



Seychelles Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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Canine Fostering Fact Sheet

So you want to foster a dog or puppy but you're not sure where to start? This fact sheet should contain all the essential information you need to make sure you're ready for the commitment of fostering. Fostering helps prepare the dog for adoption by giving them a chance to live in a home where they can fully express their personality, work to overcome fears or recover from trauma so we're very grateful that you're interested in fostering a dog with SSPCA.

Firstly, are you at least 21-year-olds, live in accommodation that allows a pet dog, have transport to collect and drop off your foster dog and have the available time, affection and commitment to successfully foster a dog? If you've answered no to any of the above questions then, unfortunately your foster application will be declined.

If you are also planning on keeping your foster dog in a cage or constantly chained up please also note that your application will be declined. All animals need and deserve room to roam around and exercise, especially dogs.

Duties of the Foster Parent:

- Regularly feed, clean, socialize, love and groom the dog;
- Introduce basic training and care for the dog(s) as if they were your own;
- Ensure the safety and general wellbeing of the dog;
- Observe and report any problems with the dog(s) to the Office Administrator (2710088) who will confer with the veterinarian;
- Return the dog to the shelter upon request or according to any special arrangements made by SSPCA staff, i.e. for vaccinations or adoption viewing.

The table below gives an indication to the time commitment which may be required for different ages and conditions of the foster dog:

Type of Foster	Time Period Required for Animal to be Fostered
Orphaned newborn or unweaned puppies	4 - 10 weeks (experienced carers only)
Weaned puppies	1 - 5 weeks
Mother dog and puppies	2 - 8 weeks
Dogs / puppies with physical or medical problems	2 - 12 weeks (this can vary greatly depending on the problem and only experienced carers only)
Dogs / puppies with behavioural problems	3 - 12 weeks (this can vary greatly depending on the problem and only experienced carers only)

If you have pet cats or dogs in your home, review their veterinary records and update any vaccinations that may have lapsed (proof will be required). Your pets will also need to be sterilized, up to date with worming and flea free. If your own cat or dog is under current veterinary treatment then you may not be allowed to participate in the foster program, depending on the circumstances.

Preparing Space For Your Foster Dog:

A foster dog or puppy is to be kept indoors or in a secure outdoor enclosure at all times. They are not allowed to go free-roaming outside. Outdoor enclosures must be escape proof, provide adequate shelter from the elements, have a covered bed and free access to fresh clean water. They should also be sufficient size for the dog or puppy to move freely about in.

When keeping a dog or puppy indoors they should be confined to one room of the house until they become familiar with it. Their water bowls should also be kept in this room. When they start to venture into the house they will have a familiar "safe" room to return to should they become frightened or stressed. The flooring should be made of a material which is easy to clean and disinfect, such as hard wood, ceramic tiles, linoleum or smooth concrete.

- The room needs to be pet friendly and safe.
- Everything in the room should be easy to wash and disinfect or replaceable.
- Remove anything that might fall on the puppy (even a book can cause serious injury).
- Remove any chemicals or cleaning agents.
- If using the bathroom ensure the toilet seat is closed.
- If using the laundry room, ensure that the cupboards, washing machine lid and clothes drier are kept closed and that disinfectants and detergents are not able to be accessed by the puppy.
- It should contain everything the dog or puppy will need to eat, drink, sleep and play.
- Have at least one bowl for water, one for wet food, and one for dry food. It is best to provide more bowls if you have several puppies so no one has to compete for access to food.
- Provide safe, disposable or easily sanitised toys to entertain the dog or puppy when you are not with them.

When you first bring your foster dog or puppy home with you, please make sure you provide a quiet space where they can have a bit of alone time if needed, especially if you have other pets in your home. Always introduce pets to each other slowly so no one becomes overwhelmed and know that there can be an adjustment period when another animal is introduced. You may wish to keep the foster dog or puppy completely separate from your other pets to prevent any unnecessary stress to all animals involved.

Puppy Feeding:

Should you foster an unweaned orphaned puppy the shelter will provide canine replacement milk which should be given at the puppy's body temperature (about 100 degrees). Once the powder is reconstituted, unused formula should be kept refrigerated. During their first 3 weeks, puppies should be fed every 2 to 3 hours during the day and every 4 to 5 hours overnight with the replacement milk. Particularly during the first week or if a puppy is experiencing diarrhea, it is often necessary to add 25% of additional water to the formula. Once they're 3 weeks old they can be fed every 4 hours during the day and every 6 hours overnight, again with the replacement milk. Carers who are unable to attend to very young puppies should take adult dogs or older puppies that are more able to last through the day and night without frequent feeding.

