



**Maricopa County**  
*Animal Care and Control*

# GENERAL DOG CARE



Congratulations on deciding to add a dog to your family! We wish you many years of fun and love!

## **Before you bring your dog home**

You will need food, a food dish, water bowl, interactive toys, brush, comb, collar and leash. A dog crate is also suggested.

## **Feeding**

An adult dog should be fed one large or two smaller meals of high quality dog food each day. Puppies from 6 to 12 weeks need to be fed small meals 4 times a day. Puppies from 3 to 6 months need to be fed 3 times a day. Consider following a feeding routine by feeding your dog at the same time every day. Provide fresh, clean water at all times. Wash and refill water bowls daily.

## **Grooming**

Dogs should be bathed when dirty; at least three to four times a year. Certain breeds of dog need regular haircuts. Frequent brushing helps keep your dog's coat clean and reduces the amount of shedding.

## **Handling**

To pick up your dog, place one hand behind the front legs and another under the hindquarters. Lift gently. Never pick up a dog by the scruff of the neck (behind the ears) or by the front legs without supporting the rear end.

## **Housing**

Dogs should have a clean, dry place of their own in the house. Consider providing your dog a dog crate. Dogs are natural denning animals (they live in dens in the wild) and they consider crates a private place where they feel safe. Crates are also wonderful as training tools. Please keep your dog indoors when you are not at home. Dogs are social animals and need the company of others to be happy.

## **Training/Behavior Modification**

When you first bring a new dog home you are building a new relationship. A training program will help you and your dog learn how to communicate effectively with one another. It will also help you teach your dog how to be a good citizen in your home. Consider joining a dog training class and reading animal behavior books. All training should involve positive reinforcement techniques.

## **Identification**

All dogs are required to have a current dog license. Your dog should always wear a collar, with his dog license attached, around his neck. Licenses are \$16 for sterile dogs and \$40 for unaltered dogs.

Also consider an ID tag with your dog's information, a microchip, or a tattoo to ensure your dog is returned to you if he becomes lost.

For more information on animal care, behavior or MCACC programs, contact  
(602) 506-PETS or visit [pets.maricopa.gov](http://pets.maricopa.gov)

### **Housetraining**

Any dog can be trained with time and consistency. All dogs need to be on a regular "outside" schedule. Use positive reinforcement to praise your dog when he goes outside. Correct your dog *only* when you catch him in the act. Never hit or scream at your dog if he goes in the house. This only teaches him to be afraid of you. Use a dog crate to assist with your housetraining program.

### **Exercise**

Depending on the breed or age of your dog, he or she needs regular exercise. A walk around the block is not enough. Spend at least one to two hours a day exercising your dog. Run, play fetch, whatever it takes - exercise is the key to your dog's physical and mental health.

### **Play**

Dogs love to play with toys, other dogs and humans. Provide your dog with interactive toys and lots of opportunities to play. Do not play rough games like tug of war with your dog. This teaches your dog dominance and aggression.

### **Health**

Your dog should see a veterinarian at least once a year for an examination and annual shots, and immediately if she is sick or injured.

### **Fleas and Ticks**

Fleas are a problem that should be taken very seriously. These tiny parasites feed off of your pet, transmit tapeworms and irritate the skin. Carefully check your dog once a week for fleas or ticks. If there are fleas on your dog, there will be fleas in your house. You may need to use flea bombs or premise control sprays and treat all animals in your house.

Make sure that any sprays, powders or shampoos you use are safe for all dogs and that all products are compatible if used together.

### **Spay / Neutering**

Females should be spayed before they become sexually mature (between 4-6 months). Spaying a female (removing the ovaries and uterus) helps prevent breast cancer, which can be fatal 90 percent of the time, and pyometra (uterus infections), a very serious problem in older females that must be treated with surgery and intensive medical care. It also prevents unwanted animals from being born. Neutering a male (removing the testicles) can prevent marking, decrease the urge to escape outside to look for a mate and reduce fighting between males.

### **Vaccinations**

Vaccines are an extremely important part of keeping your dog healthy. Beginning at six to eight weeks of age, puppies should be given a vaccine that protects against distemper and parvo. Your dog will need yearly boosters to remain protected from these diseases. Please see a veterinarian for more information about vaccines and your pet's health.

All dogs over the age of three months are required to be vaccinated for rabies. The first rabies vaccine is good for one year. You can get a rabies vaccination at any of our locations for \$34.

We also offer Rabies Clinic Specials. Rabies vaccinations will be \$20 at both the West (2323 S. 35<sup>th</sup> Ave.) and East Valley (2630 W. 8<sup>th</sup> St.) locations on Sunday afternoons from noon to 4:00, Monday and Tuesday mornings from 9:00 – 11:00.