

Puppy Development + Important Dates

Stage 1: Neonatal Period (0-2 Weeks)

This is the first age of puppy development and it begins at birth. At this age, puppies only have the sense of taste and touch and rely totally on their mother. Between birth and week three, you want to ensure puppies are getting enough milk from their mother. You may need to supplement with puppy formula.

- Dewclaws Removed - Day 1-5 (depending on the vet sometimes only done between day 1-3) Book this early!
- Puppies are gaining at least 10% of their birth weight

Stage 2: Transitional Period (2-4 Weeks)

Sensory development continues with hearing and sense of smell. Puppy teeth start coming through and their eyes begin to open. This is also the age where your puppy's personality begins to develop. Puppies will interact with their litter mates, wag their tails, stand, walk a little and bark. Mom may naturally begin weaning puppies as their teeth come in. Start transitioning pups to dog food by softening puppy food in milk replacement or water. Encourage them to taste it from your finger.

- Weaning Puppies - 3 1/2 - 4 1/2 weeks pups may start weaning. Make gruel by mixing milk replacer in puppy food and place it in a flat saucer or plate. As the puppies lap, they will ingest the food. The amount of moisture should be decreased daily until they are eating dry food with little or no moisture added (usually by four to six weeks)
- Dewormer - Talk to your vet about when a good time is to start them on a dewormer. Usually this is started by week 3-4 and done every other week until the puppies are ready to go home.

Stage 3: Socialization Period (3-12 Weeks)

Weeks 3-5 puppies start to become aware of their surroundings and have the ability to develop a relationship with people. This is the period where puppies get familiar with the day-to-day noises of a regular household such as TVs, vacuum cleaners, telephones, etc.

- Dewormer - Talk to your vet about when a good time is to start them on a dewormer. Usually this is started by week 3-4 and done every other week until the puppies are ready to go home.

Weeks 7-9, they will have full use of all their senses and will be ready to go home to their new owners.

- First Round of Shots - Puppies should receive their first round of shots before going to their new families at about 7 1/2 weeks.

Weeks 7-12 puppies usually go home with their new families. This is right in the middle of their socialization period. Therefore, it is vital that you introduce your puppy to as many new dogs, people, object and surroundings as you can. BUT, make sure you do so in a controlled manner and never put your puppy in a dangerous situation where they can be injured, scared or contract disease.

