



Living with
your dog

RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP



Summary

This guide has been written solely for general information purposes only and it is not intended for use as a veterinary medical manual in place of veterinary consultations and treatments.

**It is recommended that dogs receive regular veterinary health checks.
If you have any questions or need additional information
you should consult a veterinarian directly.**

Home environment	P.7
Socialisation	P. 8
Multi-pet households	P. 9
Health and care.....	P. 10
Nutrition	P. 16
Your dog's well-being	P. 18



Our Collective Responsibility TO ANIMALS

At Royal Canin, we believe that pets make our lives better and that our responsibility extends far beyond the quality of our products and services, to promoting the overall health and well-being of pets, through responsible pet ownership as well as promoting the positive experience of having a pet. We believe that the health and well-being of animals is the responsibility of every person who comes in contact with them.

This is why we aim to continuously share **our knowledge of dogs globally**, in order for us all to better understand and care for them. As such, we have developed this guide that will help pet owners like you, forge a relationship with your dog that benefits both you and your pet. In this guide, you will find practical information and advice to help you enrich your dog's life while also enriching your experience as a pet owner.





HOME ENVIRONMENT

Meeting the environmental needs of dogs helps to ensure their optimal **well-being and behaviour**, good health and overall quality of life. These needs encompass not only their physical surroundings, but also their social interactions with people and other animals in the home. A familiar and predictable home in which the pet can exercise some control over his physical environment and social interactions, helps to **reduce his stress levels** and enables him to cope with any challenges.

Giving your dog a dedicated area will help him feel safe and secure, ready to sleep. Choose **a sleeping area** for your dog that is warm, calm and free of

draughts. Ideally, your dog's bed should not be located in the bedroom, but in a calm spot, where he feels safe, away from windows and doors, so that he doesn't get the impression that he is there to control the comings and goings of the household.

Once decided upon, do not change this spot because dogs require stability and routine.

As dogs use their sense of smell to get used to new surroundings, you may want to consider **eliminating cleaning products** with a strong smell from your home. These can interfere with your pet's sense of smell and may therefore **be a source of stress**.

SOCIALISATION

Strengthening the bond between you and your new dog can be extremely rewarding, but it's important to take it step by step. Ideally, the **socialisation process** should begin before 3 months of age for a puppy.

Try to expose your pet to as many different sights, sounds, experiences and people as possible, getting him used to the world around him. This will help him to be less fearful as he grows up. Start slowly, **interacting with your new dog** regularly but for short periods. Look out for signs that your pet is ready to interact: the tail and body will be relaxed, while their mouth may be partly open. **To gain your dog's trust**, you can initially use treats such as kibbles. This may help **to overcome**

their anxiety in the early stages. Make sure treats become less regular over time as they can contribute to obesity. If you have children, watch them closely and help them to understand that your new dog is not a toy; it's a living thing that should never be approached from behind and should only be cuddled under your supervision.

Once your dog is more confident, let new people stroke and cuddle him under your supervision. Aim to expose your animal to people of all ages, a wide range of sounds (telephones, TVs, cars, etc.) and different places. It's also a good idea to introduce your pet to other dogs and cats while he is still young, once their initial vaccination course has been completed.

SAFETY FIRST: ELIMINATING DANGER

Dogs are inquisitive by nature and will want to explore all aspects of their new surroundings – with potentially dangerous consequences. Make sure you've prepared your home so that your pet can poke around without harming themselves or others. This means **hiding away** any **potentially toxic substances**, medication, vitamins, poisonous plants, electric wires and certain foods like chocolate, which can make dogs ill. You should also cover sockets and bins that are in their direct environment.

In the first few days, keep **windows fastened**, doors shut and balconies inaccessible. If you have a **garden**, check fences and gates to ensure they are sturdy and high enough to stop a young animal from escaping.

MULTI-PET HOUSEHOLDS

So long as their environmental needs are met, most cats and dogs can **live happily together** in the same household. When **introducing a new pet** into the home of an existing one, it is often easier for an adult animal to accept a kitten or puppy, than it is for them to accept another unrelated adult.

