



Welcome to the HOPE Family!

Dear Adopter,

Congratulations on your new family member, and thank you for opening your heart and home to a rescue dog! At HOPE Animal Rescue, we believe every animal deserves a second chance—and thanks to you, your dog has one.

This adoption packet is designed to help you feel supported and informed as you begin your journey together. Inside, you'll find essential guidance on health, behavior, and care topics to set you and your new pet up for success. Whether you're a first time dog owner or a seasoned pro, this resource can help ease the transition and build a strong foundation for your relationship.

Included in this packet, you'll find:

- *Feeding Guidelines* – Understand how much to feed your dog based on their size, age, and activity level.
- *Crate & Confinement Setup* – Tips on using crates and pens to support housetraining and safety.
- *Training vs Management Strategies* – Learn how to guide behavior and prevent problems using positive, proactive techniques.
- *Understanding Barking* – Learn why dogs bark and how to respond effectively. Lyme Disease, Heartworm & Distemper: Prevention & Care – Key information about prevention and early detection.
- *First Aid Education* – Vital health info to keep your pup safe and thriving (included in your final packet).

You can expect follow-ups from our team via text or email—more frequently at first, and then periodically throughout the year. We love seeing photos and hearing updates, so please share how your new family member is doing whenever you can.

We know this is just the beginning of your journey together. If you ever have questions or need support, our team is here for you—whether it's navigating behavior concerns, medical questions, or simply celebrating milestones.

Thank you for being part of the solution and for giving your dog the loving home they deserve. We're so grateful to have you in the HOPE family.

Warm regards,

The HOPE Animal Rescue Team

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Understanding your Dog's Needs

Feeding & Nutrition

Although dog food packages have feeding recommendations on the label, every dog is unique so you may still need to adjust how much and how often your dog is eating.

Is your dog at a healthy weight?

Maintaining a healthy weight is one of the most important things you can do for your dog's long-term health. Dogs should ideally have a Body Condition Score (BCS) between 4 and 6 on a 9-point scale. Extra weight puts stress on joints, organs, and the heart — and can shorten your dog's life by up to 2 years.

Try this test:

Make a fist and feel your knuckles — that's what underweight ribs feel like. Run your flat hand over your knuckles — that's how ribs should feel on a dog with an ideal weight.

Feel the knuckles on your palm — if that's how your dog's ribs feel, they're likely overweight.

If your dog is under- or overweight, consult your veterinarian. You may need to adjust portion sizes or switch to a weight management formula to help them reach and maintain a healthy body condition.

What Factors Impact How Much to Feed a Dog?

Activity Level: Feeding guidelines are based on average activity levels. If your dog is highly active, they may need more calories. If they're more sedentary, cutting back may be necessary to prevent weight gain.

Age: A dog's nutritional needs change over time. Puppies need food that supports growth and development, while senior dogs may benefit from specialized diets that support aging joints and overall vitality. Work with your vet to choose the right food for your dog's life stage.

Meal Frequency: Most adult dogs do best with two set mealtimes in the AM and PM are recommended for most dogs.

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General Feed Guidelines

Here is a general rule of thumb if you're having issues figuring out how much to feed your dog!

Adult Dog Size (lbs.)

Dog Food Feeding Amount Per Meal (Cups)

Adult Dog Size (lbs.)	Dog Food Feeding Amount Per Meal (Cups)
3 – 12	$\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$
13 – 20	$\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$
21 – 35	$\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$
26 – 50	$\frac{2}{3}$ – 1
51 – 75	1 – 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
76 – 100	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ – 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
100 +	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ +

Pro Tip:

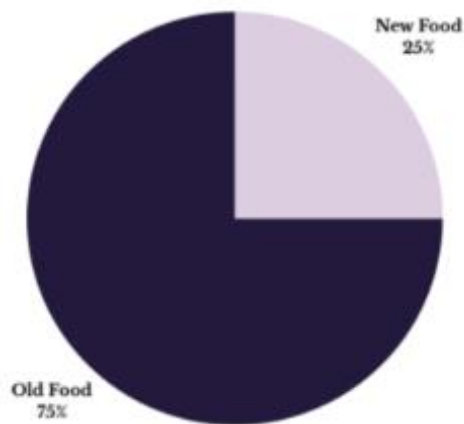
Feeding amounts listed on food bags are often **daily totals**—divide that number between your dog's meals.

