

# FOSTER MANUAL - A GUIDE FOR DOGS & PUPPIES



# ONTARIO SPCA

AND HUMANE SOCIETY • PROTECTING ANIMALS SINCE 1873



# Welcome to the Ontario SPCA Foster Care Program!



*You can change the life of a dog or puppy by becoming a foster volunteer and opening your home and heart to a foster friend.*

## TOP TIPS

Have fun!

Make time to play with your foster dog or puppy!

Take lots of photos and videos to promote your foster friend!

Tell all your friends and family! Share with us and please share on your social media!

Make it a family project!

Again, have fun!



## Is Fostering Right for You?

*There are many things to consider when deciding to foster an animal.*

### Foster caregivers must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Complete a foster care application and sign a foster care agreement
- Sign up as an “on-deck” foster, ready to pick up your dog or puppy within a 36-hour time frame
- Be able to set aside time (as often as every two weeks for puppies) to bring your foster animal in for follow-up vaccinations and spay/neuter surgery
- Take on the responsibility for routine care in your home during the foster period
- Ensure that animals can be fostered in your home
- Isolate foster animals from family pets within the home, as required
- Quarantine your foster animals for 14 days to prevent disease spread, as required
- Puppy-proof your home to reduce potential safety hazards
- Maintain a peaceful, loving environment for the foster animals and spend quality time socializing them
- Utilize the emergency contact number for after-hour emergencies
- Maintain communication with the Foster Program coordinator
- Commit to the entire foster period with the animal
- Try to spend a minimum of two hours per day with puppies to socialize them and monitor their health (time commitments will vary depending on your foster animals). For socialization and enrichment ideas visit [shelterhealthpro.com](http://shelterhealthpro.com)



### In addition:

- Existing animals in your home must be up-to-date on vaccines and in good health
- Every family member in the household will need to be prepared for the commitment and emotions involved with fostering



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## How the Foster Program Works

- A list of available foster homes is maintained by the animal centre Foster Program coordinator
- Once a dog or puppy is identified as a candidate for foster care, the animal centre staff will develop an Animal Care Plan and determine the length of time required for foster care
- Potential foster care volunteers are contacted and a placement will be confirmed
- A time is arranged for the foster volunteer to pick up the foster dog or puppy and supplies
- The animal centre staff will review with the foster volunteer the foster animal's Animal Care Plan, including any appointments for return visits to the animal centre
- The foster volunteer provides daily care and interaction, as well as monitoring of health and behaviour of the foster animal
- The animal centre staff remain available to provide any resources or support required to ensure a successful foster placement for both the dog or puppy and the foster volunteer
- The Foster Program coordinator will periodically check in to monitor the foster animal's progress
- The foster animal is returned to the animal centre for adoption
- The foster volunteer will be asked to provide information on their foster dog or puppy that can be shared with potential adopters

# What are the Risks Involved?

## Are there any risks to people?

The background of foster pets before entering the animal centre is not always known. You should be aware that bringing a foster dog or puppy into your home does come with some associated risks. At the animal centre, your foster pet will have had at least one set of core vaccines and will have begun parasite treatment, but they still could be carrying intestinal bacteria, parasites or other zoonotic agents.

Zoonoses are diseases of animals that can be transmitted to humans. Transmission may be direct (bites, secretions, excretions), or indirect (carried on clothing, equipment or through the air). The majority of diseases are not zoonotic; they are species-specific and affect only one or a few related species. Anyone can contract a zoonotic disease, however an immunosuppressive condition that limits a person's ability to fight off disease increases risk. Risk factors include age (very young or elderly,) illness, certain cancers (e.g. leukemia) and chemotherapy. Any concerns should be directed to your personal physician.

- ● ● Find more information on Zoonoses at  
**<http://shelterhealthpro.com/index.php/zoonoses-public-health>**

You can reduce the risks of spreading disease by using good hygiene practices. Hand washing after handling foster dogs and properly cleaning up.

- ● ● For more information on proper hand washing, visit  
**<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/how-to-handwash.pdf>**

## Is there any risk to my pets?

You can take steps to protect your pets. The Ontario SPCA requires that before bringing a foster animal into your home, you ensure that your own animals are up to date on vaccines and parasite treatment and are in good health. As with people, there are some animals that are at increased risk of infection. These include the very young, very old, pregnant and pets with compromised immune systems. Please discuss any concerns with your veterinarian. You will also keep the foster dog or puppy in a separate area from your pets for at least the first 14 days to further protect your pets.



## Preparing Your Home and Family to Foster

First you will complete your volunteer and foster training. Then you are ready to begin fostering a dog or puppy. A staff member from the animal centre will contact you when a foster animal is a potential match for your home. Before you receive that call, plan where foster pets will stay and discuss arrangements with your family. Please remember to let the Foster Program coordinator know if you have any changes to your contact information or your availability to foster.



### Choose a space for your foster dog or puppy

A relatively warm and quiet indoor space in the home is the ideal place for your foster pet. This should be a well ventilated, easy-to-clean area where a foster animal can be segregated from your pets. A basement room, spare bedroom, or laundry room that can accommodate a large portable crate or exercise pen generally works well, provided it can be shut off from the rest of the house. Remember that not all animals in the foster program have been house-trained, especially young puppies, so choose a space that is easy to clean and disinfect.



