butter, apple slices, carrot etc.

Paddle pools: Fill a shell pool with water if your dog enjoys going for swims on warm days. They are easy to clean and lots of fun!



Toys, toys & more toys: Make sure your new dog has plenty of different toys to keep busy and entertained. Your dog may like ones that squeak, or plush toys, or tough ropes. Try different ones to see what they like. Rotate toys so they don't get bored.

TRAINING

Your patience is important, try to start out with a few rules in place. Do not expect immediate compliance.

Training your dog gives him the opportunity to understand you. It is also a great way to strengthen the bond between the two of you.

Training Guidelines

1. Maintain consistency within the house, do not let your dog on the couch one day, then not the next.
2. If there are several members of the family, it is important that you are all providing a similar message regarding your expectations.
3. Commands should be simple and uniform
4. Do not punish bad behaviour, rather reward good behaviour.
5. We recommend following 'Positive Reinforcement' based training - this you can do at home as well as within a well-structured obedience school.
6. Toilet training works best with a proper schedule and knowing when to take your dog outside.
7. The more times they toilet in the appropriate spot and you reward or praise them, the more likely they are to follow these good habits.



SOCIALISATION

Socialisation is one of the most important things to do with a puppy to help build confidence and become a well-behaved dog. The ideal time to focus on socialisation is from 6 -16 weeks of age, as this is a dog's sensitive phase where most learning is permanent, and behaviours are formed through experiences.

Socialisation is about getting your dog used to, and comfortable with, all types of things in its environment. This is done through controlled positive exposure and interaction with a variety of stimuli including objects, sounds, smells, people, animals, and environments.

Using treats can be a very helpful tool to introduce your dog to new things and to create a new, positive association with something your dog is not comfortable with.

Always start to expose your dog to new things from a distance and let your dog show a willingness to move forward, rather than dragging a scared dog towards it.

Two common techniques commonly used to change dogs' behaviour are desensitisation and counter conditioning. Please consult a professional and certified dog trainer to help you with the re-socialisation process if you feel you need help.

INTRODUCING HOUSEMATES

CHILDREN

Kids and dogs often develop a close loving bond. Owning a dog is an opportunity to teach your children responsibility and respect for animals, not to mention all the fun they are sure to have together! Bear in mind that your rescue dog might not have had much contact with children in its previous life and may need to learn what great playmates they can be. Take it slow, ensuring the kids do not overwhelm your dog at first.

Children can unintentionally stress or hurt a small furry friend, and in turn your dog might not know how to behave around children. Bad experiences with children can lead to fear and aggression, but with proper introductions and care, these issues can be avoided.



Teach your children how to recognize when the dog or puppy is unhappy. Hair pulling, jumping, throwing, hitting, and screaming around animals can cause severe anxiety, so make sure your children understand how to behave around their new furry playmate.

For the safety of everyone, we recommend:

- Always supervise children when interacting with the dog.
- While your dog is initially adjusting to their new home, keep the children at a

comfortable distance, as not to overwhelm your dog.

- Ensure that children are calmly sitting on the floor if they want to cuddle.
- Teach children not to approach the dog from the back - he could easily get a fright, growl, or snap.
- Make sure your children do not interrupt you dog when eating.
- Teach children to be calm, quiet, and gentle with the dog.

TAKE YOUR DOGS BODY LANGUAGE SERIOUSLY

Dogs communicate primarily through their body language; with signals we can easily miss if we are not observant.

By the time a dog growls at someone – and we don't mean in a playful way – he will already have given you a whole lot of other signals that you may not have noticed. His next action could be a bite. Your dog does not want to bite, but it may be his last resort after he has shown you through his body language that he is not happy with a particular situation.

Signs of discomfort and stress

- Backing away
- Tail tucked in
- Panting
- Stiffened posture or flinching
- Looking away, avoiding eye contact
- Licking lips when no food is present

Once you spend time watching your dog, you will find that he has his own personal way of expressing his feelings, just like people do. Communicate these to your children and how to react when your dog is showing signs of discomfort.

CATS

Dog and cats can live harmoniously together when introduced properly. Cats can be quite territorial animals and need time to get used to another animal in the house. On the other hand, a reasonable instinct of dogs is to chase a cat.

