

Puppy Guide for new Owners

Here are some considerations that will help you prepare for your American Hairless Terrier puppy.

Before you take your puppy home you need to make the following preparations and have the following equipment: (See the corresponding numbered text below the list for more detail)

1. A transport crate and an “at home” crate.
2. Know which vet you will use at home.
3. Have a supply of puppy food (Purina ProPlan Puppy lamb & rice) – and a food dish and water dish (one that won't tip over).
4. Have a collar, a leash and a tag for the collar that has your phone number engraved on it.
5. A cushion that fits the “at home” crate for your puppy to sleep on and call his own.
6. A rubber toy or two for your pup to chew on instead of chewing on his cushion or any of your things.
7. A book on house breaking and training your puppy. If you buy a book that is oriented toward a single breed you will want one for a Rat Terrier (the parent breed of the AHT), or the Toy Fox Terrier or the Jack Russell Terrier.

- 1) Have a transport crate and an “at home” crate. One crate can do double duty if it is large enough. Your “at home” crate should be large enough for your adult dog to stand up, turn around and not feel cramped. Based on your puppy's parents' size the adult crate should measure at least 24”L x 18”W x 21”H. If you have a separate transport crate it can be smaller depending on the size of the dog and the length of time he/she will be in the transport crate. You may want your “at home” crate to allow your pup to easily see his surroundings (a crate made from wire mesh). A transport crate might be one with less visibility so the pup will settle down and sleep without the distraction of the world whizzing by at 60 mph (a crate made of plastic and not as “open” for visibility). Just imagine you are the dog and decide if you would be comfortable in the crate you have chosen for your friend. Most crates are collapsible for storage. The transport crate should have enough room for the puppy/dog to stand up and turn around in. The crate will have a tray at the bottom that you can line with newspaper to absorb any puppy “deposits” and it should have a small bowl that attaches to the side that can be filled with fresh water. Even on the drive home, use a crate if the trip is more than ½ hour. Holding a puppy in your lap for an extended time can result in dropping the puppy, crushing it, or having it pee on you. NEVER transport your puppy/dog by air cargo – there are too many things that can hurt her during air transport and ground handling unless she is traveling in the cabin with you.

Have your new puppy sleep in her crate. She will cry at first because she has been used to sleeping in a pile with her brothers and sisters. Even if you will let her sleep with you when she is an adult, do not sleep with your puppy – it is too easy (even for a child) to roll over the puppy in your sleep and crush her without realizing.

- 2) Establish a relationship with a local veterinarian that will care for the health of your puppy and spay or neuter the puppy at the appropriate age. Many vets recommend spaying or neutering at about 1 year of age. We are advised that a puppy's overall structural growth benefits by leaving her “intact” until she is full grown at about 1 year old. Talk to your vet and make your own decision on this matter. Visit the vet's office before you pick up your puppy and get a schedule of prices and an understanding of how the vet runs his/her office. Start your pup on heartworm preventive medicine as soon as your

vet recommends (our vet recommends at 10-11 weeks). Heartworm is much more prevalent now than in years past and an ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure (maybe worth 10 pounds of cure). Heartworm medicine will also prevent most parasitic worms that can infect dogs, and also will keep fleas and ticks away. You will usually not need any other medication for your pup. While on heartworm medicine (we use HeartGard Plus or the generic Iverhart) don't waste money on worming medicines or flea and tick medicines.

Your puppy has had vaccines and has been dewormed. The record of these veterinary treatments will be provided to you along with a health certificate. Make sure you provide these records to your vet so your puppy can receive appropriate preventive treatment to keep him/her healthy.

Keep your puppy's toenails short. It's not a matter of appearance – it's a matter of foot health. Your dog's nails should not touch the floor when he walks – he should be walking on the pads of his feet only. If the nails touch the floor his toes will be bent upward and this will be uncomfortable and hard on his feet. Ideally, you should trim your puppy's nails every week. If you are new to this it will be easier if two people can work together – one to hold the pup and one to trim. Use an appropriate size trimmer – a fingernail trimmer is good for a puppy. Use a larger size as your pup grows. Cut the end of the nail but do not cut the "quick". You can usually see the quick in translucent or white nails. If the nail is black try to cut it to the same length as a nearby nail where the quick is visible. If you happen to cut the quick your pup will yelp and let you know how unhappy he is – but there will be no serious damage. Have some styptic powder on hand to stop the bleeding – make sure you get it stopped. If you can't find styptic powder you can use a product called Wound Seal which you can find at a drugstore. We use a Dremel tool with an attachment that protects the foot from the sanding drum. There are other rotary tools specially made for trimming dog's nails. The motor noise does bother some dogs – it did bother ours at first. But they get used to it and it is much safer to use than nail cutters since you gradually grind the nail down. If you do go a little too far your pup will let you know, but the sander will usually have already stopped any bleeding. Caring for your pet will cost some money but it doesn't have to be expensive. Here are some thoughts on how to get the most out of your "pet expense dollar". Keeping your dog healthy is much less expensive than treating a sick pet. Spend money on vaccines and heartworm medicine. **We don't give leptospirosis vaccine since many AHT's react badly to it and there is limited need for it** – house kept dogs with limited exposure to dogs that run loose have little need for protection against lepto. If your vet talks you into giving leptospirosis vaccine watch for hives. Usually hives will occur quickly, but we have had dogs that react with a hives allergic reaction 2 to 3 days later. If your dog displays hives get her to the vet immediately. If there is any delay in getting to the vet give her Benadryl in the meantime (the usual dose is ½ of a child tablet). Swelling of the throat related to hives can obstruct breathing and become life threatening to your puppy.