## **Pet-Proof the space from potential hazards (Courtesy of the ASPCA)**

- Remove small, ingestible objects from the environment; this may include small toys or parts of toys, elastic bands, paper clips, string, sewing pins and needles, ornaments, tinsel and more.
- Do not let your foster dogs or puppies outdoors alone under any circumstances. They should always be on leash, or supervised in a secure fenced yard. When on a walk, do not allow interaction with other dogs.
- While in the home, keep them separated from any resident animals in a confined space such as the crate you are provided with or in a spare room such as an extra bathroom.
- Keep toilet bowls securely closed, especially when small puppies are in the home
- Secure window screens in any open windows no matter how small the opening
- Ensure that side panels on window AC units are securely in place and cannot be moved or opened
- Secure loose electrical wires, cords for window blinds and other potential hazards
- Remove plants and flowers from the vicinity of your foster dog or puppy's space; many types of decorative vegetation are highly toxic to animals
- Do not offer any human food to your foster animal unless specifically advised for training purposes, such as using cheese cubes, or cut up hotdogs.
- Keep your home reasonably climate-controlled (if it's too hot for you, it's too hot for your foster pet)
- Ensure visitors do not leave doors or windows open, and are aware and conscientious about safety measures that are in place for your foster dog or puppy
- Discard old or uneaten animal food and keep fresh water available at all times
- Secure/remove household toxins such as cleaning agents, pesticides and solvents

## **What supplies do I need to get started?**

The Ontario SPCA will supply all of the items needed to properly care for your foster dog or puppy during its stay in your home, including food and medications. If you would like to supplement some of the supplies on your own please feel free to discuss with the Foster Program coordinator.



## Picking Up Your Foster Dog or Puppy

Once you have been matched with a foster animal and your home has been prepared for your foster dog or puppy's arrival, a date and time will be arranged for you to pick up your foster pet.

Upon arrival at the animal centre, a staff member will review the dog or puppy's Animal Care Plan with you, and will ensure that you have all the supplies you will need to get started. You are on your way with your foster friend!



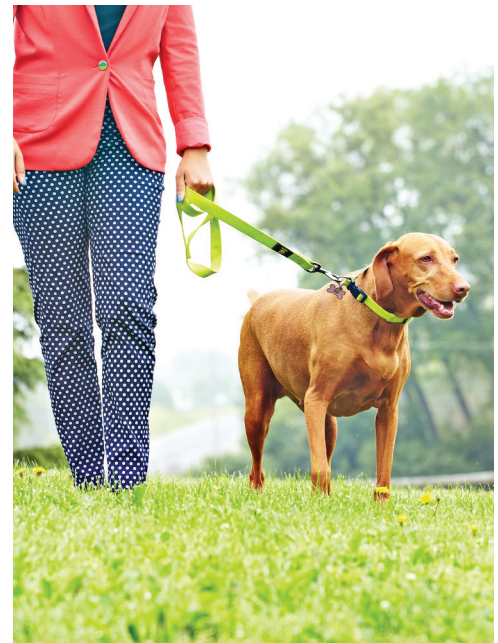
### On Route:

Dogs and puppies fostered for the Ontario SPCA should remain on a leash and can be placed in an appropriate sized crate or in the enclosed rear of a vehicle. At no time will a dog be transported in the open end of a vehicle or loose in a truck with a rear cap. The dog or puppy must not be left unattended in the vehicle at any time.

### You've Arrived Home:

Set up your foster dog or puppy's new living space before bringing them home. Have the food and water bowls, puppy pads or newspaper, toys and bed/crate/exercise pen in place, and allow them to explore the room.

Take your foster dog for a brief walk around your yard to help the dog relieve stress and acclimatize to his new area. Once inside, keep the dog on a leash and walk him through the areas of your home that he will have access to.



● ● ● ● ● ● ● **NOTE: Dogs fostered for the Ontario SPCA are to be kept on leash and/or supervised in a securely fenced yard at all times while outside.**

## Getting Acquainted with your New Dog or Puppy

Being in a new environment is stressful for most animals, and a normal reaction may be to hide.

**Safe Haven:** Allow your foster dog time to adjust to your home while being housed in a “safe haven” such as the crate provided or a separate room. Spending some quiet time sitting in the room with your dog, while offering high value treats such as cheese cubes, may help them adjust, and associate you and the space with good things like yummy treats!

**Scared Dogs:** Scared dogs may need some time to slowly adapt to you and their new environment. Let them approach you at their pace, and never force them to interact. Offering treats from a distance, or just allowing them to have some quiet time on their own may help with the transition. Scared dogs can dash out the front door in fear, and will be very difficult to recall. Allow the dog to investigate the home, always giving them the option to return to their safe place, such as their crate, or room.



**Take It Slow:** Let your foster dog get used to you slowly. Sit in the room and have treats with you. Read a newspaper or a book out loud while you’re sitting there so the dog gets to know your voice. Offer treats to your foster dog in moderation. Never stare directly at your dog or stand or loom over your dog as your dog may feel threatened. Lure with treats and gentle encouragement when going outside on leash. Scared dogs may be difficult to recall when out loose in the yard, will keep their distance, and may look for an escape route, it’s best to keep them on a leash.

**Fear Response:** If your dog runs when you enter the room, tries to hide, slinks around the room with his body low to the ground, ears back, tail tucked, or growls or cowers, recognize that these are signs of fear. The dog may escalate to biting if he feels cornered with no escape. If the dog is not responding to slow interaction as described above, contact the Foster Program coordinator immediately.

**It’s All Normal:** Some dogs may need less than a day to adjust; others may need days or weeks to become comfortable enough to explore the entire house without fear. This is normal dog behavior.



## Interaction with Children in the Home

Fostering can be a wonderful opportunity to teach children about respecting and caring for animals and a great socialization opportunity for the foster dog or puppy.

Everyone in your family will also have to be prepared for the emotional highs and lows that can come with receiving, taking care of, and returning a foster dog or puppy.

We encourage families to share in the responsibility of caring for their foster pets, but we do require that children are supervised at all times during this interaction. Please speak to your Foster Program coordinator for best practices when introducing your children to your foster pet.

