



VETERINARY SURGERY

Mike Jessop BVetMed MRCVS
Nick Hatton BVetMed MRCVS
Rachel Thomas BVMS MRCVS



Puppy Socialisation

It is very important that puppies are introduced to as many experiences as possible when they are young. Before 14 weeks puppies react to new experiences with interest and curiosity, wanting to find out more about their new world. After this time, they tend to be scared of unfamiliar things.

As a vaccination course takes several weeks to take full effect, you can't immediately take them out for a walk and show them everything, but there are plenty of new experiences they can have safely before they are fully vaccinated.

You need to take care not to scare your puppy, but you should not be over-protective either. The best approach is a "jolly hockey-sticks" type approach, something along the lines of "Yes, there's a big scary vacuum cleaner over there, but come and play with this ball," with lots of praise when your puppy does so. If you overprotect them, they will become more anxious.

Whilst puppies should not be taken for walks on the road, or the park or anywhere strange dogs could go, until a week after their second vaccination, there are plenty of experiences they can be introduced to without walking. Most puppies are small enough to be carried for several weeks after you get them. Think how many fun new experiences you can share. Don't just wait until after their second vaccination before they leave the house.

People

Dogs should meet as many different types, sizes and shapes of people as possible - adults, children, women, men, men with beards, people with walking sticks, people in hats etc. When dogs cower away from people, it is more likely to be because they are unfamiliar with that sort of person and are scared than because they have been beaten in the past.

Dogs

After the first vaccination, your puppy can meet fully vaccinated dogs at your house or theirs. You should make sure the first dogs your puppy meets are well socialised and not over-confident or aggressive.

Cats, livestock and other pets

Your puppy needs to learn how to be introduced to as many different animals as possible. Many of these species are "prey" species - it is natural for a puppy to want to chase them and he must learn from an early age that this is not acceptable.

To introduce your puppy to a cat, for example, restrain your puppy so he cannot chase the cat and continue until the cat is used to him. Once this stage is complete, introduce your puppy to

the cat, without restraint but watch very closely. At the first sign of him wanting to chase it, distract him with a game.

You should also introduce him to horses, sheep, cattle etc. This should be done on a lead, under control and at a distance, to avoid the animal trying to run away. This would only encourage your puppy to chase them

By being introduced to lots of animals your puppy should eventually think they are boring. Carry a favourite toy with you and if he becomes excited, channel his excitement onto that.

Household Items

Many household appliances can be scary to a dog who has never encountered them before. Try to familiarise him with all the things in the house which make funny noises, such as the whirr of washing machines and the buzz of hairdryers and vacuum cleaners.

Traffic

Traffic includes not only cars, lorries, tractors and so on, but also bicycles. Traffic noises can vary according to the weather, so don't forget to take him out in the rain.

Many dogs are travel sick or anxious in the car. Start with very, very short journeys, or even a stationary car. Pheromone sprays are available at the surgery to help dogs who are car sick. You never know when your car may break down, so take your dog on a trip in a bus or train in case you have to use one.

Different Environments

If you live in a town, take your puppy to the country; if you live in a quiet area, take you puppy to town. A visit to a dog friendly pub, car boot sales or country show offers all sorts of new experiences. You should also make sure they are familiar with grooming parlours, boarding kennels or veterinary surgeries.

Problems

If you are having problems, please contact the surgery for advice.

A check list is useful to allow you to fully socialise your puppy. Tick the box at every encounter and remember to continue socialising until your puppy is 12 months old



Before First Vaccine (under 8 weeks)

Men
Women
Children (a few at a time)
Babies
Elderly people
Loud/confident people
Shy/ quiet people
Cats which are part of your household
Other dogs which are part of your household
Other domestic pets
Stairs
Washing machine
Vacuum cleaner
Tumble dryer
Hair dryer
Children's toys
Being alone
DIY tools
Travelling in cars
Wearing a collar
Veterinary Surgery



Between First and Second Vaccination (8-11 weeks)

Vehicles - cars, lorries, buses (whilst being carried)
Bicycles (whilst being carried)
Children (several eg carry past playgrounds or schools)
Veterinary surgery
Other people's houses
Dogs in their house or yours
Cats in other houses or garden
Grooming
Teeth cleaning
Examination of eyes, ears, teeth etc
People wearing hats/helmets
People wearing glasses
People in uniform
Delivery people esp postman
People of different ethnic origins
Bathing
Walking on the lead in garden
Men with beards or moustaches



After Second Vaccination (11 weeks +)

Continue what you started before the first vaccination and between the first and second vaccination, but also include the following

Children (walking through parks/ past schools)
Veterinary Surgery (coming in for regular nurse clinics)
Boarding Kennel
Grooming Parlour
Pub/party
Fete/car boot sale
Public transport
Walking at roadside
Park/rural environment
Town/city
Cows
Sheep
Horses
Pushchairs
Wheelchairs
People with walking sticks
Puppy/dog training classes
Walking on the lead outside
Unknown dogs