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Switching Pet Foods

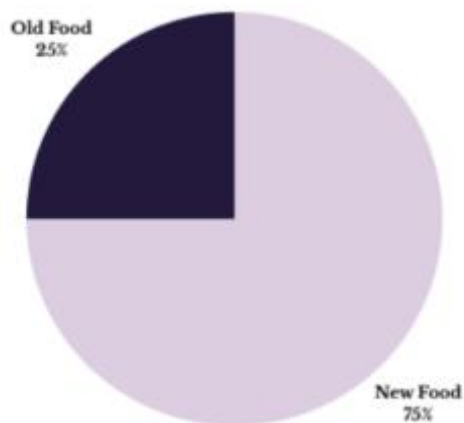
Please speak to your veterinarian to determine a plan that best fits the needs of your animal.



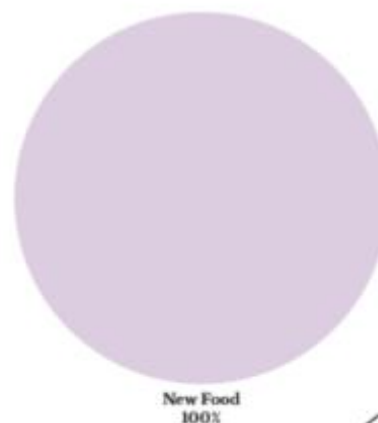
Days 1-2



Days 3-4



Days 5-6



Day 7+



<https://www.purinainstitute.com/sites/default/files/2021-06/Switching-Pet-Foods%20and%20Cats.pdf>

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CRATE & PEN/ONE ROOM

CRATE: an essential tool for teaching your puppy how to hold their bladder and bowels. Confined spaces typically discourage elimination. Many crates come with dividers to adjust the size, allowing you to make the crate smaller or larger as needed. The crate should be about one and a half times the size of your puppy's current size. Generally, dogs have a natural aversion to eliminating where they sleep or eat. The crate serves as a short-term confinement space, particularly for younger puppies. If left in the crate for longer than they can hold it, they may be forced to go to the bathroom inside, potentially developing a habit and experiencing unnecessary anxiety. Over time, as your puppy matures, they will be able to hold it for longer periods. At that point, you can experiment with leaving them in the crate for extended durations—always ensuring this is balanced with plenty of outdoor exercise and potty breaks.

PEN/ONE ROOM: provides your puppy with more freedom than a crate, while still offering a controlled environment. In the early stages, the pen can also serve as a long-term confinement. Place a pee pad in the area if you need to be out of the house longer than your puppy can hold it. By around 4 months of age, the puppy should no longer rely on a pee pad in the pen.

WHEN TO USE...

Crate:

- Feeding meals
- Supervising the puppy when you're home but unable to provide direct supervision and regular potty breaks (every 1–3 hours, depending on the puppy's age and abilities)
- **Short periods** when you're out of the house

Pen:

- Feeding your puppy meals
- Times when you're home but unable to provide direct supervision
- When you're out of the house for **longer periods**

WHAT TO PUT INSIDE...

Crate:

- Two durable chew toys
- A long-lasting chew (e.g., a thick bully stick or collagen chew)
- No soft toys, as these can pose a choking hazard
- You may need to remove any soft bedding if your puppy is prone to urinating on it
- No need to leave water in the crate

Pen:

- Many durable chew toys
- A long-lasting chew (e.g., a thick bully stick or collagen chew)
- A variety of squeaky or interactive toys
- A pee pad, if needed, for times when you're away longer than the puppy can manage
- A blanket or two for sleeping space (you may also use a bed, though puppies often enjoy tearing them up, so blankets are easier to replace and wash)
- A water bowl or bucket

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Training & Behavior

Training vs Management: What's the Difference and Why It Matters

When welcoming a new dog into your home, success comes from using both **training** and **management** together. These two approaches serve different—but equally important—roles:

- **Training** teaches your dog *what* to do.
- **Management** prevents unwanted behaviors *before* they happen.

By combining the two, you create a structure that helps your dog learn, build confidence, and settle into their new environment.