## Introducing Foster Dogs and Puppies to Resident Pets

If you want to introduce your foster dog or puppy to your resident pets **after the 14-day minimum quarantine**, you must first contact the Foster Program coordinator. They will be able to provide you with guidelines for introductions, and how to do so safely for both people and dogs. Dogs or puppies should not be introduced to resident pets unless they are free of signs of disease.



# Start Showcasing Your Foster Dog or Puppy

## Web Presence

We can share your dog or puppy's story on our social media. Please share on your social media, too! If you write a story about the dog or puppy's personality you can make a big difference in the number of calls the dog gets, so be descriptive.

### Try to include things like:

- Whether the dog likes to be petted or get belly rubs
- Favorite toys and games
- Knows basic verbal cues such as sit, or shake a paw, or does some tricks
- Is active and playful or calm
- Is housed-trained
- Has experience with other animals and children, etc.

Of course, any cute things that he does or anything you want to point out about his personality or appearance is good as well. It can be as long as you want, but the typical description is a paragraph or two.

Try to focus on the positive, so we generate interest. Any bad habits can be discussed during the first conversation with the potential adopter.

Please e-mail the story to the Foster Program coordinator.

## Photos

Got a great photo or video of your foster dog or puppy? Please e-mail them in .jpg format for photos and .mpg format for videos to the Foster Program coordinator with your story.



**For photos and descriptions that entice adopters, check out these techniques from ASPCApro:**

Hotshots-Getting Great Photos of Your Animals: [www.aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-marketing/hotshots-getting-great-photos-your-animals](http://www.aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-marketing/hotshots-getting-great-photos-your-animals)

All By Your-Selfie: [www.aspcapro.org/blog/2014/06/12/tip-week-all-your-selfie](http://www.aspcapro.org/blog/2014/06/12/tip-week-all-your-selfie)



## Daily Care

### Daily Care for Dogs with Puppies

Most mothers, even first-timers, can take care of themselves and their offspring quite well. For the most part, you will leave mom and babies alone while observing for any signs of trouble.

Provide a whelping box for nursing mothers, so babies can't get out, but mom can when she needs some peace and quiet. Only half of the whelping box should have extra warmth added.

### Young Puppy Care

A puppy's survival depends on getting consistent nutrition and warmth. The mother's colostrum, which is the first milk produced, is vitally important to a newborn's cardiovascular system and defense against disease. Colostrum is rich in antibodies to help protect against various infections, but puppies can only absorb these antibodies and benefit from them for a short period after birth.

So-called "Fading Puppy Syndrome," when a newborn fades and dies despite adequate care, is usually due to either a genetic defect or lack of sufficient colostrum. For this reason, it is very important that newborns nurse as soon as possible after birth. If they do not find a nipple on their own, put their mouth close to one and hold them until they nurse.

Continued healthy nursing behavior is crucial for puppy survival. In order to tell if the puppies are nursing, put on exam gloves and gently pick up each puppy and feel for a round belly full of milk. A flat or concave belly indicates that the puppy may not be nursing. You should perform this check once or twice a day, always wearing your exam gloves.

Also, visually confirm that each puppy is actually latching onto mom. A gram scale works great to log each puppy's weight on your health monitoring sheet (found later in this guide). Healthy puppies should gain a little weight each day.

### Problem Signs

During the first two weeks, puppies should spend approximately 90% of the time eating and sleeping. If puppies are crying during or after eating, they are usually becoming ill or are not getting adequate milk.

A newborn puppy is very susceptible to infections and can die within 24 hours. If excessive crying occurs, the mother and entire litter should be examined by a veterinarian. Please **call us immediately**.



## Daily Care for Puppies Transitioning to Wet Food (3-5 weeks)

Transitioning puppies should be fed “gruel,” which is a pudding-like consistency mix of canned puppy food and warm water. They should be fed every 4-6 hours. Please notify your animal centre if you notice the puppies are not taking to the canned food. You are welcome to experiment with different consistencies but the gruel should be gradually thickened to get them ready for solid food. Adding softened kibble can help thicken it up. Leftover gruel should be discarded immediately if not eaten. Canned food that has not been made into gruel yet can be covered and refrigerated for up to 48 hours.

Once puppies have teeth, they could start to chew the nipple on a bottle, which can be very dangerous due to small pieces being ingested. This must be monitored closely.

Fresh water should be provided at all times for transitioning puppies.

To encourage a puppy to eat the gruel, place a small amount on your finger and place it on the puppy’s tongue or lips. The goal is that she will eat on her own from a plate or bowl. This transition period can take days to weeks. Puppy pads or newspaper should be provided at this stage, away from their eating and sleeping area, as they will eventually learn to urinate and defecate away from the areas they eat, sleep and play. You can also place puppies on the puppy pad or newspaper after meals.

## Daily Care for Puppies Eating on their Own (5-8+ weeks)

Puppies who are eating completely on their own will need to be fed wet food or softened kibble about four times throughout the day. They should always have water available.

Don’t forget to clean their puppy pen or room frequently, since active puppies can be messy.

Puppies at this age can also start going outside. If the weather permits, you can even feed them outside in a secure area, allow playtime, and time to urinate and defecate before bringing them back inside!

## Adult Dogs

Adult dogs are fed twice daily. You will be provided with the appropriate food and instructions. Adults may or may not be house-trained. Be sure to take them outside after eating, drinking, playing or sleeping.

Reward them for going outside with treats and praise. If an accident happens in the house, do not scold the dog. Simply ignore, clean up, and take the dog outside. Be sure to give a reward every time the dog goes outside, so that he will very quickly associate the outdoor bathroom with good things. Supervise the dog while in the house and watch for telltale signs such as circling or sniffing. House-training usually takes a week or two, although you may have some accidents as you work out a scheduled routine.

## Grooming and Bathing

**Adults:** Groom your foster dog regularly (daily if possible) with a soft bristle brush. Brushing is an important part of routine care for dogs. The animal centre staff can help with positive association to nail trimming during one of your scheduled visits to the animal centre.

