
Guide to Your New Dog



Maclean Animal
Adoption Center
Enhancing compassion through education

About the Maclean Animal Adoption Center

The Maclean Animal Adoption Center was formed in 2002 as a non-profit 501(c)(3). Our mission is **fostering a caring community for animals by**

- **providing shelter,**
- **advancing animal welfare,**
- **promoting the bond between animals and humans through innovative programs, education and service.**

The Maclean Animal Adoption Center is designed as a community building with significant space dedicated for the use of educational programming. Improved animal welfare is dependent on availability of resources and quality instruction. Education is the cornerstone of the Maclean Animal Adoption Center. Our services and educational programming afford citizens the opportunity to obtain the information and comprehensive instruction necessary to make a positive contribution to current and future animal welfare within North Central Montana.

“To educate our people, and especially our children, to humane attitudes and actions toward living things is to preserve and strengthen our national heritage and the moral values we champion in the world.” ~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Maclean Animal Adoption Center
PO Box 3426
Great Falls, MT 59403

Phone: (406) 727-7387
Email: director@theanimalfoundation.org
Website: www.theanimalfoundation.org

Need Help With Your New Pet?

If you need help with understanding and resolving problems with your dog, give us a call. One of our Animal Help Desk staff or volunteers will be happy to help. Call us at (406) 727-7387 and we will get back to you within 48 hours. If you need urgent medical assistance, call your veterinarian immediately.

Table of Contents

What You'll Need 4

Getting Acquainted 4

 Your Dog's Special Person 4

 Your Dog's New Home 4

Kids and Dogs 5

 How to Meet and Greet a Dog 5

Introducing Your New Dog to Other Pets 6

 Introducing a Dog to Other Dogs 6

 Introducing a Dog to Cats 6

Establishing a Routine 7

Care and Feeding 7

 Feeding Your Dog 7

 Grooming Your Dog 7

 Spaying or Neutering Your Dog 7

 Playing and Sleeping 7

Keeping Your Dog Healthy and Safe 8

 Keeping Your Dog Flea-Free 8

Training Your Dog 8

Exercising Your Dog 9

Unhappy Dogs 9

Frequently Asked Questions 10

Your Contract with Your New Dog 12



Thank You!

Thank you for adopting your new dog from the Maclean Animal Adoption Center. Not only have you saved a life, but you are about to embark on one of the most rewarding personal experiences—sharing your life with a dog!

There are 78 million pet dogs in the United States and, now that you have adopted a dog from the Maclean Animal Adoption Center, you've made it 78 million plus one. Once you've outfitted yourself with some basic supplies and a little helpful advice, you'll see how rewarding it can be to live with one of these wonderful animals.

What You'll Need

- Dog bed with washable cover or folded blanket
- Food dish
- Water dish or dispenser
- Dog food
- Variety of toys, including chew toys such as Kong toys and Nylabones
- Dog brush
- Leash
- Collar and identification tag
- Crate
- Dog treats for training and rewards
- Waste deposit bags (to use on walks)

Getting Acquainted Bringing a new dog home is exciting for everyone, including the dog. First impressions are important for dogs, so early experiences in a dog's new home tend to leave a lasting impression. You can do a lot to help your dog feel secure in his or her new home.

Your Dog's Special Person. Assign a particular family member to be your dog's special person. A dog needs someone to play with who will feed and exercise her. Most dogs are highly social; they love to be around people 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The realities of modern life make this extremely difficult, but, fortunately, dogs can still be happy and healthy even if they have to spend time alone. But it is important that all of their needs are taken care of. So while one person does not have to do all the exercising, cleaning, and feeding, one person should be responsible to ensure that all of this gets done—each and every day.

Your Dog's New Home. Keep your dog on leash when she first comes home and lead the dog around the house. Show her each room and where food,

water, bedding, toys and the yard are located. Introduce your new dog to all the human family members. Lead her to the appropriate place and wait to see if she needs to go to the bathroom.

