



Post-adoption & Settling Advice: Dogs



Rescue. Protect. Lead.



Congratulations on adopting your dog! We hope you both settle well but we know that this time can sometimes be a bit stressful for both you and your new companion. To help make this transition as smooth as possible, here is some advice to help you and your new dog:

- On adoption day, we recommend you take your dog straight home. Be mindful of trigger stacking. This is when lots of little things mount up without sufficient time to recover in between. Even though we know going home is exciting and a new place of safety, your new dog won't know that so allow them time to settle and adjust.
- Give your dog free access to their assigned safe space. If they want to go there, it's important to make sure you give them their space. We know your new arrival is exciting, however be mindful to not force interaction with yourself, with children and with other animals. If they do approach you, allow them to do so but otherwise give them the time and space to figure out their new surroundings.
- Whether you have an adult dog or a puppy, toileting accidents are normal until they are used to the new routine. To reduce the number of accidents, take them outside frequently and around times they will likely need to go outside e.g. after eating, drinking, playing or resting. When they go outside, reward them to reinforce good behaviour. However, if they do go inside, it's important not to use negative reinforcement and simply clean up with an animal-friendly cleaning product, or biological washing powder and water.

In the first week, the main priority is getting your dog settled into a new routine and comfortable with household members. Whilst they settle in, be mindful of the following questions:

- 1 Are they eating OK?
- 2 Are their toileting habits normal?
- 3 Are they sleeping enough?
- 4 What do they like and dislike?

- Be consistent with the house boundaries and family rules you agreed before adoption. This will help make the dog feel more secure and settle quicker into your home.
- Take extra care with things like answering the door as you don't know how they will respond. We recommend separating them from the front door before you answer it or putting them on a long line or lead initially.
- If you're expecting visitors, introduce them outside first so you can see whether your dog is comfortable in their presence.
- If you have another dog already, it is important to give your dogs breaks from each other. It is a lot to expect them to live together immediately without any issues. We suggest feeding them separately, giving them separate walks sometimes, and introducing toys to the both of them slowly as they begin to settle. Give them one-to-one interaction individually, when possible, as well.
- Don't push your dog too far too quickly. Build up walks slowly. In fact, on their first day, they don't necessarily need a walk at all as there is so much to take in in the new home and with new owners. Over the first few days, walk your dog near home for short, regular walks to allow them to become familiar to the local area.



- As your dog settles (eating well, normal toileting, sleeping well) you can expand what you are doing with them. Depending on the individual dog, you can begin introducing them to new areas slowly. Remember, it can take weeks and typically months for a dog to fully settle, so it is always better to take things too slowly than too quickly. As you've adopted through the SSPCA, you get 4 weeks free PetPlan insurance. However, we strongly advise you to maintain a pet insurance plan for both physical health and any future behaviour support your dog may need.
- We never advocate punishing your dog. If you need behavioural support for your dog, we advise looking at the Animal Behaviour Training Council Practitioner register. This is covered by most pet insurance so do make sure you check before you take out your policy.

Help - my rescue dog has diarrhoea!

Diarrhoea can be very common, especially in rescue dogs, and although it can be alarming, most cases are very short-lived, last no more than a few days, and often treatable at home, without the need to visit a vet.

THE 3 MOST COMMON REASONS FOR A DOG TO HAVE DIARRHOEA ARE:

- 1 Stress or anxiety: Changes of environment can be stressful for some rescue animals. Help your dog adjust and reduce this stress by following our settling advice.
- 2 A change in diet or treats: Try to continue the same type, amount and pattern of feeding that your dog has been used to in our care and avoid giving any treats unless they are used to them. Any change of diet should be done gradually over 5 days to give your animal's gut time to adapt, and make sure to not overdo portion sizes or give too many treats.
- 3 Eating food scraps or rubbish: Some dogs are more prone to scavenging than others. Out on walks, be careful your dog doesn't eat rubbish lying around, and at home, avoid feeding your dog table scraps and make sure to keep plates of food out of reach.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY RESCUE DOG DEVELOPS DIARRHOEA?

If your dog has diarrhoea, you can:

- Give their gut a rest, and fast them for between 12 and 24 hours. This means no food at all with just water to drink - and avoid milk as this will cause diarrhoea. Gradually reintroduce food in smaller portions than normal until you are sure the diarrhoea has stopped.
- Alternatively, you can also give a bland diet for a couple of days such as plain white rice with some well-cooked plain chicken (no bones); plain scrambled eggs; plain cottage cheese; plain boiled (peeled) potatoes; natural plainyoghurt - before reintroducing their normal diet.



**NEVER GIVE YOUR ANIMAL ANY HUMAN
DIARRHOEA REMEDIES,
AS THESE CAN BE POISONOUS.**



When should I contact my vet if my dog has diarrhoea?



IF YOUR ANIMAL DISPLAYS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS, YOU SHOULD CONTACT YOUR VET IMMEDIATELY FOR ADVICE:

- Blood in their faeces as this can be a sign of more serious infection
- Straining to pass small amounts of watery diarrhoea
- Vomiting as well as diarrhoea
- Abnormal drooling of saliva as this can indicate nausea
- Has no appetite and eaten no food for more than 8 hours
- Weakness/tiredness or sleeping more than usual
- Signs of dehydration, such as sunken eyes, very dry or tacky gums
- Obvious signs of abdominal pain, such as hunched appearance or crying if you touch their abdomen
- If they are very old or very young or, also suffering another illness that may compromise their ability to fight infection

Always contact your vet if you become concerned that your animal is unwell or if they do not respond to the basic treatment for diarrhoea as suggested above.

If you need any further advice on how to take care of your dog or want to find more information, please refer to your dog care guide or visit our website:

www.scottishspca.org/advice/dogs/