To help smooth these introductions, try the following steps:

Introduce the animals in a **neutral setting**, such as an outdoor space neither pet knows or a room in your house that the resident pet rarely uses.

> Make sure cats have access to a **safe hiding place** if they feel threatened.

> Provide **separate** sleeping places, feeding areas and litter trays for each animal so they can feel safe. Meals, in particular, can lead to conflict if they are shared.

> Take a toy or blanket used by your new pet and wipe it across the bottom of the walls in your home so your resident pet can get used to **the new scent**.

> Use **stair gates** to allow two dogs or a dog and a cat to have separate areas.

> Carry out introductions gradually to allow familiarity to develop slowly and under supervision the first few times.



HEALTH AND CARE

Preventive healthcare for dogs is an essential part of pet health and can help to **reduce a dog's risk of developing a wide range of problems**. A comprehensive approach focusing on nutrition counselling, vaccinations, parasite control, dental care and behaviour counselling can help to mitigate issues such as periodontal disease, fleas and ticks, heartworm disease, obesity or diabetes mellitus.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are the best way to **protect your dog** and your family **against illness and disease**.

Some vaccines are compulsory, others are recommended, and this also varies depending on where you live and the extent to which your pet is exposed to the risk of disease. Generally, the first vaccines are given from **the age of 6-8 weeks**, when a puppy is no longer **protected by maternal antibodies** and is particularly vulnerable to disease. The first vaccinations are then followed by regular boosters, some of which are yearly. **Talk to your veterinarian** to find out which vaccinations you should consider for your dog and the appropriate timing for the vaccinations.

Worming and parasites

It is recommended to regularly deworm your dog. Puppies are particularly sensitive to **internal parasites** and require a number of deworming treatments. Worms can represent a risk to humans, and particularly to children as they can get them from direct contact with their pets and their faces. So it is imperative to talk to your veterinarian who will be able to recommend a regular deworming programme, adapted to your dog's lifestyle and location.

External parasites can also be harmful to your dog. **Fleas** in particular, cause irritation and skin problems. The best approach is regular preventative flea control through oral or spot-on products. Flea collars are also an option. If you live in an area with ticks, consider using an acaricide to protect your dog. Other common parasites include ear mites, demodex mites and ringworm. Your veterinarian will be able to provide you with the best advice regarding prevention of external parasites for your dog.

PET INSURANCE

Medical care for your dog can be costly. From the beginning, you'll need to budget for routine visits to the vet, but if your dog has a **serious illness** or **breaks a leg**, the cost can get extremely expensive. Contracting a pet insurance is a way to help cover these expenses. Pet insurance is either for the **lifetime** of your animal or for a **specified period**. Some policies cover pre-existing conditions and vaccinations, while others are for emergency care only. Third-party liability may also be included, covering expenses if your dog causes an accident by running out into the road, for example.

In Sweden and the UK, pet insurance is relatively common.



Neutering

An awareness of the reproductive potential of dogs, can help ensure that they do not reproduce freely.

A female dog can have up to two litters a year (10 puppies per litter – potentially up to 20 puppies per year). Given the potential for such huge numbers of unplanned pets, many of which might be relinquished to animal charities and shelters, **population control measures are important.**

Neutering consists of castrating male animals (removing their testes) and spaying females (removing their ovaries). As well as protecting against unwanted pregnancies and abandoned animals, neutering can also offer a **number of behavioural benefits.**

While intact females tend to get agitated when in heat, spayed animals will no longer go into heat. Neutered females are also less at risk of **mammary, uterine and ovarian cancer** as well as **pyometra**, a serious infection of the uterus. In males, castration reduces the probability of **testicular disorders**. Castrated males are also less aggressive, less dominant and less likely to spray urine or escape from home in search of a mate.

It is important to know that neutering results in increased appetite and a reduction in daily energy requirements. To limit the risks of obesity, neutered dogs must be given a lower calorie food. There are specific diets available for neutered dogs and exercise is important. Your veterinarian will be able to advise you regarding the best age for your pet to be neutered and can help you with the best diets for your dog once it is neutered.

Dental care

Dental problems are extremely common among dogs. **Periodontal disease** attacks the gums, loosens the ligaments attaching the teeth to the jaw bone and eventually causes teeth to fall out. Furthermore, bacteria in the mouth can trigger other infections in other parts of the body.