At a Glance: Training vs. Management

Training	Management
Teaching your dog to perform a specific behavior	Controlling the environment to prevent unwanted behavior
Helps create long-term behavior change	Helps avoid mistakes while your dog is still learning
Examples: Sit, stay, come, walking on a leash	Examples: Baby gates, crates, keeping shoes out of reach
Requires consistency and patience	Useful immediately—even before training begins
Focused on what the dog is doing	Focused on what <i>you</i> are doing to set the dog up for success
Strengthens communication between you and your dog	Prevents the dog from practicing undesirable behaviors

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TALKING DOG

Dogs communicate using body language more than they do vocally. Here's a quick guide to get a good idea of what your dog is telling you. Look at the whole of the dog: head, face, body and tail to get a more accurate idea of what the dog is saying.

FEARFUL / ANXIOUS / STRESSED

In all cases, respect the dogs need for space and offer signs of appeasement and peace: See the Doggy Dos and Don'ts poster



If not read correctly, stress, anxiety and fear often lead to behaviour commonly termed "aggressive", as the dog attempts to make it clearer that they are uncomfortable: raised hackles are a sign of fear:



TAIL POSITIONS

tucked



in line with spine



high and rigid



low and wagging slowly



CONTENT / HAPPY / SOCIAL

These dogs pose no immediate threat.



TAIL POSITIONS

relaxed



high and wagging quickly



casually at 45 degrees



JezRose 
canine behaviour specialist

in association with


Stagbar
The original, 100% natural antler dog chews

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BARKING

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF BARKING



1

DISTANCE
INCREASING

A few reasons your dog may be barking:

- Alerting to a dog or person walking by
- Trying to intimidate a potential threat
- Sudden startle

This type of barking is often reinforced by the environment, which, unfortunately, is usually out of our control. For example, if your dog is barking at the mailman and the mailman leaves, the barking 'worked,' and that behavior is reinforced.



ATTENTION
SEEKING
BEHAVIOR

2

DISTANCE
DECREASING

A few reasons your dog may be barking:

- Looking to play
- Hungry
- Needs to use the bathroom

This type of barking is typically reinforced through any type of attention, such as eye contact, petting, and/or praise. For example, if your dog is barking at you while you're on the computer, and you look over and pet them, the barking 'worked,' and the behavior is reinforced.

Yelling does not help curb the barking. If you notice that it momentarily stops the barking, that's because your dog stopped barking only out of fear. **Yelling will only add more energy to a situation that needs a lot less energy.** Staying calm, ignoring the behavior, and/or redirecting your dog are the most beneficial ways to eliminate the barking behavior.

ChannelingCanines.com



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Healthcare 101

Lyme Disease

What is Lyme Disease?

Lyme disease is an illness that affects both humans and animals. Since it is transmitted through tick bites, it can be hard to detect, which may lead to serious and recurring health problems.

How is Lyme disease diagnosed?

Lyme disease is diagnosed through a blood test that shows whether an animal has been exposed to the bacterium.

How can you treat Lyme disease?

Antibiotics usually help with treatment for Lyme disease. However, it is important to follow your veterinarian's advice regarding any follow-up care after your pet has been diagnosed with and treated for the disease.

Lyme Prevention

The best way to prevent pets from Lyme disease is to take preventative measures to reduce the chance of contracting the disease. Some ways that you can prevent the chance of contracting the disease is:

- Use reliable tick-prevention products (be sure to speak with your veterinarian about what tick prevention product is best for your pet.) When possible, avoid areas where ticks can be found. These include tall grassy areas, marshes, and wooded areas.
- Check yourself and your pet for ticks once when you return inside.

Canine Distemper

What is Canine Distemper?

Canine distemper is a highly contagious and serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and often, the nervous system of puppies and dogs.

How is Canine Distemper Virus Spread?



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Puppies and dogs usually become infected through airborne exposure to the virus contained in respiratory secretions of an infected dog or wild animal. Outbreaks of distemper tend to be sporadic.

What Dogs are at Risk?

All dogs are at risk, but puppies younger than four months old and dogs that have not been vaccinated against canine distemper are most at risk.

What are Some Signs of Canine Distemper?