When they reach 5 weeks old they should be eating solid food mixed with replacement milk or water and they should be having 3 meals every day. Puppies eat very small amounts often to keep their energy levels up for proper growth and health. You should pour the dry puppy food into a shallow dish, add the canine milk replacer and let it soak into the dry food for about 10 minutes. Mash the dry food with a fork into the milk replacer to make gruel out of the food. As they are being weaned and starting to eat solid food, they will need a fresh supply of water. Generally, young puppies need about one-half cup of water every 2 hours, so make sure they have plenty of clean fresh water throughout the day. A 7 week old puppy should also be fed 3 times a day until they're 6 months of age. From 6 months to a year, many people feed their dogs twice a day and once an adult, they offer the meal once a day.

If you are bottle feeding the foster puppy it is best to feed the puppy on a raised surface as this allows them to feed with all four feet on the surface and their heads level, much as they would if they were nursing from their mother. Some puppies prefer to nurse standing on their hind legs while holding the bottle. They will require a little support from you in this position. Avoid feeding a puppy while he is cradled on his back - if the fluid goes down the wrong way, it may end up in his lungs. Gently open the puppy's mouth with one finger and place the tip of the nipple on his tongue. If he won't eat, try stroking him. Pull lightly on the bottle to encourage vigorous sucking. Be sure to tilt the bottle up slightly to prevent the puppy from inhaling too much air.

Do not force the puppy to nurse, or allow him to nurse too fast. After each feeding, the puppy should be burped. Hold him against your shoulder and gently massage his back or pat it lightly. Overfeeding is as dangerous as underfeeding puppies! Keep an eye on your puppy at feeding time and monitor how much they are eating. Your foster puppy will generally regulate their own food intake and if they need more food they may whine. A good indication that they are getting enough to eat is the size of their bellies - they should be filled out after a meal but not bloated.

When collecting your foster dog from SSPCA, they will provide you with dog food, unless you've agreed to provide the foster dog with food. Ideally they should be getting a mixture of wet and dry food, plus access to fresh clean water throughout the day. There are lots of human foods that can make your dog very ill. Any food not specifically designed for dogs can affect their digestive system, causing vomiting, diarrhoea, or loss of appetite. Foods that dogs can't eat include:

- Alcohol
- Apple seeds
- Avocado
- Cat food
- Chocolate
- Coffee, tea and other caffeine
- Cooked bones
- Corn on the cob
- Fat trimmings
- Garlic, onion and chives
- Grapes and raisins
- Liver
- Macadamia nuts
- Milk and dairy products
- Peppers
- Persimmon, peaches and plum pits
- Raw meat and fish
- Rhubarb and tomato leaves
- Salt and sugar
- Xylitol (a sweetener used in a lot of sugar-free foods)
- Yeast

Puppy Grooming:

A mother dog works hard to keep her puppies clean. She will constantly be grooming them thoroughly to remove any sticky messes they may get into, such as food or feces. Grooming them also stimulates circulation and the digestive system. If you're fostering an orphaned puppy a daily grooming session gives you the chance to closely monitor the puppy and gets them familiarized with being handled. If the puppy is not very dirty you can use a flea comb to get rid of dust and dried feces in the fur. You can also use a warm, damp washcloth to clean them a bit more thoroughly. Use short strokes to mimic a mother's tongue.

Be sure to dry the puppy well when done so that they don't get chilled. As the puppy gets older, from 4 - 5 weeks of age, they can be allowed to roam a larger area of your house, but they should still be closely supervised and kept in a secured area when not confined to their nursing area. Remember the foster puppy is still very vulnerable to infections, such as canine parvovirus infection, and should be separated from other pets if possible, and only be allowed to interact with fully vaccinated, healthy animals.

Emotional and physical closeness to you is as important to a foster puppy as food and warmth so handle the puppy often and let them snuggle. You'll be surprised how this early cuddle activity will install a basic instinct as the puppy grows into an adult. Playing with the foster puppy with a variety of toys is also important; this will help them develop motor skills and also help them bond to you.

Toilet Training:

Newborn puppies don't instinctively know how to eliminate waste and initially they need their mother's help to get things moving. In general, they start controlling their own elimination when they're around 3 - 4 weeks old. Orphaned puppies do not have a mother to stimulate elimination so if you're fostering a young puppy, your services are necessary. You can emulate a mother dog's stimulation to eliminate by rubbing the puppies' anal and genital sections with a clean, soft, damp, warm cloth. Warm water feels a lot more like a mother dog's tongue than cold water does and is therefore more comfortable for the puppy. Be sure to massage the puppy gently and wipe down the genital area afterwards with a fresh clean cloth or baby wipe, to remove any residual urine or faeces. Infrequent urination can be a sign that a puppy's body is poorly hydrated, whilst infrequent bowel movements can indicate constipation. Worrisome elimination patterns in a puppy merit a visit to the shelter as the early stages of a puppy's life are crucial for a healthy adulthood and future in general, so pay close attention to feeding and bathroom habits.