Your veterinarian will usually be able to help with emergencies, but **the prevention of dental disease is essential**, especially as your dog will often show few symptoms of oral discomfort.

The best preventative care is **to brush your dog's teeth daily** with a special canine brush and special pet toothpaste. Offering dogs a chewing bar can help them apply friction to their teeth and thereby eliminate some of the bacteria that cause plaque. Kibbles also help slow down the development of tartar.

Grooming

Regular bathing and grooming are essential for **maintaining good skin and coat health** and condition as well as cleanliness, although different breeds or types of dogs vary in the levels of care they need.

In long-haired dogs the coat can become matted over a relatively short period of time, which can result in tightening of the skin, discomfort and pain. Short-haired dogs require grooming about once a week and bathing about every six weeks. Other dogs can be groomed as required, with some long/curly-haired breeds requiring daily grooming. Dogs with long hair may need to be trimmed or clipped and bathed every four to six weeks. Pet care specialists and veterinarians can offer advice about **how to carry out bathing and grooming** and can supply the details of a reputable grooming service.

TAKE YOUR DOG TO THE VET!

When you first get your new dog, it's recommended to organise a **visit within 48 hours**. The veterinarian will thoroughly examine your dog to make sure he is healthy and has no underlying conditions. This is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and find out about vaccinations and other **preventative care**. For **puppies**, it's recommended to get a **check-up every six months**. You can schedule these appointments to coincide with booster vaccinations.

For adult dogs, a **yearly visit** is important for a health check and this can also aid the early detection of diseases and other health problems, helping to reduce complications and suffering.



Toileting

An **appropriate toileting routine** is key to avoid hygiene issues as well as tension between owner and pet. **Dogs** need to be **taken out several times per day** to relieve themselves. However, going out shouldn't be exclusively dedicated to getting your dog to toilet, but should **include a short walk** as this is important for their **well-being** and enable them to exercise.

If you have just acquired a new puppy, toilet training is a more involved and lengthy process. Puppies have weak bladder control and need to urinate often (every 1-2 hours), and may spontaneously urinate if they are playing or become excited. Their digestive tract is also stimulated by eating, and they will usually need to urinate and defecate shortly after a meal (within 15-30 mins) and just after waking from a nap. **Establishing a routine** is essential. Take your puppy outside often, praise him with the same words whenever he urinates in the right place and offer a reward in the early stages of training.

Don't forget to clean up after your dog! As you are training your dog to new habits, get also into the routine of taking bags or a poop-scoop with you when you step outside your door, so that you can legally dispose of your dog's mess.



Unnecessary and controversial procedures

Unnecessary and controversial procedures are procedures which are not considered essential for medical reasons and are conducted in order to alter appearance or modify behaviour. Tail docking and ear cropping procedures in dogs involve surgical removal of part or all of the tail or ear respectively and are usually conducted for aesthetic reasons. Procedures like these, unless medically indicated, are unnecessary and should be avoided as they offer no benefit to the pet. **In many countries these procedures are illegal.**

Another procedure in this category include removal of vocal cords in dogs that bark excessively.

This intervention should never be necessary if the animal has been properly trained and socialised. Education of pet owners about appropriate behavioural and environmental modifications can provide more humane solutions to these problems. For instance, behavioural modification and positive training can help tackle excessive barking.



Older dogs

Continuous improvements in **veterinary healthcare and nutrition** have helped **dogs to live longer** and has increased the size of the senior pet population. Older dogs make **wonderful companions** as they are often content to spend more time around the home and tend to be more laid back and calmer than younger animals. There are a number of health, behavioural and social changes that occur with aging that may require some adaptation in the dog's environment, diet or routine. Owners, in partnership with their veterinarian, have an important role to play in supporting quality of life in older pets.

As they get older, animals tend to be less active and sleep longer. Their **vision, smell and hearing**

usually worsens, and they may develop cataracts, dental disease and osteoarthritis (joint disease). Many of these conditions can be relieved, which is why it's essential to have senior dogs checked by your **veterinarian more often.**

If well cared for, many dogs can live into their mid-teens. Dogs are considered to be in their senior years when they reach the last third of their life span.

