



## After Adoption: Chip Number and a Vet Check

### Chip Number

As soon as your adopted dog arrives to the Netherlands, please register his / her chip number under your name. This can be done on De Stichting Nederlandse Databank Gezelschapsdieren (NDG) website:

<https://ndg.nl/>

### Vet Check

When a dog is adopted from the shelter, he/she has been vaccinated, has been neutered / castrated and has been microchipped. The shelters work hard to make adopting a dog as easy as possible. However, it is still very important to follow up with your veterinarian soon after adoption.

During the exam, it is very important that your veterinarian reviews if your dog will need additional vaccinations to stay up to date. In short, a complete wellness exam is vital to ensuring your new companion is happy and healthy!

## The First 7 Days – Bringing Your Adopted Dog Home

Bringing a dog you've adopted from a shelter into your home can be one of the most rewarding experiences of a lifetime. It's hard to know what a shelter dog went through before meeting you, so it's vitally important to welcome him home in a way that will help him feel safe and acclimate smoothly.

The first few days and even weeks can be confusing for you and your rescue puppy. Learning what to expect this first week can help ease your worries.

### Before Bringing Your Dog Home

Even if you don't know everything about the dog you're adopting, there are still some ways to start getting prepared so that his arrival can go smoothly.

#### Dog-proof your home

This pertains to any areas of your home where your dog will be allowed to go. Make sure household chemicals are stowed securely away or out of reach. It's also a good idea to keep electrical cords out of plain view or to tape them in place. Also, be sure to remove any plants from your home that are toxic to dogs.

#### Designate a place in your home where your dog can spend most of his time

Every dog needs a clean, cozy bed to rest in. Whether or not you're crate-training your dog, it's also wise to set up a crate that your dog can retreat to if he feels overwhelmed or needs rest.

#### Establish a "care schedule" for your dog

Before bringing your dog home, create a schedule for when you will feed, walk, and train your dog, as well as how often he should be let out to go potty.



### Have some toys and treats ready

It's important to start reinforcing good behaviors in your dog from day one. Make sure you have some treats ready to reward your dog for going potty in the right place and some chew toys to distract your dog if he starts to chew on your belongings.

## **What to Expect When Adopting and Bringing Home a Rescue Dog**

You have just adopted your new pup and he is now in his forever home, but your dog does NOT understand that yet. Your dog may have been in a shelter, foster home or bounced from shelter to foster home several times. He is most likely confused, stressed out, and unclear of his future.

Hopefully, you prepared before bringing your new dog home, but now is a good time to review to make sure you didn't forget anything.

## **Day 1: Bringing Your Adopted Dog Home**

### Let Your Newly Adopted Dog Decompress

- As soon as you bring your dog home, keep him on a leash and take him directly to the area where you want him to go potty. When you see him use this potty area, reward him with a treat to reinforce this behaviour. Even dogs that have been housetrained for years can have accidents when placed in an unfamiliar environment, so remember to be patient as your dog acclimates.
- Once you are home, give your doggy some time to explore their surroundings, have a sniff around in the garden and get a feel for the place.
- The first day your adopted dog comes home should be uneventful. Keep things quiet and calm, as tempting as it may feel, don't invite all your friends to meet him.
- It's important to give your new dog space to decompress. Set up an area of your home that he can chill out for a while. A crate with a bed or blankets in the room is a great start. You don't need to shut the door to the crate, just have it as space for him to retreat if he wants.
- Sit back and observe your new best friend. Give the dog the chance to approach, sniff and initiate the interaction. Offering up a treat is a good way to help the dog to familiarize themselves with family members with nice things, e.g. treats/food. You all might be tempted to show your affections with hugs, kisses, picking them up, patting them on the head and staring at them when they first arrive, but this type of behavior can make dogs feel scared or uneasy, so avoid them, to begin with.
- If you have kids, don't allow them to hang on the dog, hug him, put their faces to the dogs face, etc. In other words, explain to your kids they need to give the new dog some space for a little while.
- Learn to read your dogs body language. It will help you bond and understand your dog so much better!

