

BRINGING HOME A BUNDLE OF JOY....YOUR NEW PUPPY

Since Julie Caruthers knew I was adding a new Golden puppy to my household, she thought it might be helpful for those surfing the site to have an article about those things most of us do to prepare for the arrival of a new puppy.

VET VISIT

Always first on my list is to set up an appointment for my vet to examine the puppy. I like to have the puppy seen within the first 48 hours just to make sure my vet agrees with the health assessment done by the breeder's vet. If you don't have a vet and the breeder is not from your area, ask friends and neighbors to recommend one. Just as I want the best care for my family, I want a vet who is both knowledgeable and compassionate for my pup. A vet willing to answer the questions I may have as well as one who will respond immediately when I have a sick dog is important to me.

With the new vaccination protocols and Dr. Dodd's recommendations, it is a good idea to ask the breeder if/when the pups will be vaccinated and what vaccines are used. You may want to discuss vaccines with your vet prior to the puppy's arrival so you don't need to make any last minute decisions on when to vaccinate.

FOOD

It is wise to ask your breeder what food is being fed to the litter and whether or not a starter supply of food will be sent home with the puppy. Since coming home presents many new and stressful experiences for your puppy, it is best to keep him on this food, at least for a few days. If you plan to change brands or the type of food, mix the "old" and new foods half and half for at least several days. If feeding puppy food, be sure you choose one appropriate for large breeds if your puppy is a golden. Many of us feed adult food or a mixture of half puppy and half adult food due to the rapid growth of our breed. Take the time to do a bit of research. Choose a food that provides the appropriate nutrients. Quality is important to ensure optimum health. Be sure you also ask the breeder how often your puppy is being fed and the amount given at each meal. While food amounts will need to increase as the puppy grows, it is important that you do not over feed your pup. Being overweight can produce undue stress on the pup's forming joints. You should be able to clearly feel the pup's ribs.

Question the breeder about any supplements that are being given to the pups. Many breeders give Vitamin C to their puppies to promote healthy bone growth. Unless you are familiar with dosage schedules, again ask the breeder. If you need assistance deciding whether or not to continue with supplements started by your breeder, consult your vet. (The use of Vitamin C in both puppies and adult dogs will be discussed more thoroughly in an upcoming article.)

FOOD AND WATER BOWLS

Again, *be prepared ahead of time*. Personal preference comes into play on the choice of bowls. Some feel that molded plastic has a negative impact on pigment of the nose. Plastic can also absorb odors and easily stain. Ceramic bowls are heavy and prevent tipping, but can be cumbersome or break easily when bumped or dropped. Stainless steel bowls are available in both weighted and lightweight styles. Both clean easily. Lightweight ones can cause a racket when sliding across a kitchen floor. They also move easily as the dog eats. However, for those of us with multiple dogs, the weighted styles take up more storage space.

I prefer to use smaller bowls for my pups. It just seems easier for them to eat. And, a smaller water bowl prevents "swimming" in the bowl and resulting messes. As I increase the amount of food given at a meal, I will then switch to an adult sized bowl.

COLLAR AND LEASH

~~Decide on the collar and lead you plan to use for your pup and take it with you when you pick up your puppy.~~
Some of you may pick up your pups from an airport or have a drive of more than an hour to your home. A collar and lead will provide safety if you need to exercise your puppy on the trip to his new home.