



Fostering Puppies



(Adapted from City of Seattle Animal Control)



MOM DOG WITH PUPPIES (PUPPIES 0-4 WEEKS)

A small, quiet, warm, easily cleaned room (laundry room, bathroom, family room, kitchen, or dry and warm basement or garage) is best for a mother and pups. Clean bedding should be provided, and food and water nearby. A child's plastic baby pool, lined with a blanket makes a wonderful, safe den for mama and babies. The mother dog should be allowed outside on leash (or supervised in a fenced yard) at least twice daily to eliminate. The puppies should not go out at all. If the mother's history is unknown, she will not be vaccinated at the shelter. Be aware of other dogs and other dogs' feces when taking the mother out for a walk, since she may not be properly vaccinated. The mother will spend most of her time early on nursing, cleaning up, and caring for her pups. Later, as the pups become more mobile and less demanding on her, she may enjoy more time away from them and active play with people and chew toys. As pups become more mobile, check their living area for hazards.

Feeding

The mother dog requires extra nutrition for adequate milk production. Feed a premium diet three times a day. Be sure all the puppies are nursing and steadily gaining weight. Newborns depend entirely on mom's milk, receiving valuable antibodies in the first milk (colostrum). When the puppies are three weeks old, begin offering a low bowl (a pie plate) of water-soaked kibble (puppy chow). Be sure to offer this at a time when the puppies are hungry, and, if necessary, separate the mom so she won't eat it all up. By four weeks of age they should be eating some mushy meals. (See the next section on Weaning Orphan Puppies.) By six weeks of age puppies should no longer need mother's milk and should be eating soaked kibble and starting on dry kibble.

Medical Care

Call your foster care coordinator if you see any signs of illness in mother or pups. If the mother dog goes off food or is stressed, milk production may drop sharply, and puppies may have to be raised as orphans. Check mother's mammary glands daily. As long as pups all nurse and gain weight, production is probably adequate. If milk production or mother's calcium reserves are inadequate, the mother may develop eclampsia, is an emergency situation of low blood calcium levels requiring immediate attention. Symptoms are muscle twitching, tremors, anxiousness, progressive to stiffening seizure-like tremors. A hard, red,

hot, or painful mammary gland may mean mastitis which should be checked by a veterinarian. Nursing mothers often “blow their coat” when nursing due to nutrition demands on their body; feeding premium diet in adequate amounts helps avoid this situation. Vitamin supplements can also help. The mother’s vaginal discharge (lochia) should taper from dark mucoid green to reddish brown in smaller amounts by three weeks postpartum. The mother should be vaccinated as soon as she is finished nursing. Check the pups’ umbilical cords daily until they dry and fall off. Eyes open at 7–10 days—watch for infections/crusting at the lids. If you see fleas, ask your vet for advice on treating the newborns.

The puppies should receive their first dose of deworming medicine at 2–3 weeks of age, followed by a second dose in 10 days. Dewormer will be provided for you. At 8 weeks of age the pups should receive their first set of shots.

Socializing

Be aware that mama dog may be protective of her pups, but most mother dogs will allow a calm, gentle approach by adults and picking up/handling of pups. Puppies need a lot of human contact. Handle them as much as you can.

ORPHAN PUPPIES (0–3 WEEKS)

What you will need:

Box or Carrier

Towels

Wash cloths

Esbilac or similar formula

A/D or baby food

Bottles & Nipples

Small syringes

Dishes with low sides (pie plates)

Hot water bottle or Heating pad

Timer/ticking clock

Flea comb

Baby Shampoo

Kaopectate

Possibly a kitchen scale that weighs in 1 oz increments



Since the mother is not available, the foster parent must provide all of the mother’s functions: feeding, warmth, cleaning, and stimulation to urinate/defecate.

Safety/Confinement

These pups should be set up in small living quarters (crate or box with bedding) easily kept consistently warm—at about 80–90 degrees. They will pile on each other to keep warm, but a hot water bottle and warm bedding are needed. Heating pads can be dangerous. If used, they should be kept on low, with several layers of bedding between the pad and pups, and they should be monitored closely.

Feeding

Puppy milk replacer such as Vet-alac or Esbilac, should be mixed and fed according to the package directions. Generally, feeding every three hours is needed in the beginning. By three weeks of age, feeding every 4–5 hours with a night break of eight hours should work well. Milk replacer can be fed by dropper or syringe or bottle as pups accept it and need larger feedings. Some of the pups may be too weak to suck from the bottle and you will need to feed them with syringes. If you need to syringe feed the puppies, drip the formula slowly into the side of their mouths, and give them time to swallow. Going too fast can cause liquid to go into their lungs and cause pneumonia.