Once the puppy starts eliminating on his own they may have accidents in the house because they haven't learnt to go outside. Whilst this is happening and even in adulthood, never rub a dog's nose in urine or faeces, or punish a dog for an "accident." This will teach your dog to fear you, and he may hide when he has to go potty. It is not instinctive for dogs to relieve themselves outside; it is only natural for them to not go where they sleep. Certain dogs can suffer from behavioural issues when their carer leaves them behind and can cause them anxiety. If anxiety is causing occasional accidents it's important not to scold your dog if you catch him in the act, as this type of punishment could signal that peeing in front of you is bad. Yelling can create bigger problems as for some dogs, punishing them may make them more likely to have issues with submissive urination. These dogs are more likely to have accidents into adulthood because they can be triggered by loud voices or people coming into the house, including their owners.

One way of toilet training your puppy or dog is each time you go to take your dog outside, gently take his paw, ring the bell with it and then immediately take him outside. When they go potty, be sure to praise him and give him a reward. Continue to repeat this training process until your dog understands

they need to ring the bell each time they need to go outside. For puppies over 3 weeks old you should be taking them outside frequently (at least every two hours) and immediately after they wake up, during and after playing, and after eating or drinking. Pick a bathroom spot outside, and always take your puppy to that spot. Remember to always reward your puppy every time they eliminate outdoors.

Puppy Socialization:

The primary socialization period of puppies is between 3 and 13 weeks. This means that you need to get the puppy used to people and other animals before finishing their vaccination program. This period in the puppy's life is critical for development of primary social relationships with humans and other animals. Puppies that are confined during this period are significantly more likely to develop behavioral problems such as fear and aggression, than puppies that are provided the opportunity to get socialized with other animals and people.

Even outgoing, friendly puppies should be allowed 24 hours to accustom themselves to their new home, but if they seem content and happy after the initial "chill-out period" they can be cuddled and played with freely. Shy pets will need more encouragement. Try sitting on the floor allowing the puppy to approach you or avoid you as they please, and play freely around you. You can also tempt them with small treats and food to convince them that you are not as scary as you appear. Always praise positive interaction. Any introductions of puppies to other cats or dogs should be made with great care and under constant supervision.

There is no such thing as a "bad" puppy and it is useless to punish a "naughty" puppy. Their little minds do not grasp deductive reasoning. Puppies are easily distracted with a toy or a treat when being mischievous rather than punishment and scolding. By providing toys, chews, scratching poles etc. you can get a puppy on it's right track to being somebody's well-behaved pet.

To protect people, young children should not handle the foster puppies unsupervised and everyone should wash their hands after handling the puppy and their fecal waste. The puppy should be de-fleaed before they enter your home and as often as necessary to keep fleas off of them. Note that fleas can spread disease among your animals and to people as well.

You should wash your hands with soap and water before handling your own animals or children and you may also want to change clothes. You should also routinely disinfect the foster puppy's quarters and disinfect the entire premises before any new puppies are introduced. The best way to disinfect the area is to remove all organic material and fecal debris and then soak with a mild bleach solution (1-part bleach to 32 parts water) for at least 30 minutes in a well-ventilated room. All surfaces, bowls, toys etc. need to be disinfected so this is why we advise putting them in a room without carpeting.

Illnesses:

Worms are nasty parasites that can cause chronic gastrointestinal problems. If your foster puppy or dog is not treated against worms, you may notice that your dog develops digestive upset (vomiting, diarrhoea), respiratory difficulty (cough), or a delay in growth (especially in puppies). Worming treatments are easy and effective to use. It is important to understand that these treatments do not prevent your pet from contracting worms, but work by killing any worms that are present when administered. To effectively maintain your puppy's health, you should deworm them regularly. Puppies should be dewormed at 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks of age, then again at 12 and 16 weeks of age. The next deworming should be done at 6 months and then again at 1 year. During your foster program SSPCA will provide you with deworming tablets to be administered as advised.

Some dogs may try to spit out the dewormer tablet immediately or even several minutes after you have administered it. Dogs can also occasionally vomit shortly after taking the dose and may bring the

tablet back up again. If this happens please provide fresh drinking water and keep an eye on them to ensure their condition does not worsen. If the vomiting persists or the dog seems to be in distress, we advise you to contact us to arrange for a veterinary visit. Dogs will sometimes vomit worms after being dewormed, or you may see them pass in the stool.

Vaccinating your puppy is one of the most important things you should do as regular vaccinations help puppies grow into dogs who remain free of infectious diseases, and also prevents them from passing nasty diseases on to other animals in the local area. Diseases that the vaccine will usually protect against are canine distemper, canine parvovirus, kennel cough, leptospirosis, and parainfluenza. Puppy vaccines usually start between 6 - 8 weeks of age, with new vaccines and boosters given every 3 - 4 weeks until the puppy is 16 - 17 weeks old. During your foster program SSPCA will provide you with vaccination appointments to be attended as advised.