If your foster dog requires bathing as part of the treatment plan, the animal centre staff will discuss this with you as part of the Animal Care Plan. Otherwise, if you feel your foster dog may need bathing, please call and discuss with the animal centre staff prior to bathing.

**Puppies:** Puppies should be kept clean and will often need bathing since they can be very messy. Try to spot clean by only rinsing the puppy with warm water where he is dirty, such as his bottom. Make sure to not get a lot of water on his head, especially the eyes, nose and ears. If there is food stuck on his face, use a warm, damp cloth. Puppies cannot be put back into their home until they are completely dry. You can use a blow dryer on the lowest setting after towel drying.

As with adults, grooming and brushing is an important part of routine care for your puppies and can also be an important part of their socialization.

### Medication

If your foster dog or puppy requires medication at the time of pick up, information about the medication, including type, dose and schedule will be recorded on the Animal Care Plan. Additionally, a medication log will be provided to you that includes specific dates and times to be initialed after each dose is given. Keeping detailed records of medication doses is important! It is also important that medication is given as directed. Never stop giving medication before it is finished. If you have any questions or concerns regarding medication for your foster dog, contact the Animal Centre right away.



## Behaviour



### Monitoring your Dog or Puppy's Health and Behaviour

It is important to monitor your foster dog or puppy's health daily. You will need to watch your foster dog or puppy closely for any changes to his/her health and activity levels.

You will receive a Daily Evaluation Sheet (Appendix B) to track the various physical and behavioural signs. Any changes should be recorded and discussed with the Foster Program coordinator.

### Behaviour to watch out for:

If you notice any of the following behaviours OR any behaviour you are uncomfortable or unsure of, contact the animal centre as soon as possible to discuss:

- Growling, lip curling, snarling, snapping or biting towards people or other animals
- Avoidance (fear ) of people, animal or objects
- Reactivity (lunging) at people or animals
- Possessiveness or guarding of food, toys or other resources
- Reluctance, avoidance or sensitivity to touch





## Puppy Growth Milestones

*\* Puppy Growth Milestones Courtesy of University of WI Shelter Medicine Program*

Age	Milestones
1 week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Newborns can nurse up to 45 minutes at a time</li><li>• The temperature of the nest box should be nice and warm: 85-90 degrees</li><li>• At one week of age, the puppies should be handled minimally</li><li>• Puppies will sleep 90% of the time and eat the other 10%</li></ul>
1-2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ear canals open between 5 and 8 days</li><li>• Eyes will open between 8 and 14 days</li><li>• Healthy puppies will be round and warm, with pink skin</li><li>• Healthy puppies seldom cry</li></ul>
2-3 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Puppies begin to crawl around day 18 and can stand by day 21</li><li>• They will begin to play with each other, biting ears, tails and learn to sit and touch objects with their paws</li><li>• Puppies begin their socialization phase - they will be strongly influenced by the behaviour of their mother for the next six weeks</li><li>• To further socialize puppies, increase the amount of handling, and get them accustomed to human contact, ensuring gentle handling</li><li>• It is important not to expose them to anything frightening</li></ul>
3-4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Puppies may start lapping from a bowl</li><li>• Adult eye color will begin to appear, but may not reach final shade for another 9 to 12 weeks</li><li>• Puppies begin to see well and their eyes begin to look and function like adult dogs' eyes</li><li>• Puppies will start cleaning themselves</li></ul>
4-5 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Puppies usually can drink and eat from a saucer by 4 weeks</li><li>• Can begin housebreaking at four weeks of age</li><li>• Ready for 1st vaccine</li></ul>
5-7 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to start eating dry food</li><li>• They will wash themselves, play games with each other, their toys, and you, and many will come when you call them</li><li>• Gradual introduction to novel items, places, people, and sounds</li><li>• Ready for 2nd vaccine</li><li>• Spay / neuter: puppies can be spayed and neutered from 6 weeks of age, with a minimum bodyweight of 2 lbs</li></ul>
7-8+ weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pair introductions to new things with rewards to promote a positive experience</li><li>• <b>Ready for Adoption!</b></li></ul>

## Daily Cleaning

Providing a clean, sanitary living space dedicated to just your foster dog or puppy is a highly important part of caring for your foster pet and lowering the risk of the transmission of zoonotic and infectious disease.

### **Five key practices to control disease transmission include:**

- Practicing good hand hygiene before and after handling animals or objects in the foster area
- Cleaning and disinfecting items in the foster area using the appropriate products
- Ensuring surfaces that are easy to clean and disinfect (vinyl or tile floor, not carpet, if possible)
- Stocking the area with animal care supplies that are dedicated to the area and easy to disinfect
- Keeping human traffic to a minimum

### **There are some quick and easy steps you will need to take daily to ensure your home and your foster pet remain healthy and happy:**

- Wash your hands before and after each interaction with your foster pet
- Wear disposable gloves while cleaning or picking up feces or soiled newspaper
- Wash food and water bowls daily
- Remove any organic materials (feces, urine, fur, food) from bedding, floor, furniture etc.
- Wipe up any organic material using spray bottle of Prevail® and paper towel
- Wash and thoroughly dry bedding, if soiled
- Pick up feces outside immediately
- Consider wearing a smock or other protective wear to avoid direct contact with your clothing that comes in contact with other animals

## Cleaning vs. Disinfecting

Cleaning removes dirt, grease or visible debris from surfaces, typically through the use of soap, detergent, or degreaser. Cleaning does not remove harmful organisms. Cleaning of the animal housing area, as described above, should be undertaken daily.

Disinfecting removes harmful organisms through a chemical agent. Disinfectants do not always remove dirt or grease. Disinfecting is usually done only after a surface is thoroughly cleaned.