Do not hold pups on their backs either, or allow them to suck too fast (can lead to aspiration of formula into the lungs). The puppies should be tilted forward and slightly up, as if they were nursing on their mother. Never try to bottle feed an unconscious or semi-conscious puppy. Feed until the puppy's tummy feels tight and full. Sick puppies will not eat eagerly, and you will have to feed them slowly and often to ensure that they are getting enough food.

After each feeding, you must stimulate bowel and bladder movement. Use a warm, damp cotton ball, or later a cloth as volume increases). Mineral oil on a Q-tip at the anus may stimulate defecation. DO NOT insert the Q-tip into the rectum! Gently massage their genital areas in a circular motion, and do not stop until they have finished eliminating. Note the color of the urine. If it is light yellow or straw colored, that is normal. If it is a bright canary yellow, the puppy is dehydrated and needs fluids immediately. Cottage cheesy stools or diarrhea are also an indication of illness. Call your foster care coordinator if you see these symptoms.



As your pups grow and become more mobile, weaning time approaches. Weaning can be started at three weeks by offering formula in a low dish or pie plate with or without canned food mixed in. Be sure to offer when puppies are hungry, so they will make their best effort to lap/lick/eat. Supplement with bottle feedings as needed until pups are lapping consistently from a dish. By 4–5 weeks no more bottle feedings should be needed. At four weeks, offer water soaked kibble with or without canned food mixed in or formula added. (Water penetrates kibble better; soaking in formula does not work as well). Begin offering dry food at five weeks when the puppies are hungry near meal time so they will start to try the dry food. Continue feeding soaked kibble until seven weeks or so. By eight weeks, the puppies should readily eat dry food only.

Medical Care

If signs of illness develop in the pups, notify your foster care coordinator. Lack of appetite and diarrhea are of special concern. Check umbilical cords daily until they dry and fall off. Eyes open at 7–10 days—watch for infections/ crusting at the lids. Newborns without a mom may also try to nurse on each other causing injury (genitalia are the common site for this false “nipple”). Pups may need to be separated if this occurs. Deworming should occur at 2–3 weeks of age which will be provided for you. A second dose should happen in 10 days. If fleas are found, call the shelter vet for advice in treating newborns. From birth on, puppies must be kept clean and flea free. Fleas can kill a puppy and cause anemia. Daily flea combing is usually enough, but you should be prepared to bathe them if necessary. At 8 weeks of age, the pups should get their first set of vaccinations.

Cleaning

Initially, newborn pups should be kept in a box or crate, and bedding should be changed as needed. The process of stimulating urination/defecation, then cleaning or soaking up urine/feces with cotton or cloth should keep puppies fairly clean. As pups become more mobile and learn to urinate/defecate on their own, a larger box or small, papered, gated area like a kitchen or bathroom may be used to confine them. Keep area free of feces/urine. The weaning process (low dish of mushy food) can make for messy feet and faces—wash with a warm wet cloth as needed. If you must bathe the puppies, make sure they are thoroughly dried after bathing, to avoid chilling, which can lead to illness.

Socializing

Handle newborn pups as much as possible to get them comfortable with humans.

Puppy Development

It is important to start handling and manipulating the puppies right from birth. Although their ears and eyes are still sealed, their sense of smell is already relatively well developed. The wild stress they may experience when being picked up accelerates body growth, reduces emotionality and possibly increases their resistance to certain diseases. Moreover, they become imprinted to human scent.



The growing puppies should be handled every day, and gentle grooming should be started at 4–5 weeks. As they become more aware of their environment, they should be exposed to as many stimuli as possible (vacuum cleaner, young children, men, women, other friendly animals, loud noises, etc.). However, you must pay attention that they do not become too stressed, over-stimulated, or tired. Short car trips will get puppies used to traveling. At first all puppies should experience things by themselves to learn to cope with life later on.

If the mother is not available, it is important that the puppies come in contact with an older, friendly dog from about 5 weeks of age on. They have to learn how to communicate like a dog and most importantly, how to submit. A puppy who has not learned submission from its mother or another adult dog will be more difficult to train later on. At this age, it is also very important that the puppy learn bite inhibition. He learns it best from his litter mates and from his mother or other adult dog.

From the age of 8 weeks on, the puppy is ready to learn “human” language and the rules of human society. Socialization with other dogs and humans has to be continued. With any introduction, be aware of the possibility of transmission of infectious disease—use good judgment.



