

Puppy First-Week Checklist

A calm, simple plan for bringing your new puppy home in Australia. Print it, stick it on the fridge and tick as you go.

● Before puppy comes home

- ☐ Puppy-proof at puppy height: cords, shoes, kids' toys, bins, plants, chemicals, baits
- ☐ Set up a safe base: a pen or crate in a quiet spot, with a cosy bed
- ☐ Check fences and gates for gaps; cover pools; provide shade and water
- ☐ Buy basics: lead, collar and ID tag, bowls, chews, toys, grooming brush
- ☐ Ask the breeder or rescue what your puppy is eating, and keep it the same at first
- ☐ Find a local vet and book a first check for soon after arrival
- ☐ Agree household rules (sofa? bedroom?) so everyone is consistent
- ☐ Pick a toilet spot in the garden

● Day 1

- ☐ Go straight to the toilet spot when you arrive; reward with calm praise
- ☐ Keep it quiet: limit visitors and let puppy explore at their own pace
- ☐ Offer water and a small meal at the usual time
- ☐ Short play, then a nap. Puppies sleep a lot
- ☐ Toilet trip before bed, then settle puppy in the sleep area
- ☐ Expect some crying. Stay calm and consistent
- ☐ Take photos! Then rest yourself

● Sleep and crate

- Place the crate or pen close to you at first, in a quiet, draught-free spot.
- Make it a happy place: comfy bed, safe chew, a few treats.
- Never use the crate as a punishment.
- Plan nap times; overtired puppies get mouthy and grumpy.
- Ask your vet or a qualified trainer how long your puppy can manage between toilet breaks.

● A simple daily routine

- **Wake:** straight outside to the toilet spot.
- **Breakfast:** then another toilet trip.
- **Play and a little training:** a few minutes, with rewards.
- **Nap:** in the crate or pen.

- **Repeat** through the day: toilet, play, nap, meals.
- **Evening:** calm time, last meal and toilet trip.
- **Bedtime:** final toilet trip, then settle.
- **Short outings:** only as your vet advises before vaccinations are complete.

Mealtimes and amounts depend on your puppy's age, breed and food. Ask your vet.

● Toilet-training schedule

Take puppy to the same spot, wait calmly, and reward straight after they go. Tick each time it happens outside. Accidents are normal: clean up with an enzymatic cleaner and don't scold.

Toilet trip	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
First thing in the morning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
After every meal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
After every drink or play session	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
After waking from a nap	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Before bed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overnight breaks (as your vet or breeder suggests for your puppy's age)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

● Health admin

Your vet will make a plan for your individual puppy. This list is just a prompt for your first visit.

- ☐ Book a first vet check soon after arrival
- ☐ Ask your vet about a vaccination plan and when puppy can safely go out
- ☐ Ask about worming and parasite prevention (including ticks, fleas, heartworm) suited to your area
- ☐ Ask about microchipping, and check the chip details are registered and up to date
- ☐ Register with your local council, as required in your area
- ☐ Ask about desexing timing, pet insurance and feeding
- ☐ Keep your vet and nearest emergency vet numbers handy

● Australian hazards

- **Ticks:** paralysis ticks are a risk in parts of Australia. Ask your vet about prevention, and feel through the coat daily. If you find one, call your vet immediately.
- **Heat:** never leave a puppy in a car or in hot sun. Provide shade, water and a cool spot; walk in the cool of the day.
- **Snakes:** keep long grass, wood piles and rubbish tidy. If you suspect a bite, keep puppy still and call a vet at once.
- **Cane toads** (where they live, mostly northern and eastern coastal areas): supervise outdoors at dusk and night, and call a vet if puppy mouths one.
- **Garden risks:** snail and rat baits, some plants, compost and fertilisers.

● Gentle first training

- Teach your puppy's name, and reward when they look at you.
- Start easy sits and hand-targets with treats. Keep sessions to a few minutes.
- Handle paws, ears and mouth gently with treats, to help with future grooming and vet visits.
- If puppy bites hands, swap to a toy or chew and give them a rest. They may be tired.

● 7-day tick grid

Tick a box each day you complete the task. Colour in or note down anything to mention to your vet.

Daily task	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Toilet outside after waking, meals and play	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Meals offered at set times	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Naps in the crate or pen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gentle play and a calm cuddle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Short, positive training (name, sit)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tick check (feel through the coat)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fresh water and shade available	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Settled for bedtime	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

● Notes for my vet visit

Questions, things you noticed, appetite, toilet habits, sleep.

● When to call your vet

If your puppy seems unwell, is not eating or drinking, is vomiting or has diarrhoea, is very lethargic, or you suspect a tick, snake bite or that they have eaten something harmful, call your vet or an emergency vet straight away. Trust your instincts, and ask if you're unsure.

● Be kind to yourself

The first week is a big change for you both. Expect broken sleep, accidents and chewed things. A calm routine and plenty of rest will help everyone settle. More free guides: yourbestmate.au/guides/