

IS A PUPPY RIGHT FOR YOU?

Puppies are absolutely adorable! There's no question. But caring for a puppy is a big responsibility. We've put together this guide to help you determine if a puppy may be a good fit for you.

NEED MORE HELP?

Find additional resources at pasadenahumane.org/behavior.

Time Commitment

Puppies require a significant time commitment from their guardians. From puppy-proofing to socialization, house training, feeding, playtime and training classes, puppies are a full-time job. Puppies need to learn the rules of your home, and it may take them a while to catch on. Puppies need a lot of supervision and patience as they learn their new routine. When a puppy must be left alone, they should be secured in an X-Pen or crate.

Socialization

Socialization is the most important job of a puppy owner. Puppies need to be safely introduced to as many new experiences as possible. This includes meeting a wide variety of people, socializing with dogs and other animals, and visiting new places and new sounds and smells. The socialization process starts the day the pup is born, and the critical periods will last through the first couple of months. Socialization is never complete in a dog, but the longer one waits to start, the harder it gets.

Costs

The costs of caring for a puppy can add up quickly. Puppies will need lots of toys to keep them busy. A crate or an exercise pen is a wise investment to keep the puppy contained and out of trouble. There are also medical expenses to consider. Puppies need a series of vaccines to keep them healthy, then annual wellness visits with a veterinarian. Enrolling a new puppy in a class to get them started with training is beneficial. Nutritious puppy food tends to be more expensive, but it is a worthwhile investment to help keep your puppy healthy in the long run. Remember that growing puppies will need larger amounts of food. Also, keep in mind that any medical emergency with your pet (at any age) can be very expensive.

Long-Term Planning

Many dogs can live well into their teens, so it is important to factor that into your decision before getting a puppy. While no one can predict the future, thinking about your long-term plan is wise. Will you be moving cross-country? Will you be starting a family? Could a family member need to move in with you? Exposure to as many ages of people, other animals and new experiences will help socialize your puppy to many eventual changes to its life. Also, consider what this tiny puppy will look and act like in 6 months. Try to prepare now for the all-too-soon adolescent stage of your dog. This little ball of fluff will soon be the size and energy level of a full-grown adult dog. Adolescent dogs can often be challenging due to their high energy level and sometimes impulsive behavior.

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Grooming

What about grooming? All dogs need grooming –even hairless breeds! Some breeds may require professional work. Others require only a few minutes of brushing once a week and regular attention to teeth, ears and nails. All dogs shed to some extent. Also, coat length does not mean a breed will shed more or less. A short-coated breed can shed just as much as a medium to long-coated one.

Lifestyle

Is everyone in the house prepared for a puppy? Consider the pets you have now and other family members, too. Everyone in your family should be in agreement before you bring your new puppy home. It's also a good idea to have a plan for who is responsible for which puppy care duties. Also, remember that cute puppies quickly grow up to be full-sized dogs. It's important to be as prepared as possible for all the eventualities of caring for this animal and providing all it will need for another 10-15 years.

We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at pasadenahumane.org/behavior.

Adapted from Northeast Animal Shelter