Puppy Development

AGE

1–3 weeks



NEEDS

Warmth

Food

Sleep

Dependent on mother

MENTAL CAPABILITY

Reflex behavior

Needs stimulation to eliminate

Cannot regulate body temperature

NOTES

- Should be handled gently for brief periods of time
- Sense of smell is functioning
- Will imprint on humans
- Littermates important

4–7 weeks



Food

Sleep

Mother for discipline

Ears/eyes open

All senses functioning

Aware of environment

Responding to stimuli

Eliminate on their own

Temperature regulation has improved

Begin weaning

- Influence of littermates increases
- Interaction with mates necessary to learn bite inhibition
- Regular handling
- Exposure to people, animals, and noises
- Begin to form social attachments with other species
- Provide sensory rich environment

8–12 weeks



Continued socialization

Play

Food

Fully weaned

Mental capacity fully developed

Can learn basic commands

- Learns dog language from mates and adult dogs
 - Learns submission from mother
- **Most sensitive period in pup's development: what it experiences now remains for life**

HOW TO TAKE A PUPPY/DOG'S TEMPERATURE

You will need:

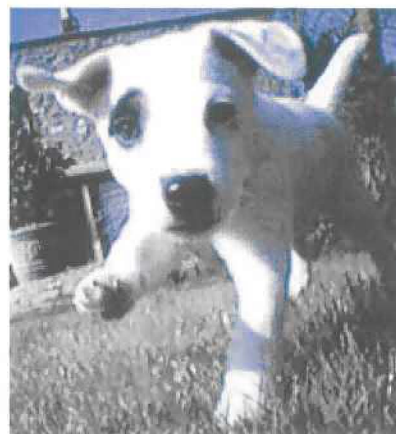
Rectal thermometer

Vaseline

Disinfectant (30:1 water & bleach solution)

A normal temperature for dogs and puppies is 100.5–102.5 degrees. Any temperature below 100 degrees or above 103 degrees is a problem. Call your foster care coordinator immediately.

If a puppy has a temperature below 100 degrees, get him onto a heating pad (turned to low and covered with a towel) immediately. If the temperature is 103 degrees or higher, and the puppy has been on a heating pad, remove him from the pad immediately.



To take the dog/puppy's temperature:

- Sterilize the thermometer by dipping it into the disinfectant solution.
- Dry with a clean paper towel.
- Shake the thermometer down to under 80 degrees.
- Coat the tip of the thermometer with a small amount of Vaseline.
- Insert the tip of the thermometer 1/2 inch into the dog's rectum and hold there for 1–2 minutes. Be gentle, as the rectal tissues are fragile, and you don't want to tear the tissue.
- You may need a second person to help hold the dog or puppy to prevent struggling. You should be speaking softly to the dog. If a second person is helping, sometimes it is helpful to stroke the dog around the head to distract him from what is going on in the other direction.
- Be sure to sterilize the thermometer again when finished.

NOTE: Using a digital thermometer can be much easier and faster! Follow the direction included with the thermometer.

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS THAT ARE POISONOUS TO ANIMALS

Remove any rat or mouse poisonings and windshield wiper fluid from your house before fostering!!!!!!!!!!!!

(Those printed in all caps can be fatal)

Alcohol	CHOCOLATE	Lupine species
ALMONDS	CHOKE CHERRY	MARIJUANA OR HEMP
Amaryllis bulb	Chrysanthemum	MILKWEED
Anthurium	Clematis	MISTLETOE BERRIES
APRICOT	Crocus bulb	MORNING GLORY
ASPIRIN	Croton	Mountain laurel
AUTUMN CROCUS	Daffodil	Narcissus
Avocado	Delphinium, larkspur	OLEANDER
Azalea	Dumb cane	ONION
BEGONIA	Elderberry	PEACH
Bird of paradise	English Ivy	PENCIL CACTUS
Bittersweet	Fig	Philodendron
BLEEDING HEART	Four-o'clocks	Pointsetta
Boxwood	FOXGLOVE	Potato
Bracken Fern	GARLIC	Rhododendron
Buckeye	Hyacinth bulbs	Rhubarb leaves
Buttercup	HYDRANGEA	Rosary Pea
Caffeine	Holly berries	Schefflera
Caladium	Iris corms	Shamrock
CALLA LILLY	JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT	Spurge
Castor bean	JIMSON WEED	Tomatoes
Cherry	Kalanchoe	YEW
CHINESE SACRED OR HEAVENLY	LANTANA	
BAMBOO	Lilly	
	LILLY OF THE VALLEY	

