

Once Puppy Arrives

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By Peter Wax

Once puppy arrives you should hold and play with him or her as often as possible all the while looking the pup over carefully. Your pup's eyes should be clear with no or very limited discharge. The nose should be cool and moist with maybe a little clear wet dribble in the nostril but not runny. The pups poop should be firm and there should be only a light color to the urine.

When not sleepy or sleeping, which is a lot of the time, pup should be alert and active and unafraid. If a bit timid remember your demeanor has a powerful effect on your new family member so be upbeat, calm and soft spoken until pup adjusts to the new digs.

If you just finished the drive home or pup came by airplane he or she could be suffering from motion sickness which can include disorientation, dry nose, drooling, vomiting, and a warm lethargic and unsteady puppy. If the situation does not improve after a nap or two or by the next day you should call your veterinarian and ask advice.

Introduce puppy to the food and water dish right away upon arrival and take pup outside to do its business. If you are lucky and puppy goes in the right spot reward the behavior with a gentle stroke and quiet encouragement. Puppies usually like a single gentle stroke and quietly spoken "good pup" as apposed to short fast strokes and loud encouragement as the reward gets lost in the resulting excitement.

When nighttime comes I suggest finding a room away from you and anyone else in the house that wants to sleep. An 8-week old puppy has no trouble keeping the whole house awake with mournful howling. If you are soft hearted, go ahead and let pup sleep in your room the first couple nights but I assure you the newness will soon wear off and you will be locking your new precious pup in the laundry room by the third night.

You might want to put a cotton towel in the kennel for pup to lie on and a chew proof water bottle filled with warm water under it. The pup is used to sleeping with litter mates and the warm bottle is a surrogate brother or sister. We have been told that a wind-up clock to mimic additional heart beats is helpful though we have never tried it.

After pup is consistently sleeping through the night I like to bring them into the bedroom and place them at the foot of my bed, the proper place for the rest of their lives. This sometimes brings on renewed howling and pup immediately goes back into the laundry room for a couple more nights. It rarely takes more then two or three such encounters before pup consents to sleep quietly at the foot of the bed.