

FEEDING, TRAINING AND CARE OF YOUR LABRADOR PUPPY

Thank you for choosing a Jimjoy Labrador! We hope you enjoy many years of companionship - and entertainment!

We would ask you to read the following guidelines, which are designed to help you settle the puppy into its new environment and give it the foundations for a happy, healthy future. Please remember that, if you do have concerns at any stage throughout the dog's life, we're always here to advise.



THE FIRST NIGHT

Feed the puppy last thing before you go to bed as it is more likely to sleep on a full stomach. Leaving a radio on can help, but it's unnecessary to leave a light on. If you wish to leave a toy with the puppy, make sure it's an indestructible one, e.g. made from hard rubber, as they can easily choke from swallowing foreign objects.

FEEDING

Your puppy has been fed on Purina Pro Plan Puppy Medium Breed and we recommend that it remains on it. You may find that, when you take the puppy to the vet, they will try to recommend other food, as some companies promote their products heavily through veterinary practices. If we believed them to be better than Purina Pro Plan, we would use them! In any event, any change of diet should not be undertaken abruptly, as this could cause the puppy to have a stomach upset.

It should be noted that Purina Pro Plan is a complete food, so there is no need to give additional supplements.

The food should be fed dry in accordance with the following guide (a feed consisting of half of a half-pint mug when fed 3 times a day, increasing the quantity gradually as the puppy grows):

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| up to 6 months: | 3 feeds a day |
| 6 months – 1 year: | 2 feeds a day |
| 1 year onwards: | 1 feed a day |

More detailed advice will be given when you collect your puppy.

From the age of 12 weeks, RAW (not cooked, as they could splinter) butcher's bones should also be offered on a weekly basis. Pork shoulder blade or leg, beef rib or chicken wings are recommended, but avoid marrow bones as they are too hard for a puppy to chew and the marrow will cause a stomach upset as it's so rich. These are particularly useful when the puppy is teething, but will keep teeth and gums healthy throughout the dog's life and provide all the cleaning that's necessary.

When the puppy reaches approximately 12 months, if you feel it is carrying too much weight, change to an adult Purina Pro Plan food as the puppy varieties are calorie-dense. It should be noted, however, that the labrador is not intended to be a 'light' dog, but there should be a hint of a waistline. If in doubt, send us a photo or, if you live locally, arrange to bring the dog over, and we'll be happy to advise you.

The puppy should be given only WATER to drink – NOT MILK.

HOUSE TRAINING

Whilst this is an area on which there are many theories, we have found the most successful method is to take the puppy out when it wakes after a sleep, or has eaten/drank. Take it to an area of the garden you would like it to use for the purpose (a patch of long grass is useful as it encourages them by tickling their 'bits') and wait while it mooches about. When the deed has been done, praise the puppy by fussing it and using a repetitive phrase such as "busy, busy, busy". If you then use that phrase when you take the puppy to the spot again, it will quickly learn the purpose of its visit there.

We do not recommend puppy training pads, as we believe they encourage the puppy to soil in the house rather than outside.

INOCULATIONS

When you collect your puppy, they will have had their first full inoculation, which includes Lepto 4. The second inoculation, given by your own vet, has to be given **4 weeks to the day** from the first one, the date of which will be shown on the vaccination certificate given to you when you collect your puppy. Your vet will advise you on how soon after their second inoculation the puppy may be taken into public areas, and will also advise you on their programme of future inoculations.

WORMING

Your puppy will have been wormed regularly prior to leaving. When you collect them you will be given written details for your vet of their last worming and the drug used, and they will advise on their future programme.

CASTRATION/SPAYING

These procedures should not be carried out until the animal has reached puberty, i.e. when a dog cocks a leg, or when a bitch has had her first season (if you have any concerns when your bitch is in season, or you're unsure what to expect, please contact us for advice).

EXERCISE

We cannot emphasise enough how LITTLE exercise a Labrador puppy should have during the first 12 months of its life – as a rough guide, allow 5 minutes supervised exercise for every month of the puppy's age. This is especially important where there is already an older dog in the household, as, if permitted, they will seriously over-exercise a puppy. It must be explained to children, too, who can also unwittingly over-exercise a puppy. It is important for the future health and longevity of your dog that this advice is heeded – puppies' bones are soft and joints can easily be damaged when they're young. In addition, hip problems are not just hereditary – they can also be as a result of over-activity in their formative years – much as it would affect us if we were expected to run a marathon as a toddler!