Behavioural changes such as vocalisation, change in appetite or water intake, house soiling may reflect an underlying medical problem that should be investigated by a veterinarian.



NUTRITION

Every dog has **unique nutritional requirements** depending on a range of factors, including their breed, size, age, lifestyle, activity and environment. A good diet that meets those needs, will help enhance your pet's health and wellness through every stage of life.

It's important to offer your dog a balanced diet, with all the essential nutrients he needs and the right amount of calories. This can help to prevent health issues arising and, if they do, catch them early thereby increasing the chances of a good outcome. Don't forget to give your dog constant **access to water**. Continuous access to water is vital even if you are feeding your dog with wet food. Water should be fresh, not too cold (not less than 10°C) and the bowl should always be clean. Do not give milk to your dog as he doesn't digest it.

Food toys are great for some dogs and foraging for food is a **great enrichment activity** in some cases. Sudden changes in diet force the digestive system to adapt and may cause diarrhoea or loose stools. For puppies under 6 months, 3 meals a day are recommended, while adult dogs can have only one or two meals a day (two are recommended for large breeds). Puppies under 6 months need training – you can use the kibbles as treats.

And the extra part of the daily ration can then be given as a meal. Food must not be freely available: in order to prevent excessive weight gain, you should respect the daily ration. If possible, avoid any type of exercise just after mealtimes, especially with large breed puppies, in order to prevent risk of stomach bloating/torsion, which they can be prone to.

Respecting your dog's feeding behaviour

Dogs have **natural feeding patterns** and **rhythms** that should be respected.

Make sure you provide two dishes, one for food and one for water and they should be quite separate from each other. Preferably stainless steel bowls as they are more solid and hygienic than plastic bowls. Easy to clean, durable, stainless steel bowls do not rust, break or chip. Moreover, some dogs can have allergies to plastic.

Choose a dedicated spot for your dog's mealtimes. Feed your dog at fixed times, in a different part of the house than that used for family mealtimes, and at different times compared to the family meals. It is also recommended that your dog is left alone to eat. Leave your dog alone with his food bowl for 10 minutes without any disturbance. If he hasn't finished eating after this time, then take the bowl away and wait until the next mealtime.

Treats and training

A reward is anything that your dog enjoys (e.g. dry food, treats, attention/petting, a fun toy, a play session). The key is to find the reward that truly motivates your dog. Reward based training or positive reinforcement based training is one of the most effective training methods and contributes to a better relationship between owners and their pets.

Don't forget that a fun game with you, or attention in the form of a positive tone of voice or petting can be a better reward than food or treats in some cases and helps to keep excess weight at bay.

If you do use treats, be aware that some treats are designed for easy palatability and may be packed with other nutrients to offer additional health benefits such as dental care or joint support.

However, it's important to limit the use of treats as they can contribute to excessive weight gain and may imbalance your dog's diet.

As such, if your dog has had treats in the day, adjust his daily food portion accordingly. If you use a lot of food rewards for training you can also use a number of the kibbles from your dog's allocated daily amount as a treat to reward him. Table scraps or human food snacks tend to be more energy rich and lower in nutritional value than treats designed specifically for dogs and should therefore be avoided.



HOW TO KEEP OBESITY AT BAY ?

Overfeeding your dog can quickly cause him to become overweight, especially if he is sedentary. Today, obesity is the most common nutritional disorder in companion animals. Why does this matter? Because obesity reduces your pet's life expectancy, exposing him to a greater risk of joint problems, diabetes, cancer and urinary issues.

The key to keeping obesity at bay is to measure precise daily portions, not giving extra food, encourage exercise, as well as weigh the dog at least once a month and regularly monitor his body condition. The Body Condition Score Chart is a good way to assess your dog. It's based on carefully feeling your pet's body and observing him from different angles. Don't hesitate to talk your veterinarian who will be able to devise a realistic weight loss strategy if needed (and also advise on how to prevent your dog putting on weight).



