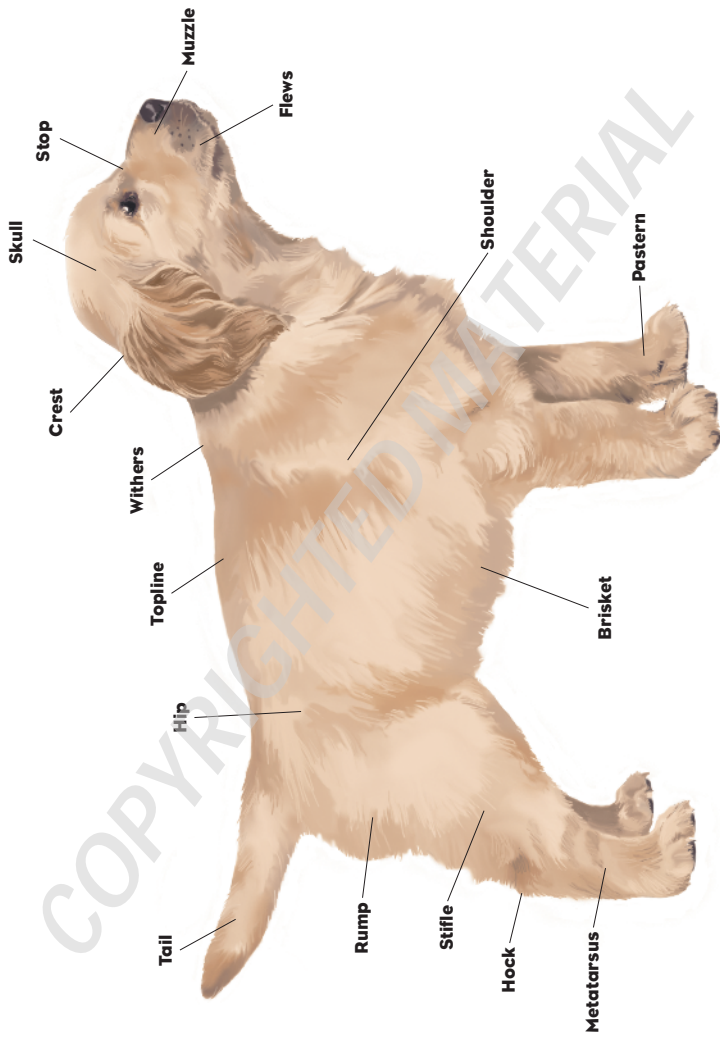


# The Puppy





## Chapter 1

# Canine Cleanliness



**S**ix little puppies squirm and wiggle, crawling closer to their mother's warmth and sweet milk. The litter is three days old. The pups can neither see nor hear at this age, and their eyes and ears won't open for about another week. Their sense of touch is working well though, as is their sense of smell. The puppies' pudgy little noses lead them to their mama, who is lying, full and fat with her abundant milk, ready to nurse them.

Six puppies nurse in a contented row at their dam's belly, making suckling noises and grunts of satisfaction. The mama dog pants softly as she watches her brood. The largest pup releases his suction hold and furiously nuzzles around, looking for a fuller spot at mama's milk bar. The pup tumbles over two nursing littermates then finds an unoccupied position and begins to nurse again, kneading his dam's belly with tiny round paws. Once again, all is right in the pup's world.

The dam's ears twitch toward a slightly different sound. The big pup is still nursing, but his snuffling, suckling sounds have changed. Now he's making a slightly different puppy grunt. Mama's nose goes to the pup immediately. She nuzzles her baby, then gently begins to lick his little belly and backside.

The pup wiggles, feeling his mother's attention, then becomes still for a moment. The stimulation of his dam's insistent lapping releases the pup's urine and feces. The mother's licking is vital to the pup's survival, for without this type of attention new pups are not able to eliminate their own body wastes.

The mama dog cleans away her pup's waste as he produces it, then she washes the pup from head to toe, removing every trace of odor. She repeats this with each pup in turn until all have relieved themselves and been cleaned. The dam tidies her whelping nest until it once again is spotless. Then she relaxes and naps for a short while with her clean, contented brood.

## Early Puppy Development

Puppies sleep about 90 percent of their first two weeks of life, waking only to nurse and be cleaned. Their dark and quiet world is informed through their senses of smell and touch. Unable to control their own body temperature, the pups spend most of their time huddled together or cuddled against their dam.

By about eighteen days old, the pups have developed enough physical coordination and strength to progress from a belly crawl to a shaky walk. One of the first journeys a puppy takes is a few steps away from the sleeping corner to eliminate. Even very young pups seem to instinctively know that it's improper to soil their sleeping and eating quarters.

By three weeks of age, the pups have gained some control over their own elimination. They no longer require the stimulation of their mother's insistent licking. They can "go" on their own, although mama still nurses them and cleans up their body waste.

