

Considering a New Puppy?

Now is the time for problem behaviour prevention!

A lot of people don't realise that a major cause of death in young dogs is euthanasia because of behavioural problems.

The human-canine relationship is special and unique. There are benefits and also costs to dogs and people living together. Our challenge is to help our clients balance these things to create the best living situation for all.

Ideally our canine family members are also members of our greater community. Puppies need to learn how to behave around people, other dogs and other animals. And they need to learn to be comfortable with being left alone sometimes.

The first step is choosing the right pup/dog. Don't base your selection on looks alone. The dog's suitability to your lifestyle is actually more important.

Size, coat, exercise needs, lifespan and history are all things that should be considered.

If anyone in your family has allergies, or you just don't want a lot of hair-shedding, an "Oodle" may be a good dog for you. (Poodle, Labradoodle, Spoodle etc).

If you don't want a dog which requires lots of exercise, a couch-potato breed such as a French Bulldog or Shih-Tzu may suit you better than a Poodle or Jack Russell. If you have a big house, a larger breed couch potato such as a Mastiff, or St Bernard or retired Greyhound may suit. On the other hand if you live close to a park or on a farm and are the athletic type then a more active breed may be right for you. If you have several hours to spare per day and want to do an activity like Agility Training, then a Border Collie could fit into your family.

Come and talk to our vets and nurses if you would like some advice on the selection of a breed. We may not be familiar with all breeds and their crosses but we can help you find a useful website that matches dog breeds to owners' lifestyles.

Think about your dog's needs too. Dogs need leadership and communication. They need company - lots of social contact. They need exercise (of varying intensity). And they need to learn manners.

Dogs and people both are better off if they learn to think before they act!

Puppies have distinct developmental periods:

- ◆ Neonatal: 0-2 weeks
- ◆ Transitional: 2-3 weeks
- ◆ Socialisation: 3 weeks- 3 months
- ◆ Juvenile: 3months – around 12 months

The socialisation period (3weeks-3months) is when pups become comfortable with other dogs, humans and animals. It is also when they are most open to learning. This is when we need to be creating



desirable behavior patterns, so that we are not having to try to undo difficult problem behavior patterns later in life. It is also when we especially need to make sure that puppies' experiences are all positive. The Fear Imprint period occurs between 12-16 weeks so it is especially important to avoid bad experiences then (including negative reinforcement techniques such as bark collars, smacking, growling)

Puppy Preschool Classes are excellent at this stage in the puppy's life; and also help teach the owners how to create those desirable behavior patterns.

Even the timid little puppy who spends most of the time at these classes hiding and watching, benefits positively.

And there are very useful aids available such as ADAPTIL one-month collars which help reduce anxiety and increase learning ability. Some Behaviour Specialists believe that all puppies should go to their new families and to Puppy Preschool classes fitted with one of these collars.

It's a huge subject! But come and talk to us! We're more than happy to give any advice we can to help make your puppy a Good Canine Citizen!

Puppy Preschool

Wednesday evenings at our Maunu Rd Clinic

4 week course starts on 1st Wednesday each month

Puppies 8-14 weeks old

Basic training techniques

General care and handling

Puppy behaviour

Socialisation and play