YOUR DOG'S WELL-BEING

Good welfare should aim to go beyond the basic requirements - like adequate food, water, ventilation and protection from injury or ill health - to include things that will enrich and improve a dog's quality of life and, in turn, enhance the overall owner-pet relationship. Enriched welfare aims to meet a dog's social and behavioural needs and strives for positive outcomes and experiences for both pet and owner.

This includes providing dogs with opportunities to express natural behaviour. Different ages, breeds and individual differences in behaviour may result in different welfare needs.

Strengthen your relationship with your dog

Positive human contact is usually beneficial for the welfare of dogs.

To build the bond with your pet, provide **plenty of personal contact**: physical contact such as grooming and stroking is mutually beneficial and helps owners too by making them feel more relaxed. Providing affection, routine, dependability, and meeting their essential needs will also strengthen the owner-pet bond.

Relationships are built on spending time together and sharing experiences. Spending time having fun, either during exercise and/or play are ways to have fun whilst building the bond.

Keeping your dog stimulated

It's important to keep your dog physically and mentally stimulated. This means **outdoor games and exercise**. Make sure you regularly alternate exercises to keep training fun.



Physical activity

Exercise is one of the most efficient ways to help **reduce the risks of obesity, respiratory problems and heart disease**. There is a whole range of options you can choose from to get your dog active.

Walking, jogging and cycling with your dog are excellent ways to get both you and him, exercising. Playing fetch and catch are also classic ways to bond with your dog while expending energy. Have you considered **canine sports**? These activities are specifically designed to boost your dog's fitness while also improving obedience and sociability. Flyball, agility and cani-cross are just a few

examples. Whatever activity you choose, remember that the type and amount of exercise should be **tailored according to the individual pet**. Moreover, as dogs can easily overheat, consider exercising during the cooler part of the day and have an ample supply of water with you.

Providing opportunities for play is an enjoyable way to promote optimal well-being and to strengthen the bond between owner and dog. Play **provides mental stimulation** as well as exercise and is also an important way for pets to **express natural behaviours**.



Coping with heat

In hot weather, it is essential to protect your pet. **Dogs** are very sensitive to heat, and overheating can have serious consequences.


Look out for tell-tale signs such as **increased panting**, heavy or **rapid breathing**, **drooling** and weakness. In severe cases, overheating can cause bloody diarrhoea, vomiting and even seizures.

Be particularly vigilant if your pet is a **senior dog** or if he has a **flat face** (Pugs, Boxers, Bulldog for example) and is therefore less efficient at panting. These animals are more at risk of the consequences of overheating.



HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN HELP YOUR DOG BEAT THE HEAT:

- > Make sure he has constant **access to fresh water**. Leave several dishes of water around your home and garden.
- > Ensure your dog has as much **shade** as possible. If he is in the garden, make sure there is a shady spot. When you're out and about, try to keep your animal out of the sun.
- > Keep your dog away from **heat-absorbing surfaces** like metal or asphalt. Animals can burn their paws and the heat from their feet can also increase their core body temperature.
- > Keep **shutters and curtains shut** in extreme heat to keep the interior cool.
- > Give him a **cool bath** or let him swim in a cool river/lake. This will help bring down his core body temperature.
- > Consider **cutting your dog's hair** if he has a thick coat. But never shave your dog, as he needs some hair to prevent overheating.
- > **Never leave your pet in a parked vehicle**. The temperature inside a car can quickly become dangerously hot, even if it's left in the shade. If the outside temperature is 35°C, the interior of a vehicle can reach 63°C within an hour. In a matter of minutes, your dog could suffer severe overheating or suffocate.

EXPOSITION TIME	TEMPERATURE BUILD UP WITHIN A CAR IN SUMMER (IN °C)				
	20	25	30	35	40
10 MINUTES	30	35	39	43	47
20 MINUTES	36	45	49	53	57
30 MINUTES	40	49	53	57	61
40 MINUTES	42	51	55	59	63
50 MINUTES	44	53	57	61	65
60 MINUTES	46	55	59	63	67



WHY ARE DOGS SO SENSITIVE TO HEAT?

Unlike us, **dogs can't cool down by sweating**. This means they must use alternative methods. Dogs use **conduction**, which means lying against a cooler object, such as the tiles in your kitchen. They also use their fur to keep heat from reaching their skin. For them, the key method for cooling down is **to pant**, helping air to circulate through their bodies.



