



**Owning a dog can be one of the most rewarding things you have ever done. But many prospective dog owners underestimate the investment of time, energy, and money required. Your dog will live anything up to 20 years, depending on its breed, size and general health. This is a long term commitment, and you must be ready to provide your dog with a home for that duration.**

## **Are you ready for a dog?**

Dog ownership requires commitment and a responsible attitude and should never be entered into lightly. It is important to remember that you will have full responsibility for your dog's care. Your dog will prove to be a loyal and enjoyable companion only if you are prepared to give enough in return.

## **Cost of keeping a dog**

Please research the costs of being a pet owner. In addition to the initial cost of getting a dog, ongoing costs include food, veterinary fees, treatment and pet insurance. You will also need to consider who will look after your dog when you are away, on holiday or if you become ill.





## Choosing a dog

Before you get a dog it's wise to think long and hard about the breed or crossbreed of dog you get and whether your new dog will suit your personality and lifestyle. Considerations should include:

- Does the dog you're considering suit your home, family, working hours etc?
- Can you make a lifelong commitment to your dog?
- Time and effort required to train and socialise your dog?
- Whether you are prepared for your home to change, from muddy paws to fur shedding. It will never be the same again!
- Whether you'd like to get a male or female / puppy or adult.
- Are you prepared to walk your dog every day?
- Will your new dog bond with other pets in the household?
- Lastly, and most importantly, whether you can afford to keep a pet.

When choosing a dog, do lots of research on the different types of dog. It's also worth researching about potential health problems and characteristics such as length of coat and how much grooming is required, how much hair they will shed, whether the dog dribbles etc.

## Why not think about a rescue dog?

It is a common misconception that rescue dogs have ended up in shelters through some fault of their own such as bad behaviour – this is rarely the case. The vast majority of dogs end up in rescues because of a lack of commitment or lifestyle changes of their previous owners.

Benefits of getting a rescue dog from Mayhew:

- We can help you select the right dog for you.
- You will gain an understanding of the dog's established behaviour from our staff.
- The dog will be vet-assessed and you will be made aware of any existing conditions before you adopt. The dog will be neutered, wormed, deflead and vaccinated before it goes home.

- We will give you the guidance you will need to become a great owner as well as ongoing advice and support.
- You will be giving a forever home to one of the many abandoned dogs who are looking for a new home every year in the UK.

Beware of purchasing a dog on impulse without any information or history on his background and health. There are many unscrupulous breeders who unfortunately breed dogs unethically with health problems in poor conditions. Please consider adopting a dog.

## Collecting your dog

Once you've decided that you're going to get a dog, do a bit of planning so that your dog's first days in its new home are as easy and pleasurable as possible.

- Equipment for your dog should include a dog bed big enough for your pet to stretch out in, a comfortable collar which you can slip two fingers underneath with an identity tag, a lead and food and water bowls.

- Buy some pet food for your dog – this can either be dry complete food or semi-moist and tinned foods.
- Register your dog with a local vet immediately. You may need to book an appointment with your vet for vaccinations, defleaing and worming. Your vet will also carry out a nose to tail MOT.
- Look into puppy/dog training classes to help socialise and train your pet including house training, sitting, staying, recall and general manners.

## Feeding your dog

Dogs' nutritional requirements change according to their stage of life. Puppies, adults and senior dogs all have different nutritional needs. Feed your dog a well balanced diet and have fresh water available at all times.

Be aware that there are a number of foods which are dangerous to dogs such as grapes, raw onions, raisins and chocolate. Do research on toxic food and household items to keep your dog safe.





## Exercise and training

The level of exercise your dog will need will depend on the breed, age and health. Daily exercise is essential to keep dogs healthy and mentally and physically stimulated.

Exercise not only improves your dog's wellbeing, it also helps build muscle tone and prevents depression, obesity, joint problems, heart conditions and behavioural issues. It doesn't matter if you aren't feeling in the mood, if it's cold and wet outside, or you have a busy day planned, your dog needs exercise and stimulation every day. A large garden is no substitute for regular exercise.

Don't forget it is a legal requirement to pick up poop after your dog. You could face a fixed penalty or a court fine if you fail to bag and bin what your dog leaves behind in areas easily accessible to and routinely used by the general public.

Training is also part of the fun of having a dog and it is important that your dog has good manners and is well-behaved when being walked and when meeting new people. You may want to assist your dog with basic training and socialising up

to more advanced training and agility. To find a reputable trainer who uses appropriate methods of training, visit [www.apdt.co.uk](http://www.apdt.co.uk) to find a class near you.

## Identification

It is your legal responsibility as a dog owner to ensure your dog has visible identification in the form of a collar and tag with your contact details on.

Microchipping is a legal requirement and is a more permanent and inexpensive way of identifying your dog – it is a simple procedure that is over in seconds, for a lifetime of peace of mind. A microchip about the size of a grain of rice is inserted into the skin between your dog's shoulder blades. Each chip has its own unique number held on a central database.

