



## **Bringing home your Puppy**

Bringing home your Sheltie puppy is a very exciting time but for those of us who have had little or no experience with puppies it can be also be stressful in as much we worry about “doing the right thing.”

The following brief topics cover some of the things you may wonder about and hopefully supply some of the information that will guide you through your “Puppy Days”.

Your Breeder will have set you off to a good start with a diet sheet, outlining feeds per day, quantity of food and ages at which to start reducing meals and increasing food amounts. You will have puppy-worming details, due date of next worming and vaccination card. Heartworm treatment product details will also be given.

### **Toilet Training.**

It is wise to take your puppy into the garden, immediately after eating. Choose an area and go to this area each time. The puppy will soon associate, through familiar scents that this area is for toileting. It is also good for you as it limits the area you need to clean of droppings each day.

If having been asleep your puppy will more than likely need to relieve himself upon waking. Circling and sniffing are also signs to watch out for as this is also an indication that he needs to relieve himself.

If you are going out, it is a good idea to have an area to confine your puppy. His bed and some toys can accompany him and also some sheets of newspaper placed on the floor (away from his bed) can be put down. Most puppies are used to newspaper from their whelping box days so most will happily toilet on the newspaper for you.

### **Rest.**

Like human babies, puppies need to sleep and snooze quite often. Their energy is quite boundless and they soon wear themselves out. It is important that your family recognises this and that a quiet area that he can call his own, be provided. If he is settled and sleeping it is important to leave him in peace to rest and revive. Favourite toys in and around his bed will help him to recognise his own area. Though in saying this, quite often your puppy will flop anywhere (usually in a main thorough fare) and be oblivious to those having to manoeuvre around him!!

### **House Rules.**

Like children, puppies need to learn good manners and know what is expected of them in their behaviour. If you do not wish your puppy to pester you at the table when you are eating, never feed tit bits from your plate, it is a rule and one that everyone at the table must abide by. Bad habits are so easily learnt and the hardest to break.

I think it is wise to decide just what you do and do not wish your puppy to do, as a family member and let him know from day one what is acceptable and what is not. With time and patience they are quick to learn and eager to please so as long as the guidelines are clear and adhered to, you will find rich reward and much pride in your well-behaved puppy.

## Chewing.

From about 3 months of age to about 7 months your puppy will start teething. The baby teeth will start to loosen and the adult teeth start to move down. This can be gum irritant (though not painful). Your puppy will start a chewing phase to help the process and relieve the gums. Shoes, furniture, in short, anything will do! Bones and Chews in plentiful supply will be a big help during this period, not guaranteed to make safe all possessions I might add but should go a long way to minimise damage!!

## Some Do's and Don'ts.

It is always lovely to sit and share cuddles but never let your puppy jump down off the furniture as the impact of his landings, over time, can adversely affect his young bones and joints which can lead to problems as he becomes older. The same can be said for outside play if you have retaining walls in the garden, in a chase and play situation, much like children, puppies believe they are "bullet proof" and regardless of the height, a "heavy landing" invariably results.

If your home has a lot of stairs it is wise to carry your puppy up and down rather than have him climbing up and down at will. A lot of stair climbing, again, is not good for young developing bones.

It is a lot of fun lead training your puppy and can be a source of some hilarious situations such as tangles and him going one way, you the other! However it is important to keep the walks fairly short, as he will tire quickly and great distances are beyond him.

A lot of Vet's have Puppy Pre School classes, a great way to socialise your puppy and it will teach him to interact with a variety of other puppies and people, plus giving you the opportunity to meet other owners navigating the "new puppy" pathway. Dog Parks are also wonderful but it is wise to keep away from these places until after the second vaccination, this ensures that your puppy is immune to nastier things that may have been left behind by an unvaccinated user.

## Hidden Traps.

Whist bones are most important, it is equally important to make very sure COOKED bones are NEVER given to your puppy. They can splinter and become lodged in the throat or intestines and do dreadful damage.

Also beware of onions, nuts, human chocolate, garlic, and avocado. These are but a few of the human foods that can be toxic to dogs. It is probably wise to share few of the foods you eat, with your puppy. Of course meat trimmings from your plate will always be a choice treat and there is no reason not to share these!

Shelties have the greatest love of food, second only to their love of you! Most of us have a kitchen tidy placed in a convenient spot in the kitchen and we automatically dispose of food scraps here. It is prudent, if confining your puppy, not to do so in the kitchen. The aromas that tempt their keen sense of smell makes it an attractive goal and they will stop at nothing to get to the contents! Given the list above of dangerous foods, it is highly likely there will be something in there that could be most detrimental to your puppy's well being.

This may also be a good place to refer to an ingredient used in some Heartworm preventatives. It is called IVERMECTIN. This substance is not tolerated by Shelties and is usually lethal. If seeking advice on changing your Heartworm treatment for any reason, it is a must to ask the question "does this product contain Ivermectin"? Be it at a Pet Shop or at the Vet, always ask.

## Fleas and Ticks.

These little “Nightmares” can be the Bane of our lives. Fortunately, in recent years a range of spot on treatments has become available and invaluable weapons in our armoury!

The use of these treatments, plus daily checking of your puppy will go a long way to ensure he comes to no harm, the greatest enemy of course is the Paralysis Tick.

In checking your puppy it is important to be thorough in your examination...check ears, around the mouth, between toes, around the tail, genital area, plus the whole of the body, by fingering through his fur feeling for any lumps or bumps. The ticks can be as small as pinheads. Symptoms of Paralysis Tick can be a gagging, choking, cough, vomiting or wobbly legs. If you suspect your puppy has one of these ticks, a trip to the Vet without delay is a must.

If you have been out for a walk and been through longish grass it is wise to give a good comb through with a fine toothcomb, from top to tail, as soon as you come home. If your puppy has picked up a tick it is possible to comb it out as it makes its way through the fur looking for a place to feed.

Keep grass in the yard short and clear leaf litter from beneath trees, limit mulch where possible too. Warm humid spots such as these, are favoured breeding spots for these little nasties.

## It ain't half hot Mum!

We all feel the effects of a hot summer day and your puppy is no exception. Always make sure his water bowl is topped up, the water cool and fresh daily. If you keep a water bowl outside try and make sure it is in a spot that is always shady as direct sun can make the water not just tepid but hot. You can also add a block of ice to his water bowl, half fill a plastic cup with water and freeze. These blocks are also fun to lick and push around too, perhaps not the ideal inside toy but outside they are great! Just make sure the blocks are large as some of the tiny cube tray blocks may be picked up whole and become a choking hazard.

Another cool idea is to fill and freeze one of the larger milk containers or similar plastic bottle and wrap well in a towel. If feeling the heat more than usual your puppy will lie next to this and enjoy it immensely, it can even be put in his bed.

Often the subject of publicity is the act of leaving a dog in a car unattended at any time, for any length of time, with or without windows up or down. To mention it here may seem like harping but it cannot be stressed often enough or loudly enough. Heat can and does kill.

## De-Sexing.

Usually recommended from six months of age. It is a well-tolerated procedure and causes little or no distress. It is a popular belief that you should let a Bitch have a litter before de-sexing, in truth that is not the case. A discussion with your Vet should give you a professional opinion and indeed “why” it is beneficial to de-sex, even before the first season. The same advice on discussion with your Vet holds for a Dog.

There are many health benefits associated with de-sexing your puppy. It is often thought de-sexing can be a cause of weight gain but as with all things weight related, diet and exercise is the key to a healthy, fit Sheltie.

To quote an old saying...”If your dog is too fat, you aren't getting enough exercise”!