A thorough cleaning, followed by disinfection is required of all supplies and the animal housing area between foster animals and/or any time an animal has been ill or any type of health concern has been identified.

Supplementary resource:  
Appendix B : Cleaning for Infection Control in the Foster Home

The complete Cleaning Cycle is a Process made up of 3 basic steps:

### #1 REMOVE GROSS ORGANIC MATERIAL



### #2 CLEAN WITH A DETERGENT



### #3 DISINFECT WITH A SPECIFIC DISINFECTANT



## During the quarantine period:

Surface/Object	Suggested Procedure	Special Step
High contact surfaces (counters, light switches and floors)	Daily cleaning using detergent and water solution or spray bottle of Prevail® and paper towel. Weekly disinfection using Prevail and allowing a five-minute wet contact time with disinfectant on cleaned surfaces.	Sweep all floors daily. Vacuum all rugs and furniture vigorously and frequently!
Visibly soiled objects/ surfaces	Clean with a detergent and water solution and spray with Prevail® to allow for a five-minute wet contact time.	
Food & water bowls	Daily cleaning and weekly disinfection with Prevail®.	Towel dry or air dry.
All regular surfaces (any surface your foster animal comes in contact with like walls, blinds, etc.)	Weekly cleaning and disinfection with Prevail®.	Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection to daily when infection is present.
Laundry (bedding, blankets and some toys)	Remove organic material before laundering. Use detergent and water temperature appropriate for fabrics. Bleach may be used for stain removal. Thoroughly machine dry on highest heat the fabric will tolerate.	Take caution in moving soiled items to washing machine to prevent environmental contamination. Throw away heavily soiled items and request replacements from animal centre.
Exercise pens or crate	Clean with a detergent and water solution and spray with Prevail® to allow for a five-minute wet contact time.	Towel dry or let air dry.

**After the quarantine period:** Continue with daily cleaning of food and water bowls, removal of soiled puppy pads, newspaper or bedding, daily wiping up any organic material and cleaning with spray bottle of Prevail® and paper towel.





## Once Your Foster Dog or Puppy has Been Returned

Surface/Object	Suggested Procedure	Special Step
All surfaces and objects	Thorough cleaning and disinfection (using Prevail® disinfectant) between each animal's stay in your home.	Thoroughly clean surfaces with a soap or detergent, and then apply Prevail® using a spray bottle to allow for a five-minute wet contact time. Allow to air dry or wipe dry after five minutes.
Floors and carpets	Sweep and wash all floors. Apply Prevail® using spray bottle to allow for a five-minute wet contact time. For carpets, vigorously vacuum and overspray with Prevail® solution.	Change vacuum bag if used.
Exercise pens or crate	Clean with a detergent and water solution and spray with Prevail® to allow for a five-minute wet contact time.	Towel dry or let air dry.
Laundry (bedding, blankets and some toys)	Remove organic material before laundering. Use detergent and water temperature appropriate for fabrics. Bleach may be used for stain removal. Thoroughly machine dry on highest heat the fabric will tolerate.	Take caution in moving soiled items to washing machine to prevent environmental contamination. Throw away heavily soiled items and request replacements from animal centre.
Laundry (bedding, blankets and some toys)	Clean with a detergent and water solution and spray with Prevail® to allow for a five-minute wet contact time.	Towel dry or let air dry.

## Socialization

You can help set your foster dog or puppy up for success through regular handling and play. The more comfortable they are interacting with people, the more social and attractive they will be to potential adopters. One or two play times daily, toy play, gentle handling and brushing are all wonderful ways to socialize while interacting with your foster pet. The animal centre can provide suggestions for socializing foster dogs and puppies.

The degree and nature of human contact each individual dog prefers depends on its socialization to people and involves genetics, early rearing conditions, life experiences and personal preference. Providing opportunities for interaction with people gives dogs and puppies the opportunity to become better socialized and increases their chances of being adopted.

Social interaction includes interactions between the dog and a person, the dog with another dog, or a dog with other dogs in a playgroup.

### Puppy Socialization

To ensure that puppies in your care are friendly and well-adjusted:

- Socialize the puppy with both people and other animals
- Introduce the puppy to a wide range of events, environments and situations

All animals, including dogs, have a window of opportunity at the start of their lives during which they learn to accept things around them so they are not afraid of them later in life.

In puppies, this window of opportunity closes at about 12-14 weeks of age. Most things that are encountered during this time will be tolerated, or even enjoyed.

After the window closes, unfamiliar people, objects and experiences are approached with caution, and the puppy may become fearful. In fact, the most common cause of fear and aggression is lack of socialization.

In a foster care home, it is crucial to take advantage of this window of opportunity to offer the puppy plenty of novel experiences and interactions with people. Keep these interactions short and frequent so as not to tire out the puppy. Include the following in your daily care, accompanied with food rewards, and praise:

#### Gentle Handling

- Touching head, ears, mouth, neck area, tail, paws and legs
- Grooming for one minute with a soft brush
- Placing and removing a collar and lead
- Restraining gently for a few seconds, releasing if puppy struggles
- Using food rewards and praise to positively reinforce the puppy's acceptance of the handling



## Socialization

### Meeting People:

- People of all ages
- Loud, confident people
- People wearing hats, helmets or glasses
- People in uniform
- Men with beards/facial hair
- People with strollers, walkers, wheelchairs, canes
- Use play with a toy such as a ball or squeaky toy to encourage a positive encounter
- Use food rewards and praise the puppy
- Stop the encounter if the puppy displays signs of anxiety or fear

### Meeting other Animals:

- Adult dogs that are tolerant to puppies
- Cats, rabbits, and other pets, if available
- Allow play if supervised and safe to do so

