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Topics Discussed During the Adoption Process

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- Health waiver / surgery site
- Introduction to resident animals
- Confinement plan
- 24PetWatch Pet Insurance

Contact PAWS

425.787.2500
 Shelter Managers x803

PO Box 1037
 15305 44th Ave W
 Lynnwood, WA 98046
 paws.org

More Resources

A wealth of information is available at **paws.org**: Under the “Cats and Dogs” tab, choose “Resource Library.”

Section 1: **New Beginnings**

Thank you

Thank you for adopting your dog from PAWS. We hope you will be very happy with your new companion. In this adoption packet you will find a variety of helpful hints and materials, including important documents about your new companion and the adoption process. We encourage you to keep these documents in a safe place along with your other important papers.

When one of our dogs leaves the shelter to start his or her “new beginning” we feel great happiness for the dog and his or her new family. So we again thank you for giving your dog a loving home, and we hope you will encourage others to consider adopting a dog from PAWS or another shelter, so they too can experience the joy of finding a new best friend.

In a few weeks we'll ask you to visit [paws.org/follow-up.html](https://www.paws.org/follow-up.html) to take an adoption survey. We hope that you will take a few moments to complete it, and we encourage you to send along pictures and to tell us how your dog has settled in at home. We have a growing community on Facebook and we welcome your posts: [facebook.com/PAWSWashington](https://www.facebook.com/PAWSWashington).

PAWS is a resource for success

If you have immediate questions about your new dog, we encourage you to look through your adoption paperwork as many of the most common questions—such as what vaccines your dog has received—can be found in your dog's paperwork. If you have questions that aren't answered in this packet, please call the Shelter Managers at 425.787.2500 x803. PAWS appreciates the opportunity to keep in touch so we can continue to help you with the bond you've established with your new companion.

As an organization that has matched over 141,000 families with companion animals, we have extensive experience and information to help new guardians with their dogs. PAWS' online

library of dog behavior information sheets, as well as information on other topics including coexisting peacefully with wildlife, can be found at the PAWS website at www.paws.org. Most of the common issues such as barking, house soiling and proper confinement are addressed, along with a variety of other behavior and training topics. Our website also includes steps you should take if your dog ever gets lost.

We want your new relationship to be successful, so if problems arise, we hope you try the resources we offer as well as other professional resources in the community in order to make your relationship work. Please don't hesitate to contact us to share your concerns.

We invite you into the PAWS family

We hope the adoption process has made you feel like a member of the PAWS family, and encourage you to explore other ways to become involved. PAWS offers a variety of fun opportunities to participate in helping animals. You may want to join us by volunteering for a weekly shift, becoming a foster care provider or participating in one of our events such as PAWSwalk, the Wild Night Gala, or Catio Tour. You can learn more about these events on our website and more about programs for youth at [paws.org/kids.html](https://www.paws.org/kids.html).

Section 2: **Your Dog's Health and Safety**

Medical care for your new dog

PAWS is committed to the health and welfare of the animals in our shelter, and provides high quality care in an effort to place animals who are healthy. Dogs and cats, however are living beings who are forever changing and we can not guarantee their health or behavior. In a large-scale kennel environment, whether it is a boarding kennel, breeder, retail outlet or a shelter, a number of transmittable illnesses can be passed among animals within a common living area. Some animals may not exhibit symptoms

during their stay at the shelter and may only show signs of illness once they have been placed in a loving home. By adopting, you have committed to providing your new dog with any medical care he or she may require. Additionally, PAWS is prohibited by law from providing medical care to owned animals once they leave our care, so all medical expenses are the responsibility of the adopter.

We provide medical information to the adopter when it is available. However, PAWS provides a safe haven for many stray animals who arrive without a medical history. Please see your dog's paperwork for details on the diseases he has been tested for and the medical treatment he received while at PAWS. If your animal recently underwent spay or neuter surgery or some other procedure at PAWS, you need to follow the instructions found in your dog's medical records to ensure your dog is healing properly. Be sure to keep exercise to a minimum for 5 days and wait to give your new dog a bath or allow him or her to go swimming until at least 10 days after the surgery.

According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, the average annual cost for veterinary bills is between \$516-785 so we encourage you to prepare for the expenses your new companion may require. To help with unforeseen and annual expenses, you may want to consider enrolling in a pet health insurance plan. Some plans are specially designed for newly adopted animals.