The first sign of distemper is eye discharge that may appear watery to pus-like. Dogs may also develop a fever, nasal discharge, coughing, lethargy, reduced appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea. In later stages, the virus may attack the nervous system, causing seizures, twitching, or partial or complete paralysis. Distemper is often fatal. Even if a dog does not die from the disease, canine distemper virus can cause irreparable damage to a dog's nervous system.

How is Canine Distemper diagnosed and treated?

Veterinarians can diagnose canine distemper on the basis of clinical appearance and laboratory tests. No specific drug is available that will kill the virus in infected dogs. Treatment primarily consists of efforts to prevent secondary infections; control vomiting, diarrhea, or neurological symptoms; and combat dehydration through administration of fluids.

How is Canine Distemper Prevented?

Vaccination and avoiding contact with infected animals are key elements of canine distemper prevention.

Heartworm Disease & Testing

What is Heartworm?

Heartworm disease is caused by parasitic worms that live in the heart and lungs of infected dogs, leading to organ damage and potentially death if untreated.

How does Heartworm Spread?

Transmitted through the bite of infected mosquitoes. The larvae travel through the bloodstream and develop into adult worms over several months.



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Who's at Risk of Heartworm?

All dogs (and cats) are at risk—especially those not on a monthly heartworm preventative. Even indoor dogs can be bitten by mosquitoes.

Signs and Symptoms of Heartworm:

- Mild, persistent cough
- Fatigue after moderate activity
- Weight loss
- Swollen belly from fluid buildup
- In advanced cases: heart failure or collapse

Heartworm Testing:

Annual testing is necessary, even when dogs are on heartworm prevention year-round, to ensure that the prevention program is working. Heartworm medications are highly effective, but dogs can still become infected. If you miss just one dose of a monthly medication or give it late, it can leave your dog unprotected. Even if you give the medication as recommended, your dog may spit out or vomit a heartworm pill or rub off a topical medication. Heartworm preventives are highly effective, but not 100 percent effective. If you don't get your dog tested, you won't know your dog needs treatment.

Puppies under 7 months of age can be started on heartworm prevention without a heartworm test (it takes at least 6 months for a dog to test positive after it has been infected), but should be tested 6 months after your initial visit, and then tested again 6 months later and yearly after that to ensure they are heartworm free.

Adult dogs over 7 months of age and previously not on a preventative need to be tested prior to starting heartworm prevention. They, too, need to be tested 6 months and 12 months later and annually after that.

Understanding the test results

Negative Heartworm Test

Your new canine companion has been screened for heartworm infection using a heartworm antigen test and has tested negative. A negative test simply means that the heartworm antigens (proteins found in adult female heartworms) were not detected in your dog's



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blood sample at the time the sample was taken. In the great majority of cases, this means your dog has not been infected with heartworms. Uncommonly, the antigen level is below the detectable limits of the test, making that result a “false” negative. The most common reasons for an antigen level occurring at such low levels include an early or light infection, an infection with immature female heartworms only, and an infection with only male heartworms. Although false negative tests are rare, we recommend discussing additional heartworm screening with your veterinarian during your new pet's physical examination. Your veterinarian will also discuss with you options for keeping your dog heartworm-free with monthly doses of heartworm prevention.

Positive Heartworm Test

Your new canine companion has been screened for heartworm infection using a heartworm antigen test and has tested positive. Although heartworm treatment is very routine, it is not a procedure that is without risk and a period of aftercare is required. For these reasons, we recommend that an additional confirmatory test be performed to rule out an initial false positive result before treatment is initialized. It is important for your dog to remain on monthly heartworm prevention while treatment arrangements are being made. Please talk with your veterinarian about safe options for heartworm-positive dogs.

Heartworm Prevention:

- Give monthly preventives (oral or topical) year-round
- Test annually—even if your dog is on prevention
- Follow vet instructions exactly; missed doses can allow infection

Pet First Aid

Important: *Any first aid administered to your pet should always be followed by immediate veterinary care. First aid is not a substitute for professional veterinary treatment, but it may save your pet's life until proper care is available. **For Your Safety***

- **Never assume** that even the gentlest pet will not bite or scratch when injured. Pain and fear can make animals unpredictable.
- Do not attempt to hug an injured pet or place your face near its mouth. While comforting may seem instinctive, it can increase stress or pain.
- Examine your pet slowly and gently. Stop if your pet appears agitated or aggressive.