At first, the mother stays with her puppies around the clock, leaving them only when she must eat or relieve herself. As the pups grow, they become mobile and curious and start to follow mama when she leaves the whelping nest. When the mama dog stops a few steps away from the clean sleeping area, the pups, toddling close behind her, stop too. If they try to nurse, mama won't allow it right now. The pups mill around in frustration, then nature calls and they all urinate and defecate here, away from their bed. The dam returns to the nest with her litter waddling behind her. The puppies' first housetraining lesson has been a success.

Now about five weeks old, the pups are mobile and active, though still a bit clumsy. They begin to play games of stalking and pouncing on one another and their dam. Their eyesight and hearing are good now, and the sound of one puppy nursing brings all the others scrambling to dinner.

The pups have teeth now, and they're quite sharp. Their jaw muscles are growing stronger too, and when pups nurse too vigorously, those pinlike teeth hurt their mama's sensitive teats. She realizes it's time to start weaning her litter.

## The Breeder's Job

When the pups are about 4 to 5 weeks old, they are growing too fast to be satisfied with mother's milk. The breeder begins to supplement their diet with a meat-and-cereal-based gruel or commercial puppy kibble soaked in water or milk.

Even when the puppies are eating solids, their dam still nurses them several times a day. Her milk supply is decreasing, though, and the pups are growing



*The mother dog must do almost everything for her new babies, including helping them to eliminate.*

bigger and hungrier. Mama usually leaves the den area immediately after she suckles her pups. The breeder has securely placed a board across the entrance to the puppy corner. Mama can easily hop over this barrier, but it's too high for the pups to follow her.

They run after their dam as she leaves, hoping for just a bit more of her sweet milk, but she disappears over the barrier board. The pups mill around in frustration for a moment, then feel urgency in their bladders and bowels. The whole litter eliminates together. The pups then return to their sleeping corner to play for a few minutes before they all settle down for an after-dinner nap.

Once puppies begin eating solid foods, their dam no longer laps up their body wastes. The pups still need their mother to teach them important rules and customs of dog society, but the breeder now must take over their feeding and hygiene.

The breeder keeps the puppies clean and their living area sanitary by frequent and thorough housekeeping. Having planned far ahead for this birth, the breeder has saved the daily newspaper for several months and has asked friends to save theirs for him as well. He opens sections of the clean newspaper and spreads them thickly wall to wall in the pups' corner to absorb puppy piddles and water spills.

The breeder watches as the puppies eliminate, then deftly removes the soiled papers and replaces them with clean papers before they can traipse back through

their messes. He has wisely arranged the puppy space so their bed, food, and drinking water are as far away from the gate as possible. This way, when the pups follow their mama as she leaves after nursing them, they will move away from their sleeping and eating area before eliminating. This helps strengthen the natural canine habit of keeping the inner den clean of body waste. Once formed, this habit will help the pups be readily housetrained when they are adopted into their permanent homes.

## Potty Outdoors

As the puppies grow bigger and more energetic, the breeder begins to allow them to go outside for short periods in mild weather. One pup feels nature's call and walks to the edge of the play area to urinate. Several other pups notice and follow, realizing they also need to urinate. They stop near the spot where the first pup eliminated and use it too.

These puppies are accustomed to a clean den because their living space has been kept sanitary and relatively odor free, first by their dam and then by the breeder. The lack of odor and mess teaches the pups not to soil their sleeping and eating areas. They learn to move as far away as they can from the nest before squatting to eliminate. Soon these pups will go to their permanent homes, where proud owners will be delighted with how quickly the pups learn to follow the household cleanliness rules.



*When you take your puppy, you will have to take on many of his mother's teaching duties.*

## Your Job

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The day arrives for the puppy buyer to bring her new family member home. She is excited as she prepares to drive to the breeder's facility. She remembers to bring the chew toy she bought at the pet supply store yesterday, along with the other items her new pup will need.

The buyer loads a puppy-size crate into the front seat and buckles the seat belt securely around it. In the crate is a folded towel for bedding and absorbency, and she has brought more towels along just in case. She checks the map and the directions the breeder sent, then makes certain she has some bottled water for the pup.

Everything's ready to go. Well, almost—at the last minute she returns to the kitchen to grab spray cleaner, a roll of paper towels, and a big plastic trash bag for the inevitable spills, leaks, puppy piddles, and car sickness.

## Getting the New Pup

As the buyer turns in to the breeder's driveway, an adult dog barks and the breeder opens his front door and waves. Two puppies snoozing in the shade in a clean, grassy pen awaken and run to the fence to see who has arrived.

The puppies place their little paws up on the fence and lick the buyer's fingers through the wire mesh. The pup reserved for the buyer is wearing a green nylon collar; the other puppy's collar is red. The green-collared puppy suddenly stops licking and gets down from the fence, walks a few steps away, sniffs, and urinates. The buyer notices the puppies' pen is very clean; she sees only one poop—right next to where the pup just eliminated.