Don't spend money on expensive pet food, vitamins or fancy, exotic treats. Find a treat with good nutrition that your pup likes and stick with it. Most of the exotic treats are marketed with **you** in mind ("don't you want the BEST for your pet?") but your pup would just as soon have a Milk Bone. And don't buy any edible treats made in China – there have been problems you don't need to expose your puppy to.

Do a little shopping around for a vet. Also keep in mind that many of the "chain" vet practices give bonuses to their vets based on the billings to customers. We have paid \$250 for the same service/treatment that another vet charged \$75 for. We once had a dog that had an infected anal gland. We were out of town and paid \$150 for an initial visit. I was told that proper follow up

treatment would be another \$450 to \$600. We returned home to our own vet who provided medicine and treatment instructions with a total cost for a successful cure of \$50.

- 3) Your pup has been fed Purina ProPlan Small Breed Puppy Lamb & Rice dog food. We recommend that you continue on this brand of food until you transition him/her to a complete adult dog food at about 6 months of age. In any case, minimize the number of times you switch foods – a change in diet may upset your puppy’s digestion as he gets used to it. If you do make a change in food, do it over a week or so and mix more and more of the new food with the old until it is all the new food. Remember, the major dog food companies have spent billions of dollars over decades perfecting the nutrition and taste of their foods. Most “special” foods are designed to appeal to humans by promising a lot of things that we value, but have little or no science to back up any claims of superiority. Don’t ever feed your dog chocolate or grapes – these can be very harmful to your dog. Table scraps are not a good idea. They may not hurt your dog but may make him fat. Keep your dog healthy – don’t let him become fat! And you both will be happier if he doesn’t have bad habits like begging at the dinner table.

Feed your puppy 2 or 3 times a day. As he grows, gradually reduce the number of feedings. We like to give our adult dogs a light meal in the morning and a larger meal in late afternoon. Feeding only once a day often results in a dog spitting up acid and bile because of an empty stomach. You should not be able to see your dog’s ribs, but you should be able to feel her ribs as you lightly run your fingers along her side. You should see a definite “waist” when looking from above and a “tucked up” stomach when looking from the side. Regulate the quantity of food you feed so he has a healthy weight – you will both be happier. Your puppy’s mom weighs 16 pounds and his dad weighs 15 pounds. You may try leaving food out all the time – some dogs will “self-feed” without becoming fat. If your puppy will regulate her own feeding without becoming fat then this method is fine. But your puppy’s parents would be obese if we let them self feed.

- 4) Always leash your pup when out of the house – a puppy can be 50 feet away in a heartbeat and that can be very dangerous. Don’t take a chance! In addition to a collar with a tag you may want to microchip your pup. A rice grain sized RFID chip is inserted under the skin between the shoulders and allows a vet to identify the owner of any lost dog which is brought to the vet. The charge is usually under \$50 and can help to find a lost pet – but a collar tag is your best bet since it can be read without taking the dog to a vet’s office.
- 5) A cushion to sleep on inside the crate doesn’t have to be fancy – just reasonably comfortable. Make sure that nothing on or in it could choke or hurt your puppy (like upholstery buttons) if he does make a mistake and chew on it. Some dogs will chew and eat cushion material or clothing like socks. Eating things like that can cause an intestinal obstruction that requires surgery. If you see signs of eating the cushion remove it immediately.
- 6) Puppies should have some simple toys. They don’t need to be fancy – an old sock **with a knot** in it can be a great toy. A toilet paper roll can work for a few minutes, but you will have a lot of bits and pieces to clean up. Some pups have a lot of fun with an empty plastic water bottle (take the little ring from the cap off first and if he starts to break pieces off take it away). Ny-la-bones are OK for a while, but when chewing creates lots of sharp little pieces that the dog can break off and swallow they should be discarded. Some dogs love to chase a ball across the room – his mommy (Danica) couldn’t care less about chasing a ball (unless Red goes after it first). Dogs, like people, have their individual preferences. You will have to learn what interests your puppy. In my opinion a **hard rubber** toy of

the right size is exactly the right kind of toy. Get a few different ones and make sure some are for individual play and some are for you and your pup to play with together. Do give your puppy some toys and play with her. Don't spend a lot of money on toys that will appeal more to you than your puppy.

