

## SO YOU THINK YOU WANT A PUPPY.....

If you are thinking about bringing a puppy into your home, there are a number of things to consider.

- Exercise---This is KEY! Are you prepared to exercise your puppy a minimum of twice per day? Even if you are the type to give yourself just a minimum of time to get to work in the morning or are exhausted after a long day of taking care of children, your puppy will not understand. An unexercised puppy is a bored puppy and a bored puppy can become a destructive puppy.
- Housebreaking---a puppy just doesn't have the same bladder control as an adult dog. Young puppies can usually only "hold it" for a maximum of 4 hours. Will someone be there to let the puppy out often enough? Crate training is very effective and puppies soon learn to regard their crate as security. They are also less likely to soil where they sleep.
- Chewing---puppies teethe from the ages of 4 to 6 months and it is important to provide them with the proper outlet for this. Nylabones, Kongs, sterilized bones, and chew toys are good outlets for teething. Your puppy will not know until you show him exactly what is okay for them to chew on. If your puppy chews on something inappropriate, correcting him at the time is very effective. However, if you find that he has chewed on something after the fact, punishing him will do no good. Correction must be timely.
- Digging---leaving a dog unattended outside is never a good idea and a bored puppy **will** dig. Digging is instinctive but many do not develop the habit. Again correction must be timely---your puppy must know what exactly you are asking him not to do.
- Socialization---your puppy needs you to work with him to become a puppy that is a welcome addition. Handle your puppy frequently and encourage the rest of the family to do it as well. Begin grooming and brushing him right away so that he becomes accustomed to the experience. Practice taking his food away when he is eating. Play fetch and retrieve with him early---avoid tug of war games. Praise your puppy for good behavior as well as correcting him for improper behavior. Start training him early---an 8 to 12 week old puppy will learn quickly with repetition.
- Feeding--- puppies under 6 months require feeding 3 times per day. We recommend an elevated food stand(better for digestion) and a quality dog food. Free feeding(leaving dog food out all the time) is not recommended as your dog will be more difficult to housetrain.

No puppy should be allowed out of your yard until he has had ALL his vaccinations—the entire set of 3, otherwise he is still vulnerable to parvo and distemper. They get their first set of shots at 8 weeks, then again at 11 weeks and the final set is given at 14 weeks,. The 1 year rabies is given at 6 months.

If you are willing to commit to the process, you will likely have a wonderful companion for many, many years! If you are not willing to put in this kind of time and effort, please do consider an older dog!