Introductions should be slow and supervised.

Slow introductions can prevent fear and aggression problems from developing. Supervision is always necessary in the initial introduction to minimise the prospect of conflict.

Do not force an interaction. Let both the dog and cat become comfortable with the new smells, looking from a distance and slowly make their way to contact with each other. Make sure your cat has an up-and-out escape option, and your dog is on a lead to avoid jumping or chasing.



Other helpful hints

- Feed your dog and cat separately or in different areas.
- Make sure both pets have their own bedding and toys, as to reduce any territorial behaviour.
- Give both animals the same amount of attention and affection.

OTHER DOGS

If you already have another dog, ideally you would have brought him to the shelter for a meet and greet, before making the decision to adopt a new dog.

When bringing your rescue dog home, it is recommended that you pick a neutral location (like a park or a friend's garden) for the first introduction, to help reduce territorial behaviour. Take it easy and try to make it fun for both your new and old dogs.

When introducing your new dog to a resident dog:

1. Keep both dogs on a lead.
2. At first, allow them to just walk along next to each other for 10 minutes or so without interacting.
3. Once they have settled next to each other on a walk, then introduce them and let them play with each other.
4. Go home and let the new dog investigate his new place while the other dog is on a walk or confined in a separate area.
5. Once your new family member has investigated his new home, give both dogs some supervised time together for short periods.
6. Watch for any warning signs in both dogs, to ensure they are comfortable together before allowing longer periods of playtime.



DOG HEALTH ADVICE

Your new dog has been examined by the AAPS veterinarians and any health issues will be disclosed to you. It is important to monitor any current or potential health issues and follow the instructions given by the veterinarians.



 Your newly adopted dog comes with a two-week veterinary health cover. If you notice any signs of illness or unusual behaviour, please call the AAPS veterinary clinic.

COMMON SIGNS OF ILLNESS

- Lethargy
- Blood in urine, stools, or vomit
- Repeated vomiting
- Changes in breathing
- Eyes weeping/redness
- Toileting inappropriately
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Nasal congestion/sneezing
- Unexpected weight loss/gain
- Changes in appetite or drinking habits
- Behavioural changes
- Skin irritation or hair loss

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Certain situations may be considered urgent. If your dog demonstrates any of the following signs/symptoms, take them straight to the emergency vet.

- Trauma (e.g., getting hit by a car)
- Gums that are blue, white, or very pale
- Seizure
- Inability to walk
- Exposure to a poisonous substance
- High or low body temperatures
- Difficulty breathing
- Collapse, unconsciousness, or unresponsiveness
- Moderate to profuse bleeding
- Severe pain

TOXIC FOODS

Below is a list of foods toxic to dogs. Please contact your vet if your dog happens to consume any of the following.

- Chocolate
- Caffeine
- Onion, chives & garlic
- Alcohol
- Moldy foods
- Grapes and raisins
- Macadamia Nuts
- Yeast Dough
- Milk/Dairy
- Blue Cheese
- Avocado
- Cooked Bones



POTENTIAL HEALTH ISSUES

KENNEL COUGH

Kennel cough is an upper respiratory infection that can occur in dogs. It is similar to the flu and has a higher incidence in areas where large numbers of dogs are present, such as in kennels or shelters. Kennel cough usually causes a moist cough although it may occur as a significant nasal discharge. Severe cases of kennel cough may cause the dog to stop eating and occasionally it may vomit in conjunction with the coughing. The symptoms of kennel cough usually ease over a 7–14-day period. If your dog has severe signs of kennel cough you should obtain veterinary advice as the condition can be assisted with medication.

HEARTWORM

Heartworm lives within the heart chambers of dogs and can be a very severe health issue. It is spread via mosquitoes. The presence of heartworm varies throughout Australia, and the prevalence in Melbourne is very low. Young pups can go onto monthly prevention medications for heartworm, such as Revolution, Sentinel, Interceptor or Advocate, or have a heartworm injection annually. Dogs over 6 months of age should have a blood test before starting preventative medications to ensure they are currently free of the disease.

FLEAS

Fleas are an external parasite and can be easily treated. Flea bites can cause a very marked allergic reaction in much the same way as mosquitoes can affect us humans. The infestation can cause your dog to excessively scratch or bite at the spot of irritation. There are a range of products available for the treatment and prevention of flea infestation and this should be discussed with your veterinary team.