Also remember that your pup will chew the toys. If the toy has a "squeaker" it may be chewed loose and your pup could swallow it. Pups will pick up anything in their mouth and will swallow anything they can, so please keep small items (like children's snap-together toys or small action figures) out of your pups reach. Dogs should have toys – he will play with some by himself and he will play with some while you and he are playing together. Usually the simplest, least expensive toys will serve as well or better than expensive ones. Did you ever notice your children having more fun with the box a toy came in than with the toy itself? Don't spend a lot of money on expensive toys, but do spend a little time thinking about what happens as the pup chews on her toy. Will pieces come off that the pup will swallow? Is that metal squeaky thing likely to come out of the rubber rat and go right down the pup's throat? Is there a sharp edge that will cut a gum or a foot pad?

If you take your puppy/dog to a "dog park" bring your own water and dish. A "community" water dish is a good way to transmit illness. While it's rare for someone to bring a sick dog to a park, you really don't need to take a chance on your pet's health.

- 7) Get a book on housebreaking your puppy. One of the best practices is to take your pup out when you know she is going to need to relieve herself. This will be first thing in the morning and immediately after each meal. In between those times take your puppy out every 1-2 hours at first. As she grows you can extend the time between "potty breaks". Take your pup out immediately (pick her up if she starts to squat) when she wakes or finishes eating. If you make the investment in time right away she will get in the habit early, and later on she will "hold it" until she can get outside.

Every dog should at least be trained to walk properly on a leash and to come when called. These are matters of safety. Do not let your pup continuously pull on the leash. Use a collar – not a harness – and give sharp corrections. Your pup should not pull – it will hurt his windpipe and can result in dangerous situations. Remember, the leash is there so you can safely control your pet – not so he can lead you around! Training your dog to come when called is more than a convenience – it can be a life or death safety issue. Additional training can result in your dog being a better companion, but at least train your pup for these two behaviors. Always use positive reinforcement when training your puppy. Your pup will naturally want to please you and positive reinforcement will work much better than punishment for unwanted behavior. Always play with your puppy for a few minutes after a training session.

Sometime between now and 10 months of age your puppy will get a lot of pimples. These pimples will be about the size of a pin head and will be mostly on the top of his head, neck and upper back. The pimples will not be inflamed. These are normal and will go away in a few weeks. As they go away the spot where each pimple was, will once again be smooth, but the spot may be without pigment for about 2 weeks. The pigment will fill in and you will not be able to tell where the pimples were. Don't worry about this – you don't need to visit the vet – it happens to all AHT's and may be associated with puberty (much as human adolescent acne). Don't pick at the pimples or try to squeeze them – just let them go away on their own. And don't bathe too often – that will actually dry the skin and worsen the condition. Bathe no more than once a week unless he gets obviously dirty. If, however, your pup should develop inflamed sores or a rash, that would be a different condition from the normal pimples and may need a vet's attention.

Your pup has been exposed to many different loud noises to help him/her avoid being frightened by a new noise. We have done this by playing a specially made CD that has everything from jet planes to rifle shots and thunderstorms. Hopefully your pup will not tremble and cower during a thunderstorm or other noisy situation. When a thunderstorm does occur, don't act differently toward your pup. If you cuddle her when it thunders she may think she should be frightened. Instead, behave normally and she will get the idea that since the storm doesn't bother you, it should not bother her either. On the other hand, don't intentionally expose your pup to unnecessarily loud noise. If you play music at outdoor concert levels don't let your pup near the speakers – extra loud noise can cause deafness in dogs just as it can to you.

In our opinion dogs are the best companions in the world. We hope your relationship with your puppy is as rewarding as ours is with our dogs. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions – we will be glad to help in any way we can. In the unlikely event that in the future you are not able to keep your puppy, no matter what the reason, please get in touch with us immediately so we can help.

Native American folktale...an Ojibway tale

The earth trembled and a great rift appeared, separating the first man and woman from the rest of the animal kingdom. As the chasm grew deeper and wider, all the other creatures, afraid for their lives, returned to the forest -- except for the dog, who after much consideration leapt the perilous rift to stay with the humans on the other side. His love for humanity was greater than his bond to other creatures, he explained, and he willingly forfeited his place in paradise to prove it.