### Bringing Home a Shelter Dog and Other Pets

If you have other pets in the home, keep them separated for the first 24 hours. Remember, your new dog is stressed; meeting another dog just adds another layer of stress and can result in a dogfight. This goes for even if your dog is the most friendly dog ever or if the dogs have met before. Bringing another dog into your home is different than a casual meeting and dogs reactive differently when it is in their territory.



## Your Rescue Dog May or May Not Want to Eat

Don't worry if your dog doesn't want to eat the first few days, this is completely normal. Try to feed the same food he was eating in his foster home or shelter, to alleviate any belly aches. You can wean him to a new food next week, but the first week keep things simple. Make sure he is drinking water; you don't want him to get dehydrated.

### **Day 2: Getting Your Dog Comfortable**

The second day your dog may want to explore his surrounds more. Every dog is different; so don't be concerned if your newly adopted dog prefers to hide under the table or in his crate. This is perfectly normal and part of the decompression processes.

But if your dog wants more attention, then give it to him slowly. Do not give your newly adopted dog full access to your home. Keeping his freedom to a minimum will help keep unwanted behaviors at bay.

If you have other pets, you may introduce them now. If it is another dog, make the meeting outside in a neutral area. Take them both for a long walk together before entering the home again. All animals involved should be leashed and allowed to sniff each other to introduce themselves. An initial tussle may happen especially if you are adding a male dog to the home of another male dog or two. Who will be dominant needs to be decided so one dog might take the lead. The tussle might just be a subtle growl or a bark. There might not be a tussle at all if all of the dogs are good nature and are friendly to other dogs. If you have a cat, then it is suggested to keep the introduction on the cat's terms. Using a baby gate to give the cat a space to escape if desired.

Remember, your new dog may have never seen or experienced things you take for granted. Stairs, television, kids, bicycles, etc. can all be strange to a new dog. It's important to keep all this in mind when introducing and exposing your dog to new experiences. Always be patient, positive and reassuring. Don't avoid the things that make him fearful, but slowly show him there is nothing to be afraid of.

### **Days 3-7: Creating a Routine for Your Adopted Dog**

Slowly add activities throughout the first week. Simply going for daily walks to explore the neighborhood is enough. Every dog will be different and each dog will need its own amount of time to adjust to his new home. So learn to read your dog's body language and take it slow.

If you thought your dog was potty trained but is having accidents in the house, don't be too alarmed... this is pretty normal. Just go back to basics of potty training. If he is marking in the house, keep your dog on a leash or crated until you can trust him. This could be days, weeks or months.

As part of making them feel welcome, you should also give your new dog plenty of opportunity for "quiet time". This will let them acclimatize to all of their new surroundings. Just remember to remain observant of their responses and keep everything at the dog's pace; after all, moving into a new home with a new family can be quite overwhelming.

Create a routine. Dogs and people alike strive on a schedule. Feed your dog twice a day, walk every day, etc.

Don't allow behaviours just because you feel sorry for your dog. If you allow it now, it makes it more difficult to change in the future. Lay the rules down now. If you don't want your dog on the couch, never allow him on the couch. If you don't want your dog to beg at the kitchen table, don't allow it this week just because he's new to your home.

Do you need to take a dog training class? Every dog is different. You may get lucky and your dog was already trained in his previous life. But 9 out of 10 times, your dog was surrendered or abandoned because he wasn't trained. Read about the different type of dog trainers and decide what is best for you and your dog.



## Does Your Adopted Dog Have Doggy Baggage?

We all come with a history (baggage), and a rescue dog is no different. You may not know much about your dog's past, or maybe you do. Either way, don't feel sorry for your dog. Your dog needs a strong leader that he can trust and lean on when needed, not someone to feel sorry for him.

Show your dog he can trust you to protect him when he needs it most. The first week, month and 3 months are critical times for you and your dog.

## Home alone: preventing separation anxiety

### What is Separation Anxiety in Dogs?

Separation anxiety in dogs is frantic, distressed and often destructive behaviors associated with separation from their pet parents. It can still qualify even if these actions only last for a few minutes. Pet parents often mistake separation anxiety for disobedience or spite, but dogs are actually distressed and upset because of their parent's absence.

