

Introducing a New Puppy or Kitten to Your Home

The first few weeks after adopting a puppy or kitten set the tone for their lifetime health and behaviour. Early socialisation, correct nutrition, and preventive care form the foundation of a confident, well-adjusted companion. Proper guidance in this stage prevents common problems such as anxiety, poor immunity, and developmental issues. This guide will outline the crucial steps you need to take now to ensure a confident, happy, and well-adjusted adult pet.

Important Factors to Consider

1 VACCINATIONS & PREVENTIVE CARE



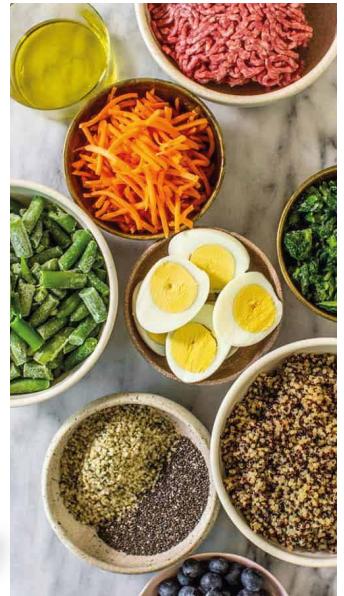
- Vaccinations typically begin from 6—8 weeks of age
- Core vaccines protect against fatal diseases such as distemper, parvovirus, hepatitis, rabies (dogs) and panleukopenia, calicivirus, herpesvirus and rabies (cats).
- Deworming should start at 2—3 weeks of age and continue every 2—4 weeks until 6 months
- Flea and tick prevention is essential in the Indian climate.
- Maintain a written record or Pet Passport for all preventives.



2 NUTRITION & GROWTH



- Feed a complete and balanced diet formulated for growth (AFFCO/FEDIAF-approved).
- Only feed 100% homemade diets IF formulated by a veterinary nutritionist. Imbalances are common — you do not want to experiment with nutrition during the growth phase, as this sets the tone for their lifetime!
- Introduce dietary variety early to build a resilient gut microbiome and reduce food aversions - offer 1 new ingredient as a food topper every 4-7 days.
- Offer 3–4 small meals daily until 6 months of age, then gradually transition to 2 meals.
- Adjust food quantities according to growth rate.
- Fresh water must be available at all times.



3 SOCIALISATION & DESENSITISATION



- The socialisation window (3–16 weeks) with people and other animals is critical for behavioural development.
- Gradually introduce new people, fully-vaccinated pets, touch, textures, sounds, and environments in a calm and positive way.
- Stay clear of dog parks and unvaccinated animals until the vaccine series is complete.
- Car rides are a great enrichment tool early on! It's also important to get your pups used to the car to avoid anxiety-induced nausea and crying.
- Encourage gentle handling by different family members to prevent fear of touch or grooming.
- Reward with treats and praise to reinforce confidence.





4 BEHAVIOUR & TRAINING



- Start basic training early using positive reinforcement methods—never punishment or raised, angry, loud tones.
- Teach name recognition, sit, come, and toilet training using consistent cues.
- Provide safe chew toys and enrichment activities to reduce destructive behaviour.
- Crate training and scheduled rest help prevent separation anxiety.
- For cats, offer multiple litter boxes (one per cat plus one extra) and introduce scratching posts early.
- Begin harness and leash introduction as early as 8–10 weeks of age for puppies and 10–12 weeks for kittens. Early exposure builds confidence and prevents fear responses later in life.



5 HEALTH AND ROUTINE CARE

- Schedule your first vet visit within a week of bringing your pet home.
- Discuss microchipping (if indicated) and sterilisation timing with your veterinarian.
- Desensitise your pets to grooming, ear cleaning, nail clipping, paw wiping, tooth brushing and whatever else you may want to do with them in the future as part of Fear-Free handling from the start.
- Keep an eye out for vomiting, diarrhoea, poor appetite, cough, or lethargy and seek prompt veterinary attention.

Myth vs. Fact

MYTH BUSTING SOME COMMON INACCURACIES



“Puppies should not go outside until all vaccines are done.”



“Homemade food is always healthier.”



“Small dogs don't need training.”



Safe, controlled social exposure under guidance is essential before 16 weeks to prevent fear and aggression.



Most self-designed homemade recipes lack balanced nutrients. Use veterinary-formulated diets.



Every dog benefits from structure and boundaries to prevent behavioural issues.



For more resources and downloadable guides,
**visit www.vanthevet.com & follow
[@vanthevet.clinic](https://www.instagram.com/vanthevet.clinic) on Instagram.**



WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR VET VISIT

- Physical examination and baseline weight recording.
- Discussion on diet, vaccination, and deworming schedule.
- Parasite control recommendations for your area.
- Behaviour and socialisation tips tailored to your pet's breed/temperament.
- Guidance on sterilisation timing and preventive screening as your pet matures.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

FOR PET PARENTS

- Begin vaccinations and deworming on schedule.
- Feed a balanced, age-appropriate diet.
- Encourage positive social interactions daily.
- Keep records of all treatments and growth milestones.
- Schedule routine vet checks every 6 months during the first year.