It is very important to keep SSPCA informed with any health changes with the foster dog. If any of the following signs of illness are seen they should be reported to SSPCA the day you notice them:

- Lethargy
- Coughing
- Blood in stool
- Loose stool
- Lack of appetite
- Eye or nose discharge
- Sneezing
- Vomiting

Medical emergencies must be reported to SSPCA immediately. A medical emergency could be any of the following:

- A temperature over 103F or less than 98F
- Trouble breathing
- Seizures
- Severe lethargy / non-responsive
- Evidence of severe pain: restlessness, vocalizing, panting
- Major wounds requiring suture
- Vomiting excessively (3 - 4 times) or excessive diarrhea
- Not urinating for 24 hours or more

Canine First Aid:

Bones, Sticks and Balls - Bones, sticks and balls can get lodged in or across the roof of a dog's mouth. If this happens, you may notice your dog pawing at his mouth or struggling to close his jaws. You may be able to remove the object by hand or with tweezers, but if not you'll need to get your vet to do so using sedation. As always, prevention is better than a cure, so never let your dog play with small balls and avoid throwing sticks.

Burns - If your dog suffers a burn from hot water, oil, chemicals or ice, he'll need immediate attention. Minor burns can be treated at home - simply clean the affected area with a mild antiseptic and apply a soothing cream or gel such as aloe vera. Severe burns will need veterinary attention, so call SSPCA to arrange an emergency appointment.

Cuts and Wounds - Dogs may suffer from cuts or wounds particularly to their feet if they run on something sharp like broken glass. If this occurs, clean the affected area with a disinfectant and apply a bandage if necessary. Consult SSPCA if you cannot stop the bleeding or the wound is severe.

Dog Bites - If your dog is unlucky enough to be bitten by another dog, it's always worth getting them checked over by the vet. Make a routine appointment if the bite or bites are minor but ensure your foster dog is seen as an emergency if they're severe. This approach should be taken with all animal bites.

Ear and Eye Problems - Your foster dog's ears should be a shiny, pale pink color inside and free from wax or discharge. They should not smell unpleasant. If you suspect an ear problem always consult SSPCA. If your dog has any problems with his eyes such as a scratch or conjunctivitis you should consult SSPCA, and if you can prevent them from rubbing their eye.

Fits - A fit can be recognized by sudden, uncontrolled spasmodic movements, often with chomping of the jaw and salivating. A fitting dog will usually fall onto its side and be unaware of its surroundings. If your dog does have a fit, try not to restrain him. Instead, remove any furniture or hard objects around him that could cause an injury. Then, turn off all stimuli such as lights, radio, television, washing machine etc. and darken the room so he can recover quietly. You should always consult SSPCA if your foster dog has a fit.

Fractured or Pulled-off Claws - These can be very painful and tend to become quickly infected. Bleeding is also often profuse. If possible, try to apply a bandage to the foot before arranging an appointment to take your foster dog to the shelter as antibiotics are often required and the claw may need to be clipped back under sedation or anesthetic.

Heatstroke - The best advice as far as heatstroke is concerned is that prevention is better than a cure. Ensure your dog doesn't stay out in the sun for too long on hot days and avoids the midday heat. If he does get mild heatstroke, cool him down as best you can with wet towels or a fan, and ensure he drinks plenty of cool water and gets lots of rest. Serious heatstroke will require the attention of a vet.

Poisoning - Some dogs are very inquisitive, and there's always the possibility your foster dog will get hold of something he shouldn't. Much like heatstroke, prevention is better than a cure and you need to dog-proof your home to ensure he can't access things that could be harmful to his health, such as slug pellets, bleach or chocolate. If you suspect your dog has ingested something harmful, always bring the packaging with you (if able) to the shelter as this will help identify the problem and source an antidote.

Vehicular Accidents - If your foster dog has been involved in an accident with a vehicle, you should call SSPCA right away. Your dog may be in shock and could react unpredictably so approach him with caution. If possible, lift your dog onto a blanket then take him to the vet as quickly as you can. If he cannot be moved, you may have to ask our veterinarian to come directly to the scene.

Stings and Insect Bites - If your foster dog has been stung and has severe swelling around his mouth, nose or throat that's causing breathing difficulties, you should bring them to the shelter immediately. If the sting or bite isn't causing any serious problems, you can alleviate your dog's discomfort by applying a cold compress to the affected area. If injured, try to keep your dog calm by talking to him in a soothing tone letting him know he'll be okay.

Thank you for reading this Canine Fostering Fact Sheet and we hope it's provided you with all the necessary information you require to successfully foster a dog or puppy with SSPCA.

We look forward to hearing from you to begin your fostering programme with us.