TICKS

Ticks are dangerous as they can transmit not only diseases but also paralysis from the paralysis tick. Spring and summer are peak seasons for these nasty little creatures. To protect your dog, start tick prevention from the day you pick up your dog. Please consult your vet as to which product is best to use and check your dog daily if you live in a tick prone environment.

INTESTINAL WORMS

Dogs can frequently become infested with intestinal worms such as roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworm. Your dog should be wormed regularly throughout its life to reduce the risk to your dog and yourself. Advice on suitable products is available from the AAPS veterinarians.

DENTAL DISEASE

Owners should pay attention to the state of their dog's teeth. Tartar often builds up on the teeth, which can result in gingivitis and dental disease. These conditions can have a very marked impact on the long-term health of your dog and are easily addressed by providing appropriate food. If your newly adopted dog suffers from or is at risk of developing dental disease, you will be made aware and given instructions on how to properly care for your dog. If you have concerns of your own, please ask your veterinarian for advice.

OBESITY

Obesity is an increasing problem in pets, especially when they are bound to just indoor activity, but the main cause of obesity is overfeeding our pets.

Obesity can increase the risks for:

- Many types of cancer, diabetes mellitus, heart disease and hypertension
- Osteoarthritis
- Urinary bladder stones
- Reduced lifespans

Once you have identified that your dog is overweight or obese, it is important to adjust feedings specifically for weight loss – using a specific nutritional product, portion, and meal frequency. Consult your veterinarian for advice and be consistent with the new routine.



SKIN CANCER

If your dog has any pink skin or light coloured hair, they could potentially be at risk of sunburn and eventually skin cancer. There are many ways to prevent this including: shaded areas in your yard, keeping your dog indoors, applying dog-safe sunscreen and treating any sunburns should they occur.

DOG BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES

Many behavioural problems of dogs are associated with stress, boredom, lack of socialisation and lack of training. Appropriate training, exercise and social interaction will frequently prevent the development of behavioural problems.

MOUTHING

Mouthing is a normal part of puppy behaviour. A puppy frequently uses its mouth to explore an environment. It can also use mouthing behaviour to assert itself over other animals. Your response will vary depending on the reason. If your puppy is mouthing and chewing to investigate its environment, merely offer an alternative acceptable chew toy, such as a rawhide bone or a rope toy. In this way your puppy ceases its inappropriate activity and learns to give up things when required.



If your puppy is mouthing you in a playful way but starts becoming assertive and inflicting discomfort and pain, make a noise to resemble a pain response and remove your hand or body part from the dog.

If the puppy continues, repeat your response but walk away and ignore the dog until it settles down.

BARKING

Barking is a normal activity for puppies and dogs, however in a suburban environment you must be very aware of the impact of barking on neighbours. Barking is the single most common reason for neighbourhood complaints to local councils involving dogs.

Dogs bark for multiple reasons:

- Trying to attract attention
- Communicating
- Expression of anxiety or fear
- To raise the alarm
- Boredom
- Lack of training

Your initial response to a barking dog should be to ignore it.

If the dog is barking because it is anxious or frightened, try to establish the cause and remove the source of concern. If the dog barks through boredom, such as being left for prolonged periods, attempt to provide the dog with some type of environmental enrichment. Many things such as Kong toys and treat balls will provide additional stimulation and make sure you give your dog plenty of exercise before leaving the house.

FOOD AND POSSESSION AGGRESSION

If your dog were to become very possessive with its food, a possible approach is to provide several bowls of food and whilst it is eating, take one of the unattended bowls away, then replace it when taking another bowl away. This way, the dog becomes less stressed by the removal of food and is rewarded by having it returned without having to exhibit aggression. You can try a similar approach if your dog becomes overly possessive of

objects by offering an alternative treat when removing the object then returning that possession after the dog has given it up.



DIGGING

Digging is a normal activity for dogs and is more established in the genetic make-up of some breeds. If digging is a problem, you should initially provide some other activity to divert the dog's attention. You could consider establishing a digging pit for a dog where it is acceptable for the dog to dig and play games in this area by burying a toy for the dog to find.