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If Your Pet is Choking

- If your pet is still able to breathe, keep them calm and seek immediate veterinary care.
- Carefully open the mouth and look for a visible object. If you can see it, gently try to remove it with tweezers or pliers. Do not attempt removal if it is not easily accessible, as you may push it deeper.
- If your pet collapses or cannot breathe, lay them on their side. For medium to large dogs, perform abdominal thrusts by placing your hands behind the rib cage and applying firm, quick pressure. For small pets, use gentle back blows between the shoulder blades.
- Continue attempts until the object is dislodged or veterinary help is reached.

If Your Pet is Not Breathing

- Gently pull the tongue forward and check the throat for obstructions. Close the pet's mouth and breathe directly into the nose. Ensure the chest rises with each breath.
- Give one rescue breath every 4–6 seconds.

If Your Pet Has No Heartbeat

- Do not start compressions unless you have secured an airway. Check their throat for any obstructions.
- Lay your pet on their right side. The heart is located just behind the left elbow.
- For medium and large dogs, use both hands to compress the chest about one-third of its width (about 1–1.5 inches).
- For small pets or cats, place your thumb on one side of the chest and fingers on the other, and gently squeeze.

Compress:

- 100–120 times per minute for small pets (under 25 lbs)
- 80–100 times per minute for larger dogs
- Alternate 30 chest compressions with 2 rescue breaths.
- Continue until your pet regains a heartbeat or professional help is available.

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If Your Pet Has Heatstroke

- Move your pet to a cool, shaded area.
- Apply cool (not icy) wet towels to the neck, armpits, and groin. Avoid covering the face.
- Use a fan or gently hose water over the body, especially the belly and between the legs. Sweep away excess water to allow for heat evaporation. Offer small amounts of cool water to drink, but do not force. Seek immediate veterinary care.

If Your Pet is Having a Seizure

- Remove other animals and clear the area of objects.
- Do not restrain your pet or place your hands near their mouth. Time the seizure. Most last 1–3 minutes.
- Afterward, keep your pet warm and quiet and contact your veterinarian.

If Your Pet is Injured

- If safe, stabilize limbs with a splint or bandage. Poorly applied support can worsen the injury, so only attempt if trained.
- Do not remove objects embedded in a wound. Trim protruding objects if needed for safe transport, leaving 3–6 inches exposed.
- Muzzle the pet if possible and go to a veterinary clinic immediately.

If Your Pet Has a Bleeding Wound

- Apply direct pressure with a clean towel or cloth for at least 3 minutes before checking.
- Do not remove soaked cloths. Add additional layers on top as needed. Seek immediate veterinary care for deep or persistent bleeding.

If Your Pet is Burned

- Muzzle your pet if safe to do so.
- Rinse the burn with cool (not cold) water for several minutes. Do not apply creams, ointments, or ice.
- Seek veterinary attention promptly.



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If Your Pet is Poisoned

- Contact your veterinarian or Animal Poison Control at 888-426-4435 immediately.
- Do not induce vomiting or give any home remedies unless instructed. Be ready to provide:
 - Pet's species, breed, age, weight, sex
 - Substance name and amount ingested
 - Time since exposure
 - Symptoms shown
- Bring the substance container and any vomit to the vet if possible.

Important Phone Numbers:

Animal Poison Control Center: 888-426-4435

Local Emergency Vet: Capital District Veterinarian Referral Hospital (518) 785-1094

Primary Veterinarian: Spring Family Veterinary Hospital (518) 554-8484

Final Notes

Bringing a new dog home is the start of a lifelong relationship—and like any relationship, it takes time, patience, and understanding. Whether you're navigating early challenges or celebrating milestones, remember: you're not alone.

The HOPE team is here to support you every step of the way. We're always happy to answer questions, offer guidance, or just hear how your dog is doing.

Thank you for choosing to adopt and for giving your dog a second chance. Together, you're building a brighter future—one tail wag at a time.

HOPE contact info:

Kelsey (dog program coordinator): (518) 409-6040

Sophia (owner of Channeling Canines): (518) 380-1688