If your dog gets lost, it can then be scanned to find your details. Engraving 'I am microchipped' on your dog's tag will highlight the fact the dog has identification.

All of our adopted dogs are microchipped.

Remember to update the microchip contact details if you move home or change phone numbers.

## Register your dog

You will need to register your dog with a vet that is local to you. You will be able to take your dog to your vet for any treatments and vaccinations. It is important to have the contact details of an out-of-hours emergency vet service. Ask your vet for more details.

## Pet insurance

We also advise taking out pet insurance for your new companion as soon as possible, as veterinary treatment can be very expensive.

## Neutering

Neutering is the name for a veterinary procedure which offers animals a permanent solution for birth control. It may also be known as spaying, castrating, desexing, fixing or sterilising. It is one of the hallmarks of responsible pet ownership.

Neutering improves your dog's health by reducing or eliminating the risk of certain cancers and other diseases. Your dog is also less likely to develop unwanted behaviours such as the need to escape, roam, or fight with other dogs. Male and female dogs can be neutered from twelve weeks of age.

Talk to your vet about this procedure on your first visit.





## Vaccinations

It is essential to vaccinate your dog against common canine illnesses, some of which can be fatal. The main diseases vaccinated against are Canine Parvovirus, Canine Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis, Leptospirosis and Parainfluenza. If you are thinking of putting your dog into kennels, they may request that your dog also has the Kennel Cough vaccination. Puppies can be vaccinated from eight weeks of age; it is a simple course of two vaccinations three to four weeks apart, followed by annual boosters.

## Worming

Worms are internal parasites that can be a serious health risk to puppies and dogs if left untreated and may potentially infect and cause disease in humans. Roundworms and tapeworms are the most common ones to infest dogs, although it isn't always easy to tell if your dog has worms as there may not be any noticeable symptoms. There is also a life-threatening lungworm that is carried by slugs and snails. If your dog comes into contact with these common garden pests there is a risk he could

become infected. Your vet will be able to advise you on appropriate worming products.

## Fleas

Most dogs suffer from a flea infestation at some point, so we advise that you regularly treat your dog to prevent fleas. While there may be no symptoms at all, the most common symptom to look out for is scratching or chewing, most commonly at the tail-base and lower back.

The adult fleas you may see on your dog are only the tip of the iceberg – 95% of the problem exists as eggs, larvae and pupae in the home.

We recommend that you do not buy off-the-shelf worming and flea treatments as they are ineffective and dangerous if not suitable. Your vet will be able to advise and prescribe the most suitable and effective treatments for your dog.

## Ongoing health checks

Your vet will carry out a 'nose to tail' MOT when your dog is given its annual booster vaccinations. But you can play a key role too by keeping an eye on your dog's health and helping him to stay in tip top condition and live a long and healthy life:

- Look out for changes in your dog's food consumption, drinking and toilet habits. Does your dog have less energy or are they slower in getting up or jumping? Monitor your dog's faeces for colour, consistency and signs of worms.
- Rub your hands over your dog's body including the head, legs and paws to check for any lumps or bumps or anything stuck in his paw pads.
- Keep your eyes open for evidence of fleas, ticks and other parasites. Check your dog's coat quality and whether any dandruff or hair loss is evident. Is your dog scratching, chewing or biting excessively?

- Check your dog's eyes and ears for any abnormalities or discharge. The corners of his eyes should be free of discharge and his ears should be clean.
- Regularly examine your dog's mouth for signs of disease such as bad breath, reddened, bleeding or swollen gums and build up of tartar.
- If it looks like your dog is losing weight or is overweight, it's advisable to see the vet.

In bringing a dog into your family, you are taking on a lifelong commitment, so make sure you are ready for it.

## Vet services provided by Mayhew

Before a dog leaves Mayhew to go to their new home, they will be fully vet-checked in our Community Vet Clinic and will have received the following treatments/procedures:

- Neutering.
- Microchipping.
- Flea and worm treatment.





- First set of vaccinations (we will also provide the second set of vaccinations if they are still in our care at that time).
- A final vet check before they leave Mayhew.

If a dog has existing medical conditions, we will offer advice on how best to manage them. Mayhew offers affordable veterinary preventative care at our Vet Clinic. You will still need to register with your own vet for other treatments.

## Nurse Clinics

Mayhew's Community Vet Clinic holds weekly Nurse Clinics.

A registered veterinary nurse can provide the following services:

- Microchipping.
- Flea and worm treatments (provided the dog has been seen by one of our vets during a vaccination appointment within the last year).
- Basic grooming such as brushing to remove matted fur.

- Ear cleaning.
- Nail clipping.
- Weight loss advice.
- Dental care advice.
- Senior health screens.
- General health checks.

Visit [www.themayhew.org/nurseclinics](http://www.themayhew.org/nurseclinics) to check dates and times to make an appointment.

### Contact the Vet Clinic

Tel: 020 8962 8017

Web: [www.themayhew.org/vetclinic](http://www.themayhew.org/vetclinic)

Email: [vetclinic@mayhewanimalhome.org](mailto:vetclinic@mayhewanimalhome.org)