Until bathroom habits have been established, assume your adult dog may not be housetrained and take her outside during the day time every hour or so for the first few days. If you adopted a puppy, you should take her outside every hour. (You can expect a puppy to start having bladder control at about three to four months old.) When you go out, praise your dog each every time she uses the designated area, whether it's in the backyard or during a walk. Tell her what a great dog she is and give her a small treat when she is finished.

NEVER rub her nose in a "mistake," or make her nervous about relieving herself in your presence.

Also, never punish her for an "accident" discovered later in time. Your dog will not understand, no matter how "guilty" you think she looks.

Kids and Dogs

Adult supervision when children are interacting with dogs is very important, especially when you do not know the dog's prior history with children. However, there is no reason why young children and dogs cannot be the best of friends, as long as they (it might be grandkids, neighbors, etc. that are the children) understand some simple facts about dog behavior.



Read the section "How to Meet and Greet a Dog" aloud to children who will interact with the dog and discuss it with them. Keep in mind these important reminders:

- Dogs do not like to be hugged, kissed, squeezed, picked up or have their tails pulled.
- Dogs are sensitive to loud noises and sudden movements and will feel threatened if they are chased, stared at, or lunged at.
- Dogs don't like to be disturbed while they are eating or sleeping.

How to Meet and Greet a Dog. Although dogs have been domesticated for thousands of years, they still retain some of their old instincts. They can be territorial, defensive around food and just plain boisterous—because that's all acceptable, even necessary, in a dog society. Depending on the individual dog, these traits are more or less obvious, but even the meekest little dog has a little bit of the wolf in him.

To understand how to meet and greet a dog, we must first think like dogs—to see things from their point of view. When a child greets a new dog by running up with wide eyes and a broad smile, crooning soft words, flinging his arms around the dog's neck, and giving her a warm hug, and the dog snarls or snaps, it is easy to say the dog attacked without warning or provocation.

Things, however, can look very different from the dog's perspective. The child was baring his teeth. We call it a smile, but bared teeth can be a sign of hostility to a dog. The soft words sound like a growl—and we all know that to a dog, growling is not a friendly gesture.

The child was running—just the way a dog attacks another dog. Friendly dogs approach each other slowly, offering plenty of time for sniffing and learning each other's scents. Finally, the child hugged the dog—which the dog interprets as physical restriction. All in all, the child's attempt to make friends could be, from the dog's point of view, a very scary encounter.

Until your new dog becomes comfortable with all the members of his new family, children should:

- Stand quietly and allow the dog to approach
- Not stare directly into the dog's eyes
- Wait until the dog sniffs the child's outstretched fist

If your new dog seems nervous, give him some time to adjust. But establish the rules early in a fair, positive way.

Introducing Your New Dog to Other Pets

Pets enjoy each other's company. A pet with a playmate will likely get more exercise, stimulation, and companionship, but sometimes it takes a while for them to realize the wonderful advantages they're about to enjoy.

Introducing a Dog to Other Dogs. Some dogs view the arrival of another dog to their home as an invasion of their territory. To get the dogs off to a good start, the initial meeting should be somewhere other than your home, if possible. Introductions at home can cause the resident dog to feel the need to defend his or her territory and can give the new dog a sense of impending doom. If you must introduce them at home, have leashes on both dogs in case you need to separate them but do not hold onto the leashes. During these first encounters, have short, fun sessions with the dogs. Play games, go for walks and be generous with doggie treats (as long as neither dog shows a tendency to resource guard). Let the dogs know that when they are together, they are going to have a great time. Closely supervise the dogs when they are together until you know they will get along with each other.

If possible, when you are not at home, keep the dogs in separate rooms for the first few days or until they are comfortable with each other.

Dogs can experience jealousy and other complex emotions. Your resident dog may revert to some long-forgotten behaviors like chewing or territory-marking to express her negative feelings. Punishing her will only alienate her more, reinforcing the feelings she is upset about.



Be careful not to neglect your old friend in your excitement over the new dog. Nothing will irritate her more than seeing all the hugs and attention that she's used to getting being lavished on another dog. Tip the scales of treats and praise in favor of the resident dog.