### Objects to play with under supervision such as:

- Cardboard box
- Child's toy bucket
- Treat ball
- Large stuffed toy
- Empty plastic bottle

### Objects to chew under supervision such as:

- Nylon bones
- Rawhide chews
- Strong toys (e.g. KONG®)
- Hard biscuits
- Ice cubes

### Surfaces to walk on:

- Clean grass
- Slippery surfaces such as linoleum or tiles
- Steps or staircase
- Variety of floor surfaces such as carpet or concrete
- Irregular surfaces such as gravel, stones or pebbles

### Sounds: (CD Available for "Life Sounds")

- Television or radio
- Loud voices such as yelling or a baby crying
- Thunder
- Vehicular sounds such as cars, motorcycles, sirens, horns
- Small engine sounds such as lawnmowers and chainsaws
- Household appliances such as vacuum cleaner or blender
- Play audio CD of life sounds listed above

### Experiences:

- Go for a car ride
- Visit the park
- Walk on a busy street
- Taste a variety of foods
- Spend time alone for short periods
- Spend time in a crate



## Engaging Your Foster Dog

Here are some ways to engage with dogs in your care:

- Gently talking to the dog, using familiar words such as their name, or common verbal cues such as “good dog”, “wanna treat” or “sit”
- Petting
- Grooming
- Play
- Leash walk

The dog must be allowed to approach and choose the level of physical contact it desires. Caretakers should be careful not to force an interaction on a dog.

The degree and nature of human contact a given dog prefers depends on its socialization to people and involves genetics, early rearing conditions, life experiences and personal preference. We want to ensure a positive experience in each type of interaction.

**Signs that indicate that the dog welcomes interaction include:**

- Eyes squinty or almond shaped
- Body loose and wiggly
- Play bow
- Tail neutral (parallel to spine) to low (below spine)
- Play mouthing or play biting
- Grooming behaviours such as nibbling or play flea-biting
- Long, sweeping tail wag
- Head butting against a person’s hand or body
- Staying in close physical proximity



## Quiet Socialization Time

Dogs require routines that also include quiet time, and socialization with people. Most dogs usually enjoy spending time with you, and welcome the opportunity to curl up near you:

- You can sit quietly, offer affection, and talk quietly. This can work especially well for shy or fearful dogs
- Bring a book and treats, start reading; let the dog choose to come to you to solicit petting, and offer treats
- While you read aloud, the dog will find the sound of your voice comforting and will learn social skills that will help the dog get adopted
- The key is your presence, quiet interaction with occasional petting, and a possible treat

## Interactive Playtime

Playing with people can provide social interaction and an opportunity for more physical activity. It can also contribute to the dog's socialization. Whether done within an enclosure, or in a play room, interactive play can entice most dogs. Use items such as fetch toys, squeaky toys, or laser pointers to allow the dog to engage in play behaviour (eg. chase, retrieve, chew).



Fetch can be an enticing game for any dog, and a great way for a foster caregiver to connect with the dog. Everyone seems to love a good game of fetch with a dog! An easy and fun way to teach a dog to play fetch is to use the two-toy fetch method, trading one toy for the other on each retrieve.

As with all forms of enrichment, also ensure that the dog has access to one or more toys during the course of the day.



Avoid toys with small or ingestible parts. Toys with strings, squeakers, or other materials that a dog might ingest should be removed after play.

## Self-Entertainment

Allow the dog to spend some time on his own, engaging in a variety of self entertaining toys or puzzle feeders.

### Safe chew toys include:

- Newspaper or paper towel/toilet paper tubes for ripping and shredding
- Boomer Balls®, which are large, tough, plastic balls that are difficult to destroy
- Herding dogs often enjoy rolling and chasing the balls in the animal centre's outdoor enclosure
- Holes can be drilled into the Boomer Ball®, transforming it into a kibble-dispensing device that keeps food-motivated dogs occupied
- Heavy-duty rubber toys such as a KONG®. For an added challenge, suspend a KONG® by a rope from the top of the dog's kennel
- Nylabones®
- Tug-a-Jug™
- Large, rolled-up rawhides
- Fresh, crunchy fruits and vegetables, such as apples, large carrots, and cucumbers
- Empty cereal boxes: these can act as kibble-dispensing devices and also provide the ripping and tearing that some dogs enjoy. Nest three to four boxes, pouring kibble inside the boxes, closing the tops and placing kibble in between each layer of boxes. Remember to remove the plastic pouch from the cereal box first!



## Understanding Canine Behaviour

The ability to read canine body language will help you understand what the dog is communicating, and then implement the proper intervention, such as enrichment, socialization, or modification.

Understanding what dogs are communicating through their body language is essential for dog caregivers:

- It enables them to more accurately “read” the dog and understand their emotions and motivations for their actions and behaviours
- It helps them respond more accurately to behaviour issues like aggression

Body language is made up of a dog’s body postures, facial expressions, and the position and carriage of certain body parts, like ears, tail and mouth position and movement. Knowing the basic postures and what they mean can help dog caregivers deal with problems more effectively and enjoy their dog’s company more fully because they can understand canine communication.



**Visit [ShelterHealthPro.com](https://ShelterHealthPro.com) for more information  
on canine body language and canine communication.**

### Training

Dogs and puppies love to learn. Knowing that their actions will earn them a reward gives them a sense of control over their environment. Training your foster dog or puppy provides mental and physical stimulation, facilitates positive associations with humans, and can build confidence in shy or fearful dogs.

