DR STU MOBILE VET

It just takes time.

Your new puppy: a practical care checklist

Personalised Mobile Vet | Dr Stuart Cunningham BVSc | Reviewed November 2026

Start with the dates and products in your puppy's breeder or rescue record. Have the record ready for our home visit, or send it ahead, and we will set the plan from there. The ages below are a guide for a healthy puppy in South East Queensland.

> **Start socialisation now.** Puppies are especially receptive to positive new experiences from about **3–14 weeks**. This overlaps the vaccine course, so choose safe, calm experiences rather than waiting until 16 weeks. Do not force a frightened puppy to interact; early fear can have lasting effects, although dogs can still learn later.

YOUR PUPPY'S EARLY CARE MILESTONES

6–8 wk	10–12 wk	16+ wk	6 mo	12 mo after final
First C3	Next C3	Final early C3	Review worming plan	First C3 booster + check
□ Done: _____	□ Done: _____	□ Done: _____	□ Done: _____	□ Done: _____

Worming: every 2 weeks from 2–12 weeks, then monthly until 6 months. Dates vary with the record and product used.

Before your puppy comes home

- □ Ask for the **vaccination, worming, flea/tick and microchip records**. Note the date, product and next due date for each. Confirm the microchip is registered and transfer the contact details to your name.
- □ Set up a quiet sleeping space, puppy-safe area, food and water bowls, a harness, lead, safe chew toys and a toilet area. Put medicines, cords, toxic plants, chocolate and other hazards out of reach.
- □ Buy a complete, balanced **puppy food** suited to your puppy's expected adult size. Keep the existing food initially and change gradually if needed. Provide fresh water at all times.
- □ Book a **health check within a few days of arrival**, especially if the paperwork is unclear. In Queensland, puppies should be microchipped before 12 weeks of age unless an exemption applies.

Around 8 weeks: the first days at home

- □ Check whether the **first C3** vaccination (distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus) has already been given. The usual first dose is at **6–8 weeks**. Book the next vaccination **2–4 weeks later**. The final early dose needs to be at **16 weeks or older**; a 6-week start may need an extra visit to keep the correct intervals.
- □ Continue **intestinal worming every 2 weeks from 2 through 12 weeks** (2, 4 and 6 weeks are usually handled by the breeder, then 8, 10 and 12 weeks), then **monthly until 6 months**. Use a puppy product for the current weight and record every dose. Ask which worms the chosen product covers, including tapeworm.
- □ Choose an **age- and weight-approved flea and paralysis tick product** with your vet, and start when its label allows. In South East Queensland, prevention is usually needed year-round. Check your puppy's whole body for ticks every day, particularly after time outdoors.
- □ Set up **heartworm prevention** early, using a product approved for your puppy's age and weight. Heartworm is spread by mosquitoes; flea or tick treatment does not necessarily cover it. Keep the schedule exact. If prevention is interrupted, ask about testing and restarting.
- □ Take the puppy to the toilet area **after waking, eating and play**, and often between those times. Reward immediately after toileting in the right place. Clean accidents calmly; do not punish.

- ☐ Give several short, pleasant experiences each day: different household sounds, surfaces, people, gentle handling and brief time alone with a chew or food toy. Let your puppy retreat if worried. Do not force greetings.

Around 10–12 weeks

- ☐ Attend the **next C3 vaccination visit** (usually 2–4 weeks after the previous dose). Ask whether a **kennel cough** vaccine fits your puppy's likely contact with other dogs. It may be needed for boarding, daycare or group activities.
- ☐ Keep worming every 2 weeks to 12 weeks, then switch to the planned monthly schedule. Weigh the puppy before dosing and check the current product's weight band.
- ☐ Join a **well-run, reward-based puppy class** that accepts puppies with age-appropriate vaccination and cleans its premises. Arrange calm meetings with healthy, vaccinated dogs you know in private spaces. Avoid dog parks and high-traffic dog areas for now.
- ☐ Practise **name → reward**, **come → reward**, and a few seconds of relaxed harness wearing each day. Keep sessions short. Reward the behaviour you want; avoid punishment and aversive equipment.
- ☐ Begin handling practice: one gentle touch to a paw, ear or mouth, then a treat, and stop while the puppy is comfortable. This makes future grooming and vet care easier.

At 16 weeks or older

- ☐ Book the **final dose of the initial C3 series at 16 weeks or later**, even if your puppy has already had earlier injections. Maternal antibodies can block those earlier doses. The timing matters more than a set number of injections.
- ☐ Ask when ordinary public walks are appropriate for your area. For higher-risk places, allow about **1–2 weeks after the final core vaccine** for the immune response, as your vet advises. Continue safe socialisation in the meantime.
- ☐ Keep monthly intestinal worming until 6 months. Check that flea/tick and heartworm protection have **no gaps**. Products differ: one treatment may cover several parasites but not all of them.
- ☐ Discuss **desexing timing** for your puppy's breed, size and circumstances; there is no single best age for every dog. Ask about dental care, body condition and what to expect as adult teeth come through.

At 6 months and beyond

- ☐ Write down the date for the **first C3 booster and health check: 12 months after the final early C3 dose**. Use the date in the vaccination record, rather than your puppy's first birthday.
- ☐ Move to an adult intestinal-worm plan suited to your dog's lifestyle; **every 3 months** is a common baseline, but hunting, scavenging, raw offal and some family situations may need a different plan. Keep flea/tick and heartworm prevention going year-round as advised.
- ☐ Continue short reward-based training: recall, loose-lead walking, settling on a mat and comfortable alone time. Progress gradually. If fear or reactivity is developing, ask for help early.
- ☐ Book a **health check every year**. After the first booster, C3 may be given every **3 years** with a suitable product. Kennel cough protection, if needed, is generally **annual**. A yearly health check still matters in the years between core boosters.

Call promptly if your puppy is flat, repeatedly vomiting, has bloody diarrhoea, has trouble breathing, or develops weakness after possible tick exposure. These are not “wait until the next vaccine” problems.

Book a home visit: personalisedmobilevet.com.au · Online booking · 0478 027 533

Sources: WSAVA vaccination guidelines (2024); AVA vaccination policy; AVA socialisation policy; Animal Welfare League Queensland foster protocol; RSPCA tick advice; RSPCA toilet training; Queensland microchipping.