After a flurry of final details, the new owner is ready to leave for home with her furry family member. The breeder has given her a sheaf of papers, including registration paperwork, immunization information, and instructions for feeding and care. He also sends along a week's supply of the food the pup is accustomed to eating.

The breeder nods in approval when he notices the new owner has brought a crate to safely transport the pup home. She loads the pup into the crate and checks the seat belt to be sure it's fastened securely.

## The Trip Home

The puppy settles down in the crate, happily chewing on the toy his new owner brought for him. For the first few miles the pup occasionally gets restless, stops chewing his new toy, and whines. After he gets used to the movement and sound of the car, he settles back down and naps for about half an hour. When he wakes he starts to whine again, and the new owner realizes the pup probably needs a potty

## Marking a Potty Spot for Your New Dog

While you're at the breeder's home (or the shelter, if that's where you will get your new dog), take a paper towel and blot up some urine from your pup or his littermates. Put this into a plastic bag and take it home. Place the soiled paper towel on the ground in the area where you'll be taking your pup to eliminate. Pour about half a cup of lukewarm water through the towel onto the ground to scent the new potty area with puppy urine, then dispose of the paper towel. The scent will give your pup the clue he needs to understand where he's supposed to eliminate at his new home.

break. She pulls into a rest stop and clips a lightweight leash to the pup's collar because it would be too dangerous to walk him off-leash here, so close to traffic.

The owner carries her pup to a likely spot and sets him on the ground. The puppy sits for a moment and scratches at the unfamiliar new collar, then gets up, sniffs the ground, turns half a circle, and urinates. Success! The owner waits a few minutes more, just in case the pup isn't finished. Sure enough, he goes again. Then they hit the road. The car's movement lulls the pup and he soon falls asleep in his crate again and doesn't wake up until they pull into the driveway at home.

## At Home

The owner marks a potty spot in her backyard by pouring some water through the paper towel she'd soaked with urine from the pup's former home (see the box on this page). Then she takes the puppy out of his crate and carries him to the marked spot so he can relieve himself. Success—times two! Afterward, she brings the puppy into the kitchen, where she has already set up a portable folding exercise pen as a puppy corral with several layers of newspaper covering the floor.

As she prepares supper, she allows the pup to play around her feet where she can keep an eye on him in case he acts restless, like he might need to eliminate. When she feeds the pup, she places his dinner bowl in the far corner of the pen, next to his crate/bed and tip-proof water bowl.

After the pup finishes eating, the owner takes him out to the potty area, where he immediately relieves himself. The owner praises the puppy and gives herself a mental pat on the back for preparing everything she needed ahead of



time. She begins to realize that because of the pup's good cleanliness start at his breeder's home, plus her own preparedness, housetraining might turn out to be easier than she'd anticipated.

## Teach—Don't Punish!

From the beginning, the odds were stacked in favor of housetraining success with this puppy. The situation was ideal: The pup's dam was a good mother and teacher, the breeder was knowledgeable and diligent, and the new owner was watchful and well prepared. The dam started her pup's housetraining education, the breeder furthered it, and the new owner continued in a way that helped the pup succeed. If every breeder and new owner did their homework as thoroughly as in our story, there'd be very few housetraining problems.

But there are. Chances are if you picked up this book, you are having some of those problems. In addition, it's important to remember that even pups with the best possible start in housetraining have accidents. It *will* happen with every dog in every household.

In life there are many challenges, but housetraining a puppy or adult dog, though challenging at times, doesn't need to be difficult or frustrating. Often, all that's needed to prevent or solve elimination problems is some experienced guidance and a few new tricks. This book is written to provide you with both. Once you understand your dog's natural needs and inclinations, the housetraining process will be surprisingly quick and simple.

## Punishment Is Ineffective

When those inevitable accidents do happen, please remember that punishment is not an effective tool for housetraining. Many pups will react to punishment by hiding future puddles and poops where the owner won't find them right away—behind the couch or under the desk,



*It's your job to be patient with your puppy and anticipate his needs.*



for example. This eventually may lead to punishment after the fact, which leads to more pee and poop hiding, and so on.

Instead of punishing your pup for potty accidents, stay a step ahead of mistakes by learning to anticipate his needs. Know your pup's natural elimination schedule—keep a written log if necessary. Learn to recognize the postures and actions your pup displays when he's getting ready to urinate or defecate. Then, instead of sending him out to his potty place alone, accompany him to the designated area when it's time to go. Calmly tell your pup what you want him to do; teach him a cue to eliminate (say something like “go potty” or “hurry hurry”). Wait patiently with your pup and praise him when he goes. This will work wonders; not only will he have the natural pleasure of relief, he'll know you're happy with his behavior. Punishment won't be necessary.