



METRO NASHVILLE
ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL

TIPS and RESOURCES for your NEW DOG

The first few days in your home are special and critical for a pet. Your new dog will be confused about where he is and what to expect from you. Setting up some clear structure with your family for your dog will be paramount in making as smooth a transition as possible.

Before You Bring Your Dog Home:

- 1) Determine where your dog will be spending most of his time. Because he will be under a lot of stress with the change of environment (from his original home to the shelter to your house), he may forget any housetraining (if any) he's learned. Often a kitchen or bathroom will work best for easy clean-up.
- 2) We encourage you to crate-train your new dog. Try to have your crate set up and ready to go for when you bring your new dog home. Find out more about crate training in this video: [Crate Training Basics](#)
- 3) Dog-proof the area where your pooch will spend most of his time during the first few months. This may mean taping loose electrical cords to baseboards; storing household chemicals on high shelves; removing plants, rugs, and breakables; setting up the crate, and installing baby gates.
- 4) Take time to create a vocabulary list everyone will use when giving your dog directions. This will help prevent confusion and help your dog learn new things more quickly. Not sure which words to use? [Check out Teaching your Dog Basic Commands.](#)
- 5) Bring an ID tag with your phone number on it with you when you pick up your dog so that he has an extra measure of safety for the ride home and the first few uneasy days. If not possible, get an ID tag for your dog's collar as soon as you can.

TIPS

- 1) Make sure children know how to approach your new dog: Go here for more on [Introducing dogs and children.](#)
- 2) MACC feeds once or twice a day, depending on the dog. To minimize stomach upset for your dog, feed two smaller meals for the first few days.

- 3) **POTTY:** Once home, take him to his toileting area immediately and spend a good amount of time with him so he will get used to the area and relieve himself. Even if your dog does relieve himself during this time, be prepared for accidents. Coming into a new home with new people, new smells and new sounds can throw even the most housebroken dog off-track, so be ready just in case. Need more housetraining tips? Check out this [Dog Housetraining](#) section.
- 4) **BEHAVIOR:** The ASPCA has put together some great resources for helping pet owners and fosters work through issues. [Check out their Dog Behavior Help Section here!](#)

THE BEGINNING

Remember - remain calm and quiet around your dog, limiting too much excitement (such as introducing him to new dogs or neighborhood children) and follow the **Two Week Shutdown** in the MACC Decompression handout. If he came from another home, objects like leashes, hands, rolled up newspapers and magazines, feet, chairs and sticks are just some of the pieces of “training equipment” that may have been used on this dog. Words like “come here” and “lie down” may bring forth a reaction other than the one you expect. Or maybe he led a sheltered life and was never socialized to children or sidewalk activity. This dog may be the product of a never-ending series of scrambled communications and unreal expectations that will require patience on your part.

Have patience with your new dog’s behavior, level of training, and the time it takes to establish a bond with you. Give your new dog time and space to adjust. Commit time the first few days to get to know your dog’s habits and personality. Establish a routine for the dog and balance interaction and down-time. This is a period of trust-building, so don’t scare or yell at the dog or try to force close contact. Watch your dog’s postures and expressions. Learn to read him. It may take even up to several months for you to get to know your dog’s true nature. And don’t forget, your new dog is trying to do the same with you!