Visiting the veterinarian

PAWS and VCA Animal Hospitals have teamed up to provide your pet with the following:

- A complimentary overall wellness exam (must be performed within 14 days after adoption)
- Complimentary 14-day follow-up care for the diseases listed on the Healthy Start certificate, at any of the participating VCA Animal Hospitals
- This offer from VCA can be worth \$250 in discounted care for your new pet. Vaccines,

emergency or specialty services are not included.

VCA will contact you to schedule an appointment or you can reach them via the Healthy Start certificate included in the adoption packet for details and a list of hospitals.

Or you may choose to use the complimentary Free Health Exam courtesy of the Certificate for Washington State Veterinary Medical Association that covers the cost of the first visit within seven (7) days of adoption, but not any additional charges that may apply for treatment. Either way, you should make an appointment for your new companion within five (5) days of adoption with a veterinarian.

When visiting the veterinarian for the first time with your new dog, take the medical records provided by PAWS with you. Check your adoption packet for additional health waivers or inserts that may have been provided as well. This will alert the doctor to any vaccines, parasite treatment, surgery or other procedures that were performed. PAWS gives dogs the basic DHPP vaccine combination, as well as bordetella vaccine and dewormer, but we do not test for heartworm or give rabies vaccines (unless specifically noted in the animal's paperwork). If you travel to other parts of the country, your veterinarian may recommend additional parasite prevention treatments or testing. Please speak to your veterinarian about an appropriate vaccination schedule for your new dog.

Other important ways to keep your new dog healthy are providing routine medical care, including flea and parasite prevention, good nutrition, proper grooming, exercise and socialization.

If your dog is not feeling well

When your companion animal is not feeling well, she may show signs such as loss of appetite, lethargy, loose stool, hiding, or vocalizing. These symptoms could indicate an illness, such as kennel cough, or may mean that your dog is

simply adjusting to his new surroundings. It is always best to consult with your veterinarian if your dog appears to be unwell.

What is Kennel Cough? Kennel cough is the common name for a highly contagious upper respiratory disease in dogs. It is caused by a combination of viruses and bacteria. Kennel cough is transmitted in ways similar to the common cold in humans—via sneezing, coughing, or direct contact with nasal secretions.

What are the signs? The condition affects the upper respiratory tract of dogs. Common symptoms include coughing (sometimes a honking or gagging cough), sneezing, and mild nasal discharge. Affected dogs are usually otherwise alert and active, with a healthy appetite and no fever. In rare cases, kennel cough can progress to pneumonia. Signs such as difficulty breathing could indicate a worsening illness.

How is it treated? Kennel cough is usually a self-limiting disease, meaning that most dogs will get better on their own without treatment. The best thing to do is to provide your dog a warm, stress-free home. In a home setting, most dogs recover within two weeks. Sometimes antibiotics and other medications are used for kennel cough and can be prescribed by your veterinarian.

Are other dogs, cats or humans at risk? Kennel cough could spread to other dogs in your home. Vaccinated, healthy dogs in a home might develop mild signs of kennel cough after exposure to a new dog, but often won't show any signs at all. While your new dog has kennel cough, do not take her to dog parks or other places where many dogs are present so she will not infect other dogs. Cats are susceptible to one bacterial component of kennel cough. If other dogs or cats in your household develop coughing or nasal discharge, consult your veterinarian. Remember that PAWS cannot pay for medical care for either your adopted animal OR other pets in your household. Very rarely, an immuno-compromised person (such as someone living with HIV/AIDS, or undergoing cancer chemotherapy) could be infected with one of the bacteria involved in kennel cough, Bordatella bronchiseptica. If someone in your family is

severely immuno-compromised, please discuss kennel cough and other health-related issues concerning a new pet with your physician.

Proper nutrition

Proper nutrition will keep your new friend healthy and will make your life easier by not having to attend to an upset digestive system. PAWS encourages you to seek guidance from your veterinarian and specialists at local pet supply stores for information on available brands of food, and to purchase the highest quality food you can afford. A general rule of thumb is: the higher the quality of food, the better your dog will digest it and the less waste will be produced. Since a variety of food is given to animals at PAWS, it is not uncommon for them to experience some changes as their digestive system gets used to the new diet provided in your home.

The importance of microchipping and identification

PAWS registers all 24 PetWatch microchips.

