



After a lot of work and effort, you've found the perfect puppy and the day is quickly approaching when you will finally be able to bring your German Shepherd puppy home.

Supplies to Have on Hand

Bringing home a new dog is a big event and it is not uncommon for new owners to forget to purchase all the supplies they will need when the puppy arrives. Among the most critical items are food, bowls for food and water, a collar, a leash, several safe chew toys, supplies to clean and clean up after your shepherd, and of course, there's the crate and all the supplies that go with this purchase.

Food and Bowls

Your new dog will need to eat only a few hours after you bring him home, so be sure to have food and bowls on hand. We are feeding our puppies Royal Canin Maxi Puppy and Purina Pro Plan Sport (Purple Bag) . Whether or not you plan to continue with this food, you shouldn't introduce a new food immediately as this could cause gastrointestinal problems

When it comes to choosing food and water bowls for your new puppy, keep in mind that puppies and some adult dogs take great pleasure in carrying their bowls around, stepping in them, tossing the food, or chewing on them. Plastic bowls are inexpensive, can be easily tipped and destroyed, and are difficult to clean.

Ceramic bowls are heavy enough to be stable, but break easily, and are often not dishwasher safe. Stainless steel bowls are easy to clean, are relatively durable, and bottom weighted bowls won't tip.

Collars

At 8 weeks of age our puppies wear the sizes XXS or XS. You also can measure the dog's neck, making sure that you allow room for comfort without making it too loose. Next, you must decide what kind of collar to purchase. A flat-buckle is a good choice for a puppy or an adult, as this collar is often used for early puppy training.

However, a young puppy can grow through several sizes before he reaches maturity.

An adjustable collar can last longer as your puppy grows, but it is a little more dangerous. When the collar is at its tightest adjustment, it leaves a

significant amount of collar to be tucked, forming a loop. An active puppy can get this loop hung up on his crate or outside on the fence. Additionally, the adjustable collar typically fastens with a plastic clip. Some of these clips are much more durable than others, so make sure that you don't buy one that will break easily. Training or choke collars are made either of rolled nylon or leather (like rope) or metal links. The collar is made to tighten, or choke, as the dog pulls. You may wish to use this collar for training purposes, but it should not be used for a puppy!

Leashes

Leashes come in varying thicknesses, lengths, and materials. If you are purchasing a puppy, choose a lightweight leash with a small clip. Owners frequently make the mistake of running out and purchasing the thickest, longest leash as possible. A thick leash has a heavy clip, which will clunk against your puppy's head. As your puppy grows, you can increase the weight of the leash and clip accordingly.

Leashes come in assortment of materials: nylon web, cotton, leather, and metal chain links.

Chews and Toys

You shouldn't spoil a puppy or dog with too many toys or chew items at once. Many trainers recommend that you keep about twenty items on hand but only offer the dog a few of these at any one given time. You can rotate the chews and toys to create the element of surprise. Dogs are very much like

children. If they haven't seen a toy or chew for a few days, its reappearance is treated like a special event. If you have many items for your puppy, keep roughly half of them out and the rest hidden in a cupboard. Every day, replace four items that have been out with four items that were hidden.

The toys and chews you select should all be puppy-safe. Puppies and adults have strong bites and can break a rawhide bone into chunks or tear a weaker rubber toy too easily. Unfortunately, the smaller chunks or torn pieces can become choking hazards. When selecting these items, look for things like knotted rope toys, sturdy tug toys, tough rubber shapes that can be stuffed with dog biscuits, and extra-large tennis balls that are too big for a shepherd to swallow.

Cleaning Strategies and Supplies

Use a shampoo that is tear-free and designed specifically for puppies. Shampoos made for humans may be too abrasive or too difficult to rinse out of the dog's coat.

If your dog is not yet housetrained, you must be ready to deal with a few accidents. You should be prepared to spot-clean your floors and carpet with a supply of paper towels, stain remover, and an enzyme-eating cleaner. Several products are specifically made to break down the chemicals in dog urine so that the wet spot no longer has an odor. Stain removers can be very helpful, but make sure you test yours on a hidden area first. If the product does not discolor your carpet or upholstery, it is safe to use in the future.

Purchasing a Crate

In the last few years, the crate-and-carrier market has expanded greatly with the addition of many new and innovative products. From side-loading metal wire crates and pop-up tentlike mesh crates to collapsible and partitioned kennels, there is a crate out there for every dog and every budget.

Wire Crates

The German Shepherd loves to be able to see what is going on around her. The wire crate enables your puppy or dog to see her surroundings even when she's spending time in her special space. The metal wire crate provides the best air circulation possible when traveling by car, and thanks to the removable tray at the bottom, this crate can be completely and thoroughly cleaned.

Hard-Shell Plastic Carriers

These plastic carriers come in two pieces, with a top and a bottom that fasten together. They are inexpensive and a good airline-approved crate may cost as little as \$35 for a puppy or up to \$100 for an adult dog. Plastic carriers are lightweight and just about perfect for the puppy or dog that prefers a warm cozy space. The plastic crate does have a few shortcomings. For one, the crate cannot be partitioned. That means it will be necessary to purchase a smaller crate for a puppy and upgrade to a larger crate when your shepherd reaches adolescence. Additionally, the air circulation is not as good as that in a wire crate or mesh crate, and the crate doesn't break down into pieces that are easily stored or stowed away. Finally, because of the cracks and tiny fissures that occur in plastic, it is nearly impossible to completely clean and sterilize this crate.

Mesh Tents

Mesh crates set up like tents and are the ultimate in lightweight temporary housing. Mesh traveling crates are made with a screen-like material that is supported by PVC tubing. They collapse into very manageable sizes, have tremendous air circulation, and are nice options for a well-behaved, calm dog that is reliable and quiet in a crate.

A puppy can rip through the mesh walls easily, if she is so inclined. The mesh kennel is also not safe for traveling in a car because it doesn't limit the dog's movement in the event of a sudden stop.

The Ride Home

The most important thing to remember to bring with you when you go to pick up your puppy is a crate in which to bring her home. New owners often forget to bring a secure way of transporting the German Shepherd. This can cause several problems.

Puppies are known to have sensitive stomachs, and it doesn't take much motion to make them vomit. If the new puppy is in your lap when this happens, it can be a bit messy. If the puppy is in a crate, on the other hand, this is relatively easy to clean up.

Puppies can also be quite nervous and squirmy during the car ride and have been known to get themselves and their drivers in trouble. Accidents and near accidents have occurred when puppies have wriggled underneath the brake pedal, inadvertently hit the automatic window button, or knocked the gearshift into neutral.

The First Night

Patience is the key ingredient to a successful first night with the dog at home. If you are bringing home a new puppy, don't plan to get a lot of sleep that night. With any luck, you don't have to work the following morning. This is your puppy's first night away from her mother and littermates, and the experience can be unnerving for any dog.

Your puppy will be used to sleeping in a warm, cozy puppy pile. Now she'll be alone in her crate. You can help her adjust by making sure she has a lot of warm, comfortable bedding. You might also consider wrapping a warm hot-water bottle in a towel and placing this in her crate, too.

Important Appointments

Before you pick up your puppy, you should make an appointment with your veterinarian to have your puppy's health checked within 48 hours of bringing him home.

A Head Start on Training

You already know the importance of beginning training with your puppy as soon as possible. What you might not know is that early puppy training classes fill up very quickly. Unless you reserve a space before you bring your puppy home, you may find that you can't get into a class for months.