

Your Puppy's First Year

Welcome to the life of an Irish Terrier. This can be full of companionship, entertainment, humor, joy and interesting experiences. In order to have this very special relationship, it is important that your Irish Terrier is carefully nurtured in its first year in order to give it the best start in life.

Here are some important tips:

Medical Care:

Make sure to visit your veterinarian to have a complete check up. Inform your vet of the puppy's past medical history (vaccinations, worming, etc.) obtained from the breeder. Your breeder will provide you with all documents relating to medical care that took place while the puppy was in your breeder's care.

Preparing the Puppy's New Home:

During the first year of the puppy's life, it will keep you very busy with many activities, some of which could be destructive or dangerous to the puppy's health. Be sure to "puppy proof" the part of your home you plan to keep the puppy in so that this area will be safe and secure.

Beware of the following possible dangers to small puppies:

- Electrical Wires
- Open Fires
- Pools and Ponds
- Other Pets
- Open doors
- Balconies and raised decks
- Unsupervised Small Children
- Chemicals found in kitchens, bathrooms, laundry, garage

Fencing:

The Irish Terrier is a lively dog who needs a safe area in which to relieve itself and run off its energy. Backyard fencing should be 5 to 6 feet high and secure at the top and bottom. An Irish Terrier loves to jump and sometimes will try to dig under fences. Your Irish will want to play in the yard with the entire family. Therefore, you may want to train the puppy to use one section of the yard as its toilet. This should be part of your housebreaking procedure as soon as your puppy moves into your.

Housebreaking:

The Irish Terrier is not hard to housebreak if careful and reasonable care is given to the procedure.

You should expect the puppy to relieve itself at such times as:

- Immediately when awakened from sleep
- After fifteen or twenty minutes of play
- After all meals, and drinks of water and
- During any exciting event in the house such as arrival of company.
- The keyword is "Prevention." If the puppy can relieve itself outdoors periodically (more often when it is younger), it will not get into the habit of having "accidents" in the house.

Crate Training:

Using the proper size crate for your puppy is a necessity for providing your dog with a safe, secure place to rest, as well as an invaluable tool for the housebreaking process. Puppies do not want to soil their sleeping quarters, therefore, when using adult size crates for a small puppy, reduce the size of its sleeping space by providing a partition that can be removed when the puppy grows. Dogs like the den aspect of the crate and once they are grown, they will enjoy using the crate as their bed and will retire on their own if you leave the crate door open.

Socialization and Training:

Irish Terriers are more sociable than we are led to believe by descriptions of the breed. Irish are inherently people oriented and devoted to their families. If raised from birth with daily handling and exposure to household activities, many Irish will greet strangers as long lost friends. Similarly, if socialized with other dogs continuously, beginning at an early age, they are more likely to be friendly with other dogs. An exception to this statement would be that Irish of the same sex, if not altered at an early age, usually do not get along in the same household. Irish Terriers are intelligent quick learners who can easily master the basic household rules that make them charming household companions. The fundamentals of obedience (sit, down, stay) present little problem for the clever Irish. The command "Come" is by far the most challenging command to get the Irish Terrier to obey especially as it grows older. Irish Terriers have an overwhelming desire to see and experience every part of the world. Irish, like most terriers, are independent and strong willed. To train an Irish Terrier successfully, the trainer must learn to be firm without being harsh and to keep the lessons short and interesting. An Irish will be bored by hours of repetition and will not be a willing, happy student. Besides everyday training within your home, your puppy should be socialized and trained outside the home in the company of other dogs. Attendance of puppy kindergarten classes will help you teach your puppy how to behave in a manner that will make it a reliable and loving member of the family. Once your puppy is over 6 months old and has finished teething it is ready for more formal training in such activities as obedience and show handling. Contact your local kennel club to learn what facilities they provide that are convenient to your home.

Ear Training:

Between the ages of 4 to 8 months old the puppy will shed its baby teeth. At this time it may be necessary to correct its ear carriage by gluing or taping the ears to the head for a period of time. You will need guidance from your puppy's breeder or from an experienced Irish Terrier person. Persistence in this exercise will be rewarded with the look of intelligence and roguishness that is much desired in this breed.

Grooming:

Regular grooming, including brushing and combing the coat, brushing teeth and nail trimming help to maintain both the health and dashing appearance of your puppy. Tools you will need include a grooming table, a good quality natural bristle brush, a metal comb, scissors, nail clipper, palm brush, toothbrush and canine toothpaste. Early exposure to these activities will help prepare your Irish for the coat care that will be necessary as they grow older. By 5 months the coat will need to be "stripped." It is very important to pull the hair out rather than cut it. Cutting the coat will diminish the red color and will soften the texture of the coat. Your breeder should describe to you the different techniques involved in the stripping process.

Identification:

Before you take your puppy out into society, make sure he/she has an identification tag secured to his/her collar. You may also want to consider permanently identifying your puppy with a tattoo or microchip. Most veterinarians will microchip your dog and instruct you how to register the number. The AKC registry accepts all pets that are identified with a microchip, tattoo, or collar I.D. tag.

Please remember that love and affection are the two most important things a puppy needs to grow into a well adjusted adult.