### The Benefits of Positive Reinforcement:

The Ontario SPCA is committed to the promotion of animal welfare. We are committed to the humane application of the most current research in animal behavioural science. Positive reinforcement training concepts will:

- Celebrate and foster the human-animal bond
- Help you work with animals in your care, while maintaining their trust
- Increasing their sociability and social interaction skills
- Improve the animals’ adoptability

## Positive Reinforcement (Reward-Based) Training:

Simply add a meaningful reward (either praise or food) to encourage the desired behavior. By applying or adding something pleasant, you increase the likelihood that a desired behavior will occur again. There are many different techniques, including lure/reward and clicker/marker techniques. For example if your dog lies down at your feet, you say “good dog, good down” and your dog’s tail begins thumping. He has been positively reinforced, with praise, for lying at your feet.

Animals will act in ways that they’ve learned are successful in gaining them good experiences and helping them avoid bad experiences. Behaviour that is rewarded is going to be repeated.

Well mannered and socialized animals present better to adopters, show they have special attributes, and can transfer these skills and attributes to new learning at home.



### Remember:

The best practices are:

- Reinforce what you want
- Ignore what you don’t want

Your goal is to engage in activities with the animals in your care that celebrate and foster the human-animal bond.





## Wellness Appointments at the Animal Centre

Your foster dog or puppy will need to visit the animal centre at certain points during their stay with you for routine medical care, weigh-ins and vaccinations.

They may also need to visit the animal centre in if they show any signs of illness. You will find a list of scheduled appointments on the Animal Care Plan provided at the time of pick up. Generally, these appointments will take anywhere from 15-30 minutes. You will be required to transport your foster pet to and from these appointments.

If you are unable to make a scheduled appointment, please contact the animal centre as soon as possible in order to re-schedule.



## Veterinary care

All veterinary care provided to your foster pet must be approved by the animal centre manager. You will be provided with contact information.

**Please do not take your foster pet to see a veterinarian without approval from the animal centre.** In most cases the animal centre staff will transport the animal to the veterinary hospital. In case of an emergency, in an effort to save time, animal centre staff may have to meet you at the veterinary hospital, or have you attend the appointment while they communicate with the hospital remotely.

**If you notice any changes** in your foster pet's health or behaviour or have any concerns regarding the care of your foster pet during regular business hours, please notify the animal centre as soon as possible.

# Emergencies

**When to call the Emergency Line:** Every foster volunteer is provided with a phone list and a phone number to call in the event of an emergency. If your foster pet is in distress and needs medical attention outside of animal centre business hours, please do not hesitate to call the emergency number provided. The following chart will help you to determine whether or not you should call the emergency contact number.

## Examples of Emergency Situations (Call the Emergency Line)

- Very high or low body temperature
- Very pale, blue or grey gums
- Trauma – eg. hit by car, dropped, consistent limping, stepped on, unconscious
- Open mouth breathing, erratic, gasping
- Sneezing or coughing blood
- Seizures or neurologic symptoms
- Severe bleeding (includes bleeding in urine or stool)
- Not eating or drinking
- Continuous vomiting and dehydration
- Liquid diarrhea
- Lethargic
- Uncharacteristic/abnormal behaviour
- Straining to urinate/not urinating more than 24 hours
- Failure to defecate more than 2 days
- Unable to stand or walk

## Examples of Non- Emergencies (Call the Animal Centre in the Morning)

- If your foster pet has vomited once or has diarrhea once but is still active, eating and drinking
- Decrease in appetite
- Coughing or sneezing without blood or airway blockage
- Clear, yellow, or green discharge from the eyes or nose
- Weakness
- Visible parasites

## Bites or Scratches

If your foster dog or puppy bites or scratches any person, it is recommended that the person bitten or scratched receives First Aid and seeks medical attention. All bites and scratches involving your foster pet are to be reported to the animal centre immediately with all available details regarding the bite or scratch. The animal centre is required to report all incidents to the local Health Unit and to the Ontario SPCA Human Resources department. The Health Unit will advise the dog be placed under a mandatory quarantine period of 10 days to be monitored for potential zoonotic disease. The quarantine may take place in the foster home or at the animal centre. This will be determined through discussion with the animal centre manager.



## Returning Your Foster Dog or Puppy

### Scheduled returns:

Once your foster dog is ready to return to the animal centre, staff will work with you to schedule an appointment. Appointments are scheduled during regular animal centre operating hours. The staff will do their best to accommodate your schedule. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please contact the centre in advance to reschedule. It is very important that the centre staff are prepared for foster returns so they can provide appropriate, comfortable housing for all the animals in their care. When you return your foster animal, you will have the opportunity to share your foster parent experience with the coordinator.

### Unexpected returns:

We understand that emergencies or unforeseen changes happen and that there are times when foster animals will need to return to the animal centre unexpectedly. If you are in the midst of fostering an animal and for any reason are unable to continue care for that animal, please contact the animal centre as soon as possible and arrangements will be made to return the animal to the animal centre. In the case of an emergency, please call the emergency number provided.

We also request that you do not leave your foster dog with a third party. Any alternate care arrangements will be made by the animal care centre staff.

## Adopting a Foster Dog or Puppy

The purpose of the foster care is to provide temporary housing for animals in loving homes until they can be returned to the animal centre and placed for adoption.

There are times when a foster volunteer develops a special bond with a foster animal and considers adoption. If this happens to you, you will be able to adopt your foster dog or puppy. You will need to contact the animal centre staff to discuss your adoption process. If a friend or family member expresses interest in adopting your foster dog, please direct them to contact the animal centre. The centre staff will discuss our adoption procedures with them directly.



## Preparing for Your Next Foster Dog

We hope you enjoyed your experience as a foster parent providing special care for an Ontario SPCA foster dog or puppy!

Please return any supplies provided by the animal centre. A thorough cleaning, followed by disinfection, is required of all supplies and the animal housing area between foster animals. See the Daily Cleaning Section: Once Your Foster Animal Has Left.

Let the Foster Program coordinator know that you are ready and waiting for your next foster pet!







