

Handling

We want our pet dogs to be comfortable around dogs and people, and to be relaxed about handling and grooming, so that these things are not scary or unpleasant. Scared dogs bite, and scared dogs live a very stressful life, so please do not let your puppy grow up to be a scared dog!

- ❖ **The time to get your puppy used to all of these things is now – after he is 3 months old, it will be much harder to get him to relax about things he might find scary. Do the handling activities listed below, making sure that he is introduced to new experiences gradually, and that he gets lots of praise and treats.**
- Gently clean inside his ears and then wipe with just tissue or cotton balls.
- Brush his coat – at first just a few strokes at a time. If he tries to chew the brush then keep his mouth busy with a stuffed chew toy while you brush him.
- Get him used to tooth-brushing, first by rubbing his gums with just your finger dipped in salt water (dogs like the taste), then using a finger toothbrush, and finally with a real toothbrush and doggie toothpaste.
- Get him used to having his mouth opened and examined by you, and pretend you are giving him a pill by touching the back of his tongue with your finger.
- Fiddle with his paws and nails, and then gradually introduce him to nail trims – at first clipping just one or two nails at a time or using a Pedi Paws nail grinder. Make sure you know how to avoid cutting his nails too short – it will hurt him quite a bit if you cut the vein!
- Get him used to baths by putting him in the tub for treats: first with no water at all, then with a little puddle to play in. Eventually get him used to running water, being wet, and finally being shampooed and rinsed.