There are several common brands of microchips on the market that can be easily scanned by animal control, shelters or veterinary clinics so that lost cats and dogs can be reunited with their family. Your new cat has been microchipped and staff will explain how to register it. **We ask that you contact the company one week after the adoption to confirm that your personal contact information has been accurately entered into their database. Refer to the front of this packet to determine your cat's microchip brand.**

- 24PetWatch: 1.866.597.2424
- AKC: 1.800.252.7894
- AVID: 1.800.336.2843
- Banfield: 1.877.567.8738
- PetLink: 1.877.738.5465
- HomeAgain: 1.888.466.3242
- Found Animals Registry 1.855.738.2447

It is imperative to update the registration if you move, change phone numbers or other pertinent contact information. A microchip is only useful if the registration is kept up to date!

(A registration fee may be required to update information for some brands of microchips.)

While having a microchip is important, you should also provide other forms of identification for your dog that can easily be read without the use of a microchip scanner. This includes a license and identification tag. PAWS sells pet licenses for residents of Brier, Mountlake Terrace and Seattle, as well as residents of King County and the communities that use the King County license. Licenses for other areas can be purchased through your local government. If you did not purchase a license at the time of adoption you will need to do so within 30 days in order to comply with most local laws.

Emergency plan

Your new dog is now a part of your family, and needs to be included in your emergency plan. Please assemble a disaster kit with the essentials your dog will need. You'll find helpful information about disaster kits for dogs and cats on the PAWS website. Also, ask a friend or family member to be an alternate caregiver in case you are unable to provide immediate care to your dog in an emergency.

Section 3: Settling In

Provide supervision

Think "safety first" as you help your new dog get settled into your home. When transporting your new dog, properly secure your dog inside the main vehicle compartment using a travel crate, doggie seat belt or harness, if possible. Do not let her hang out of a window or travel loose in the back of a truck.

While you may need to pick up a few supplies, your first stop should be your home. Do not take your new dog directly to a pet supply store, an off-leash park or other highly stimulating environment until you both have time to bond. If you must go to the store, leave your dog with another person to monitor and reassure her while you are away.

Once you arrive home, help your dog settle in as smoothly as possible by providing close supervision. This is vitally important when the dog is in the presence of infants or children, being introduced to resident pets, and when going outside. Even after your dog becomes comfortable at home, it is never safe to leave a dog unattended with infants or young children. Please refer to PAWS' website for information on dog behavior and children.

Do not leave your new dog alone with other animals until a consistently safe relationship has been established between them. You may want to check PAWS' website for additional details about introducing your new dog to your resident animals and how to help them adjust to living together.

Now is the time to check your home and yard for possible escape routes, including damaged screens or screen doors. Also check for other common household hazards and poisons harmful to animals. The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center has an excellent list that can be found at www.aspc.org.

Crate training can also provide a safe option for confinement for short periods of time. Crate training can take days or weeks depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. Visit the PAWS website to review our resource sheets on crate-training for a step-by-step process on the proper way to introduce your new dog to his or her crate. If you properly train your dog to use the crate, he'll think of it as his safe place and will be happy to spend a limited amount of time there when necessary.

Continuing a pattern of success

Remember, it is up to you to prepare your new dog for success. This includes providing him with proper toys, play time, exercise and socialization. Since all animals need exercise (and most of us could use some extra exercise, too!) playing with your dog is the perfect way to keep both of you healthy and happy. Before you begin walking or playing with your dog, it is best to check his paws for any injuries or broken nails. Consult with your

veterinarian about when and how to properly trim your new dog's nails. Some dogs may need this done by a professional.

Once you know your dog is physically ready for exercise, you should confirm that her collar fits properly and the identification tag is attached. The collar your dog received at PAWS was for temporary use, and we encourage you to purchase a martingale-style or buckle collar depending on the size and strength of your dog. Some dogs do best being walked using a Gentle Leader® or Haltie® head halter style walking tool or a no-pull harness, rather than having the leash attached to their collar. Check with the staff at PAWS or a professional, such as a certified pet dog trainer, for recommendations. You can visit the PAWS' website for tips on how to select a trainer.

All dogs enjoy regular walks to explore new territory and spend time with their human family. The length of walks and the amount of off-leash play time will depend on your dog's age, breed type, general health and personality—some dogs need several hours of vigorous playtime every day. Most dogs enjoy the mental stimulation gained from a variety of toys. You may want to refer to the Dog Behavior and Training information sheets on the PAWS website.

It is best to walk dogs using a sturdy nylon leash that is no longer than six feet. Note that most communities have leash laws in place to protect you, your dog and your community. Please respect these laws for the safety and well-being of your new companion.