## Appendix A: Daily Evaluation Sheet

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID # \_\_\_\_\_

DATE															
INITIALS															
APPETITE															
Special diet:															
Good															
Average															
Nibbling															
Not eating															
STOOLS															
Normal															
Excessive															
Strong odour															
Bloody															
Straining															
None															
SKIN - red															
Itching / thicken (I/T)															
Hair missing															
VOMITING															
Food															
Bile															
Blood															
COUGHING															
SNEEZING															
Clear															
Yellow															
Green															
Blood															
EYES															
Clear discharge															
Pus / mucus															
Red / irritated															
Swollen															

## Appendix A: Daily Evaluation Sheet Cont'd

Spay / Neuter Date : \_\_\_\_\_

DATE															
INITIALS															
OVERALL BEHAVIOUR															
Friendly															
Outgoing															
Scared / shy															
Vocal															
High energy															
Calm															
Listless / depressed															
Aggressive															
Aggressive towards dogs (through kennel)															
CLEANLINESS OF KENNEL															
Completely clean															
Some mess, but not stepped on															
Somewhat messy															
Smeared															
BEDDING TOYS															
Bedding is used, clean/neat															
Bedding is ripped to pieces															
Bedding has urine / feces on it															
Bedding pushed away / ignored															
Enjoys playing with toys															
KENNEL STRESS SIGNALS															
Spins in cage															
Smears feces all over kennel															
Appears depressed															
Bites at cage door															
Barks excessively															
Bounds off kennel walls															
Never settles down															
KENNEL STRESS SIGNALS															
Rarely barks															
Constantly barks															
Excitement barks															
Attention barks															
Alarm barks															
Viscously barks															

## Appendix B: Cleaning for Infection Control in the Foster Home

### During the quarantine period:

Surface/Object	Suggested Procedure	Special Step
High-contact surfaces (counters, light switches and floors)	Daily cleaning using detergent and water solution or spray bottle of Prevail® and paper towel. Weekly disinfection using Prevail and allowing a five-minute wet contact time with disinfectant on cleaned surfaces.	Sweep all floors daily. Vacuum all rugs and furniture vigorously and frequently!
Visibly soiled objects/ surfaces	Clean with a detergent and water solution and spray with Prevail® to allow for a five-minute wet contact time.	
Food & water bowls	Daily cleaning and weekly disinfection with Prevail®.	Do not wash food bowls in water that has been used already to clean litter boxes.
All regular surfaces (any surface your foster animal comes in contact with like walls, blinds, etc.)	Weekly cleaning and disinfection with Prevail®.	Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection to daily when infection is present.
Laundry (bedding, blankets and some toys)	Remove organic material before laundering. Use detergent and water temperature appropriate for fabrics. Bleach may be used for stain removal. Thoroughly machine dry on highest heat the fabric will tolerate.	Take caution in moving soiled items to washing machine to prevent environmental contamination. Throw away heavily soiled items and request replacements from animal centre.

**After the quarantine period:** continue with daily cleaning of food and water bowls, scooping out litter boxes, daily wiping up of any organic material and cleaning with spray bottle of Prevail® and paper towel.

## Once Your Foster Dog or Puppy has Been Returned

Surface/Object	Suggested Procedure	Special Step
All surfaces and objects	Thorough cleaning and disinfection (using Prevail® disinfectant) between each animal's stay in your home.	Thoroughly clean surfaces with a soap or detergent, and then apply Prevail® using a spray bottle to allow for a five-minute wet contact time. Allow to air dry or wipe dry after five minutes.
Floors and carpets	Sweep and wash all floors. Apply Prevail® using spray bottle to allow for a five-minute wet contact time. For carpets, vigorously vacuum and overspray with Prevail® solution.	Change vacuum bag if used.
Exercise pens or crate	Clean with a detergent and water solution and spray with Prevail® to allow for a five-minute wet contact time.	Towel dry or let air dry.
Laundry (bedding, blankets and some toys)	Remove organic material before laundering. Use detergent and water temperature appropriate for fabrics. Bleach may be used for stain removal. Thoroughly machine dry on highest heat the fabric will tolerate.	Take caution in moving soiled items to washing machine to prevent environmental contamination. Throw away heavily soiled items and request replacements from animal centre.
Laundry (bedding, blankets and some toys)	Clean with a detergent and water solution and spray with Prevail® to allow for a five-minute wet contact time.	Towel dry or let air dry.





## Appendix C: Health Information: diseases and conditions

### Dehydration

Watch carefully to see if your foster puppy is nursing regularly or drinking water, and keep track of urination schedule. You can check for dehydration by lifting the skin up just a little lower than the back of the neck. It should be taut and snap back down when released. If it stands up or takes some time to go back down, the puppy may be dehydrated. Please contact us right away if you think your puppy is dehydrated.

### Other Common Issues:

**Let your coordinator know if you notice any of these:**

- Fever (greater than 39.5°C)
- Loose stool or has had diarrhea once but is still active, eating and drinking
- Continual vomiting or occasional vomiting that lasts more than a day or two
- Extreme lethargy for more than one day
- Coughing, with or without mucous, green or yellow nasal or eye discharge, may be a sign of a respiratory infection such as kennel cough
- Any foul-smelling substance in the ears, head shaking or scratching
- Fleas or flea dirt (black pepper-like substance in the fur)



# ONTARIO SPCA

AND HUMANE SOCIETY • PROTECTING ANIMALS SINCE 1873

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The Ontario SPCA and Humane Society is a registered charity, established in 1873. The Society and its network of animal welfare communities, facilitate and provide for province-wide leadership on matters relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals and the promotion of animal well-being. Offering a variety of mission-based programs including community-based sheltering, animal wellness services, provincial animal transfers, shelter health & wellness, high-volume spay/neuter services, animal rescue, animal advocacy, Indigenous partnership programs and humane education, the Ontario SPCA is Ontario's animal welfare charity.

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