### Signs of Separation Anxiety

Signs of separation anxiety in dogs include salivating, barking, howling, dilated pupils, panting, trembling and pacing. Behavioral signs include ignoring food, coprophagia, destroying items in the home, scratching at furniture, attempting to escape from a crate or room, and exuberantly greeting their owner as if they haven't seen them in years.

### How to Stop Separation Anxiety in Dogs?

As a pet parent, your goal is to find the best calming anxiety treatments for your pet. Treating separation anxiety in dogs does not require a medical professional, and you can succeed on your own with persistent work and dedication. Dog anxiety treatment includes behavioral changes that will help your pup learn that being alone is not scary. Here is a list of dog calming treatments:

#### 1. Change Your "Going Away" Signals

Use a different door, put your coat on but don't leave for 15 minutes, leave your keys/purse/shoes in a different location. The goal is to break your dog's association of these actions with your departure and not let them trigger separation anxiety. When you leave, give your dog a treat or a toy to play with to distract them. Calming treats for dogs can be used as a short-term remedy for separation anxiety. They will also teach your pooch that being alone is not scary and create positive associations with your departure.

#### 2. Downplay Goodbyes and Hellos

Don't get emotional when leaving your dog and overexcited when you come back. By paying too much attention to your departure and return, you risk reinforcing the dog's fear of your absence. Calmly say goodbye and leave. When you come back, quietly say hello and don't get too affectionate until your dog has calmed down.

#### 3. Exercise Your Dog Before Departure

A tired dog is a calm dog. Exercising at least 30 minutes before departure will relax your dog and divert its attention to food and sleep.



#### 4. Train Your Dog to Be Alone When You Are in the House

Tell your pooch to stay in a room by themselves while you go to a different part of the house. If your dog has severe separation anxiety, start with small 5-10 second intervals and work up to 20-30 minutes over several weeks.

#### 5. Create Personal Space for Your Dog

Instead of sleeping with your pup, get them a separate dog bed where you can also pet them and give calming treats. This will teach your dog to enjoy having their own space and be independent of you, which will help ease their anxiety when you're away.

#### 6. Leave Comfort Items and Background Music on for Your Dog

Items that have your scent such as dirty laundry can help your dog relax and remember that you will come back. Remove stress factors such as chokers, collars, chains, or crates if your dog doesn't like them. Hide treats around the house so they can hunt them while you're away. Finally, soothing nature sounds can help your dog relax and fall asleep.

#### 7. Don't Leave Your Dog Alone for Too Long!

Your dog can learn to be alone for part of the day, but if you need to be away for longer than 6-8 hours, bring them to work if possible. You can also structure your errands so that you are only away for short periods of time. If you need to leave for several days, ask a friend or a relative or consider a doggy daycare service or hotel to make sure they're taken care of when you're away.

#### 8. Medicine

To treat severe separation anxiety in dogs, consider calming medicine. Contact your veterinarian to discuss your options.

#### 9. Shop for Anxiety Treatment Pet Supplies

Get a KONG toy which will entertain your pup by engaging them to work for a treat. A dog swaddling jacket can also help ease your pup's anxiety by applying constant gentle pressure to their body.

## Quality food

Watch "Petfooled" on Youtube to gain a better understanding of the pet food industry. Of course, it is propaganda, but it gives a very good insight into why as responsible dog owners, we need to know what is in our dogs food.

Quality kibble brands include: Acana, Orijen or Darf Vol bites. If you are looking to feed home-cooked food, you can also check Dogchef (<https://www.dogchef.be/en/>)



**Note from Rescue Dogs and Cats, The Netherlands** – this document has been prepared using the information available on internet and our own experience with our dogs and cats that we have helped to adopt and rehome. If you experience more serious issues with your adopted dog, we would strongly advise you to get in touch with a professional dog behaviorist.

## References

### The First 7 Days – Bringing Your Adopted Dog Home:

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- <http://www.dogsoutloud.org/2013/05/so-youve-brought-home-a-new-dog-now-what/>

### Home alone: preventing separation anxiety:

- <https://petcube.com/blog/how-to-ease-dogs-separation-anxiety/>