Exercising the body and mind

The primary reason that dogs are returned to shelters is that they have developed undesirable behaviors such as excessive barking, digging, or chewing. In almost all cases, this behavior is caused by the dog not being provided with enough exercise and mental stimulation.

Exercise is key to your new dog's health and happiness, as is keeping him socialized to people

and other companion animals. Dogs are social animals, and they need and enjoy the company of people. Your dog will enjoy being with you as much as possible, both inside and outside of the home, and may enjoy car rides as well. Taking him to training classes is another way to help keep him mentally stimulated, socialized and well-mannered.

While at PAWS or in her previous home, your dog may have had other dog buddies and may enjoy the company of canine friends. Before introducing your dog to other dogs, take some time to get to know her first. The better you know your own dog, the better you will be able to assess whether she becomes happy, over-excited, anxious, or fearful when first meeting new dogs. Always introduce dogs slowly, on-leash, in a neutral territory, and where there is enough open space so that you can take a "time out" from the introduction, if needed, and so that no one feels backed into a corner. It is best to avoid a hallway or door entrance, for example. Before entering the neutral greeting space, remove any items that may heighten your dog's excitement during the introduction, such as food, toys or treats.

For their health and safety, generally it is best to introduce only dogs who are already spayed or neutered, have been fully vaccinated, and are in good health. Often, dogs of the opposite gender do better together, but most dogs can interact comfortably with both genders. Keep in mind that a dog who is sick, injured, geriatric, or recovering from an illness or injury is less likely to feel comfortable and interested playing with other dogs.

The greater Seattle area is home to many off-leash parks which can be fun places to exercise your dog. Off-leash parks are highly stimulating for dogs. Some high energy dogs can become over-excited, and shy dogs can get overwhelmed. We recommend you wait at least four weeks before taking your new dog to an off-leash area, so you can get to know his personality and "play style." Before taking your dog to an environment such as an off-leash park or pet supply store that allows animals, set him up for success by working on leash manners and general training

commands. Your dog should also have mastered the recall or “come” command before you allow her off-leash in a large area. For certain dogs the PAWS staff may have recommended avoiding off-leash parks all together. For these dogs it is best to focus on developing a small group of dog friends who can safely play and interact on a regular basis.

As well as spending plenty of quality time with your dog throughout the week, one of the tried and tested ways of providing regular exercise is a 30-minute walk around your neighborhood or local park, once or twice a day. Your dog will enjoy the routine of visiting all her favorite places to sniff, and you will both benefit from the fresh air.

Training classes give you and your dog a chance to form a strong relationship, help you through the hurdles that occur once the transitional “honeymoon” period ends, and help you address new issues that may arise. Visit the PAWS website for details on how to select a class or trainer.

Be patient and “try, try again”

Some behavior problems experienced by adopters occur when the dog has become more comfortable in her new home. Of course you want your dog to feel at home, but some dogs start to “push their boundaries” once they feel established. Younger dogs, up to about two or three years of age, may also display some behavior changes or start to “act up”—the canine equivalent of teenage years! If you adopted a puppy, please refer to the information sheets found on the PAWS website for details about the developmental stages of puppies and puppy-proofing your home.

It is a good idea to periodically review information in the Dog Behavior section of the PAWS Resource Library to learn how to positively reinforce your dog’s good behavior, help change his less desirable behavior, and manage inappropriate behaviors. If you have let some rules slip you will need to patiently reinforce those rules. Also, check-in with other family

members to make sure that everyone in the family is asking the same thing of the dog. Dogs expect, understand and benefit from consistency and leadership.

If your dog is exhibiting a behavior that causes you great concern or creates a dangerous situation, take immediate steps to create a safe confinement area for the dog and contact your veterinarian or a certified pet dog trainer for assistance. Sudden changes in behavior may indicate a health problem, so it is important to rule this out before working with a trainer or behaviorist. You may also call PAWS’ shelter managers at 425.787.2500 x803 or x804.

Returning your dog to PAWS

If it is absolutely necessary to re-home your dog, please contact PAWS at 425.787.2500 x803 or x804. PAWS accepts owned animals, including those adopted from us, by appointment only. Animals with scheduled appointments should have a completed Dog Surrender form* and available medical records with them at the time of their surrender. Animals must be brought to the Lynnwood shelter. ***(Cat City is an adoption-only facility and will not accept surrendered animals.)***

*A Dog Surrender form can be submitted at paws.org/dog-surrender-form.html.