

## Shiny, Happy Puppies

**Give your pup a healthy start by covering these basics.**

*Eve Adamson*

Posted: Mon Nov 25 00:00:00 PST 2002

You're glowing. That new puppy dazzles you with its gleaming eyes and playful energy. If only this rush could last forever. Well, it can if you're attentive to the pup's health. Puppies need check-ups, shots, proper nutrition and a strong immune system. Yours depends on you. Here's a simple guide to satisfying its needs.

**First Veterinarian Visit**The first check-up is crucial to a lifetime of good health habits and maintenance.

**Why:** Veterinarians spot many health problems right away. If you purchase your puppy from a breeder, you should be able to return it if a serious health problem exists. If you're already attached to the pup, you can address problems immediately. This first visit also is your opportunity to learn everything you can about proper puppy care.

**When:** Take your new puppy to the veterinarian within the first 48 hours of acquiring it, preferably before you take it home for the first time. It probably needs vaccinations and your breeder's health guarantee may require an immediate visit.

**How to Prepare:** Find a good veterinarian by asking friends for recommendations and interviewing a few prospects. The veterinarian should have solid credentials and a good rapport with you and your puppy.

**Remember:** Don't hesitate to ask specific questions about anything from nutrition to grooming to training to the idiosyncrasies of your dog's breed.

**The Veterinarian View:** "It's important to allot enough time for the veterinarian to go over all the issues of having a new puppy," said Kate Schulze, DVM, of Sunrise Pet Clinic in Tucson, Ariz. "In addition to the basics of puppy care, your veterinarian should discuss behavior training. The No. 1 reason for euthanization is behavior problems, so you need to get off on the right foot in the first eight to 12 weeks so that you can have a long and happy 14 to 16 years with your pet."

**Nutrition**Proper nutrition is essential for your fast-growing pup's healthy development.

**Why:** Different breeds have slightly different nutritional requirements, but puppies generally need three times the calories of an adult dog of equal weight. Pups also have higher calcium, energy and protein requirements. Inadequate portions and diets compromise growth and development.