ESCAPING

It is very important that the yard is secure to prevent a dog escaping. Frequently, owners underestimate the height of a fence that a dog can scale if they wish to escape. Ensure that you are providing your dog with sufficient exercise prior to leaving them alone and that you commit to a reward when you return if the dog has remained on your property. Some dogs will only attempt to escape during thunderstorms or when there are fireworks, and the solution is to provide a higher level of security, offer plenty of distractions or try to make sure they are not left alone during these occurrences.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Common signs of stress in dogs include:

- Pacing or shaking
- Whining, panting, or Barking
- Pinned ears
- Rapid blinking or dilated pupils
- Decrease in appetite
- Cowering
- Avoidance or Hiding
- Digestive issues

It is best to rule out any medical issues prior to assuming it is a behavioural one.

How to help reduce your dog's stress:

1. Play/walk: Physical activity like games of fetch, or a walk outside of the house and backyard can be a great stress reliever for dogs.
2. Create a safe zone. Set apart an area in your home for your dog to escape high-stress events like thunderstorms and parties.
3. Provide lots of mental stimulation such as puzzle toys, interactive games, nose work or any other type of activity that will challenge them to think.
4. Play classical music. This has been proven to help relax dogs during mild cases of stress.
5. Positive reinforcement training and desensitisation. In some cases, you may be able to train a dog to become desensitised to the trigger of stress. This takes commitment and time but is overall incredibly rewarding and provides life-long results and improvement.
6. Provide calming pheromones such as **Adaptil**. These pheromones can help to relax a stressed dog and can be purchased from most vet clinics or pet stores.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Separation anxiety is a word commonly used to describe a dog that is in distress when home alone or one that cannot cope with its human departing.

Dogs with separation anxiety will often bark, whimper, or howl excessively for long periods of time when home alone, become very destructive, or even try to escape to find or follow their owners. Excessive urination or defecation can also sometimes go along with it.

Be patient and take the time to settle your dog in before getting stressed about separation anxiety. If you are unsure if your dog has separation anxiety, it is important to seek professional help from a certified dog trainer or behavioural vet. They will first need to confirm that your dog has separation anxiety and will then develop a plan of behaviour modification therapy. This will take time and patience to implement.



OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

WEATHER & TEMPERATURE

- Do not walk your dog on hot ground. If it is too hot for your bare feet to walk on, then your dog should not walk on it.
- On hot days, only take your dog out for walks in the morning or evening.
- It is better to keep your dog inside on hot days. However, if they must go outside, make sure your dog always has access to shady areas, with plenty of water.
- In the colder weathers, make sure your dog has warm blankets or bedding.
- Depending on your dog's coat, consider getting a coat for your dog to wear in the colder months.

HOME ALONE MANAGEMENT

Leaving your dog home on his own for the first time can be scary, both for you and your new friend. He might not feel safe yet or accepting that this is his new home.

- Leave your dog alone for short periods of time each day, gradually increasing the time.
- Ensure you make time to settle your dog into your new home. Many rescue dogs have had multiple homes and can have abandonment issues. Giving him confidence that you are coming back to him will help settle him in faster.
- Always leave your dog in a safe place area with water, shade, their bed, toys, chew treat and/or a food dispenser.

- When you go out, leave your dog with something engaging, like a chew treat or a mentally stimulating food toy, to keep them occupied and make your departure positive.
- It can be comforting to leave an old t-shirt that smells of you in his dog bed when you go out. Always leave the collar with his ID tag on him, in case he manages to escape.

HUMAN FOODS DOGS CAN EAT

- Peanut butter
- Yogurt
- Salmon
- Eggs
- Oatmeal
- Chicken
- Bananas
- Carrots
- Beef/Lamb



AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL PROTECTION SOCIETY

AAPS is a community-based, not-for-profit registered Charity dedicated to the welfare of animals. We rely entirely upon volunteers and community support together with our Opportunity Shops, to provide essential financial support for the Shelter. We work very closely with ALL animal welfare organisations in our endeavour to provide protection, assistance, and welfare for all animals.

Visit aaps.org.au for more information on caring for your dog and what to do if it is lost. There is also a large range of pet products available at our Adoption Centre and Veterinary Clinic. For specific behavioural problems, please contact the office or vet clinic.



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