TRAINING CRATES

These can be useful for giving the puppy some 'space', particularly where there's another dog and/or small children in the household, and for sleeping in at night. This will help with house training, as they don't like to soil where they sleep. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you don't leave a collar on the puppy when in the crate, as they can get caught on it, with tragic consequences.

TRAINING/DISCIPLINE

All animals like to know 'where they stand', so discipline should start from the word 'go'. In its first few days, the puppy needs to learn two words – its name and the word 'no'. As the puppy is going to grow into a large dog that could easily knock over a small child (or even a frail adult!), it should be discouraged from jumping up people. Start by saying 'no' accompanied by a light tap on the nose. If the puppy persists, say 'no' more firmly and give a slightly sharper tap. In each case, make a big fuss of the puppy when it obeys, and it will quickly learn what is and isn't acceptable.

It is natural behaviour for puppies to chew things, but again they must quickly be taught that you don't want your best shoes destroying! Correct the puppy immediately by saying "Name, No!" and by making a fuss of it when it obeys. Indeed, any correction must always be made when the puppy's caught 'in the act'. Walking in to find your favourite book in shreds may be annoying, but shouting at the puppy after the event is pointless as it won't understand why!

When you're about to leave the puppy alone for a short while, don't make an issue of it - just go out 'normally' as if you're nipping into the garden and, when you return, make no more fuss than you would if you'd been in another room and the puppy was pleased to see you. Leave two or three toys for the puppy, but no more than that, as they lose their novelty value if constantly available.

We strongly recommend taking the puppy to training classes (your vet will have a list of those local to you), particularly if you are a new owner. They're excellent for teaching the puppy to focus on you amidst the distraction of other dogs.

TRAVELLING

We're often asked the best way to travel the puppy home when collecting them. We recommend a stout, high-sided cardboard box that's big enough for them to turn around in, but not so big that they could slide about with the movement of the car and risk injury. It's best if you can be accompanied on the journey so that the passenger can sit alongside the puppy on the rear seat and steady the box from sudden movements of the car.

It is always prudent to travel a puppy (or adult dog) on an empty stomach, i.e. no food within 2 hours of starting the journey, even if this entails missing a feed. To begin with, take the puppy on short journeys that include something enjoyable, e.g. a walk in a fresh environment. Try to stick to a particular place the dog will occupy in the car, and it should soon get into a routine.

Whilst the puppy's first car journey could cause a little sickness, this is usually through worry about a strange environment and they quickly grow out of it. In rare cases where travel causes genuine distress, however, there are several preparations available from your vet.

It should be noted that it is now a **legal requirement** for dogs to be restrained from reaching the driver by:

- a crate/cage; or
- a harness attached to a rear seat; or
- a purpose-designed barrier preventing their climbing into the front.

If using a harness, the puppy needs to be walking confidently on a collar and lead before attaching them to a harness, which is likely to make them panic. Very gradual minute-on-minute training will be required until they've become used to it.

LEAD TRAINING

As stated in the 'Inoculations' section, the puppy should not be taken out into public areas until after the period advised by your vet, but lead training can start prior to that in the garden, or even in the house. Patience will be needed to begin with while the puppy familiarises itself with the sensation of having something around its neck and with being restrained, but they quickly accept it. When the puppy is able to go out, it should be taken on only short walks initially (see the 'Exercise' section) to explore the outside world, gradually building up as it grows.

We must mention that we don't recommend using a harness, as they can cause problems with physical development and also tend to encourage them to pull (think sled dogs!). We always advise the use of a rope slip lead for training.

It should be noted that it is now a **legal requirement** to have a dog tag on their collar. We consider the traditional round disc to be safer than the bone-shaped ones, which can get caught on, say, a crate/barrier when travelling, or other objects when off lead. As mentioned earlier, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you don't leave a collar on the puppy when left unsupervised in the crate at home, as they can get caught on it, with tragic consequences.

GROOMING

Unlike some long-coated breeds, the Labrador requires relatively little attention in terms of grooming, but it's a good idea regularly to handle the puppy all over and check its ears from an early age. Although their coats don't need a trim, they enjoy being brushed as much as the next dog! The Labrador needs its natural oils to maintain the 'waterproof' properties of its coat, so bathing unnecessarily is not recommended and should be restricted to occasions such as when they have swum in a smelly canal, etc.

AND FINALLY

We like to think that our puppies are going to a lifelong home, but we appreciate that it doesn't always work out that way. If you should find it necessary to part with the dog at any time in its life, please contact us in the first instance, as we have a waiting list for older puppies/adult dogs and are usually able to find them good homes. We hope that won't be necessary, though, and that you have many years of happiness with your new friend!

JIMJOY LABRADORS

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