Behavioural difficulties and signs of distress

The best way to ensure the good behaviour and **well-being of your dog**, is by **understanding and respecting his individual needs**.

Very often, behavioural issues and changes can be the first indicator of illness or other causes of decreased welfare. Some common signs of stress are diarrhoea, constipation, a poor appetite, excessive sleeping, aggression, hyperactivity or a desire to isolate themselves.

Of course, these symptoms can also have other causes, but they should trigger alarm bells.

Try **to understand the reasons for your dog's distress**. Has there been a recent change in his environment? A new person, animal or object? Maybe he is being subjected to additional noise? Or it could be as simple as a change in his nutrition? To relieve his stress, **address the root cause of the problem** if you can, and then try to spend more time with him.

Hierarchy of needs

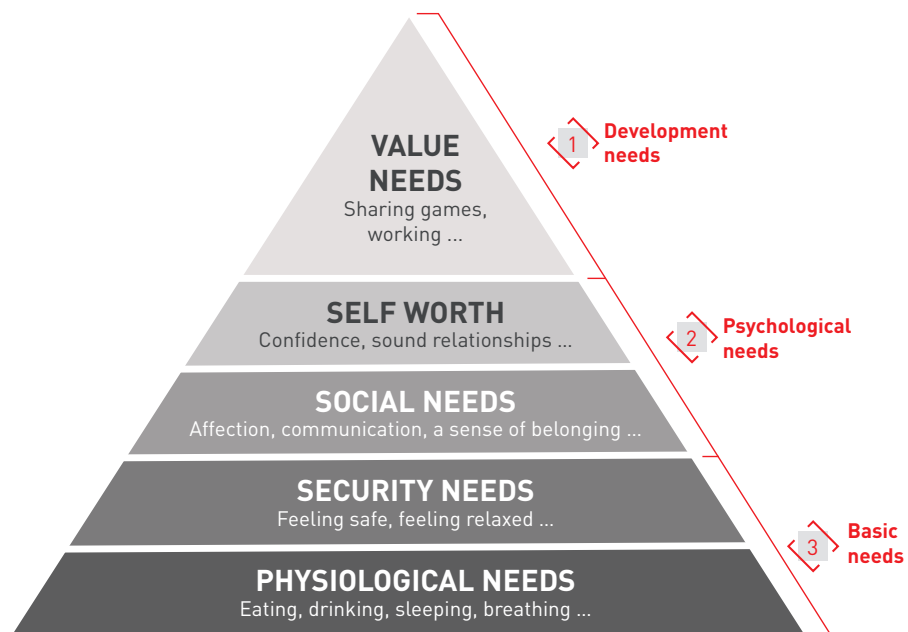
Your dog's different needs can be summarised by a pyramid of hierarchy of needs. Originally designed for humans (Maslow's pyramid), this pyramid can easily be applied to dogs. The animal's most essential needs are at the bottom of the pyramid, while secondary needs are higher up. To move up the pyramid, you must first satisfy the needs on the level below.

The **most fundamental needs**, at the bottom of the pyramid, are **physiological**: sleep, nutrition, shelter, etc. Next comes safety - dogs need **to feel secure**

in their environment before they can relax and form relations. Once this need is covered, they can move to the next level, **seeking love and belonging through** a trusted relationship with you and your family. Next is esteem, which comes through praise, **reward and positive reinforcement**. Finally, self-actualization is the feeling of confidence and achievement they get through succeeding in play.

It's worth keeping these different needs in mind, as the relationship with your dog develops.

PYRAMID OF THE DOG'S NEEDS



Be a responsible dog owner

You should now have a good idea about how to be a responsible dog owner.

Now it's up to you to put theory into practice!

When you welcome a dog into your home, you put his well-being in your hands. By following the advice in this guide, you should ensure his continued health and happiness.

Understanding and respecting your dog for the unique animal he is and getting to know him well is essential to help him thrive and grow in his new environment.

This will allow you and your dog to enjoy a rewarding and long lasting relationship.

A better world for pets 





INCREDIBLE IN EVERY DETAIL