Introducing a Dog to Cats. A dog meeting a new cat should always be leashed. You will need to carefully

supervise the first encounters and watch your dog for signs of predatory or aggressive behavior toward the cat. Curiosity is normal, but a dog who lunges at a cat is not safe to be off-leash around the cat. If your dog gets along well with the cat, but the cat shows you that he is feeling threatened during this experience, let him retreat to his “safe” room until he is willing to try again.

The very best way to introduce a cat to dogs is to do it gradually over the course of a few days. While the cat is secure in his safe room, start by showing the dog(s) the cat’s carrier or bedding that the cat has been sleeping on. Likewise, allow the cat to check out items the dog(s) play with or sleep on.

Next, allow the cat out into the area the dogs usually reside. Meanwhile let the dogs explore and sniff around the cat’s room while he is on the other side of the door, exploring their turf.

Then you can put the cat in the carrier and the dog(s) on a leash and allow them to see each other. It is important to keep the dog under control at all times. Do not allowed the dog(s) to overwhelm the cat by rushing up to the carrier. Feeding all the animals before these meetings can put everyone in a more relaxed mood.

The last step is the supervised meeting with the dogs leashed and under control at all times and the cat out of the carrier. Go slowly and take your time. It is important the cat not feel threatened by the dog and, it is equally important the dog learn to accept the cat as part of the family. Never leave the cat alone with the dogs in the same space without supervision until you know they are getting along well.

Establishing a Routine

Establishing your routines right away makes your new dog feel secure and settled.

Establishing rules sets behavior patterns for the future because the dog knows what’s expected of him from the first day.

Establish an exercise routine, a feeding time, training routine, and a grooming routine. All of these will strengthen the bond between you and your dog.

Above all, take time to play with and just be with your dog. Sit on the floor next to him and scratch his ears, chest or belly. Watch television together, play with toys, take walks, and talk to your dog.

Care and Feeding

Feeding Your Dog. We recommend a high- quality (premium grade) dry food. Fresh water must be available all the time.

A regular feeding schedule will make timely bathroom breaks easier, make your dog feel more secure because she knows the routine and provides the opportunity to monitor how she is feeling.

See the Humane Society of the United States website for a listing of foods and other substances that can be dangerous for a dog (www.humanesociety.org; Foods that can be Poisonous to Pets, Common Household Dangers for Pets). Call your veterinarian immediately if your dog has eaten something you feel may be dangerous.

Your dog should be fit and trim. If you can see his ribs, he is probably too thin. But if you can’t feel his ribs at all, your dog is too fat. Change the dog’s portions accordingly, but avoid sudden, drastic changes in the amount or type of food you offer him.

Grooming Your Dog. Frequent brushing and combing helps to keep the fur clean and reduces shedding. Nearly all dogs learn to enjoy being brushed. Brush for short periods at first and give lavish praise or offer food treats as a reward. There are also professional groomers in the local area.

Spaying or Neutering Your Dog. If all dog lovers spayed or neutered their dogs, we wouldn’t have so many homeless dogs and puppies in shelters every year. In addition, there is no truth to the myths that having a litter of puppies mellows a dog’s disposition or spaying or neutering cause’s dogs to become overweight and lazy.

Spaying or neutering a dog may reduce the risk of urinary problems and cancer later in life, curbs the dog’s compulsion to roam and mark territory by spraying urine and makes them generally better behaved with small children and other pets.

Most dogs adopted from the Maclean Animal Adoption Center have already been spayed or neutered. If your dog has not, you will be required to pay a deposit and make an appointment for spay/neuter surgery. If you are unable to afford this, the Maclean Animal Adoption Center may have low-cost opportunities to provide financial assistance.

Playing and Sleeping. Dogs are highly social animals. They should live and sleep inside the house like the rest of the family. Your dog should be integrated into family activities and a period should be set aside each day to spend quality time with him, such as playing ball or going for a walk.

Keep in mind that a rambunctious dog can be perfectly happy as long as he gets plenty of attention and exercise. Take time to play with your dog every day. Buy some dog toys and have fun!

If your dog spends time alone outdoors, one great way to keep him happy is to provide him with a playmate and companion—namely, another dog.

Keeping Your Dog Healthy and Safe

All dogs adopted from the Maclean Animal Adoption Center have received their initial vaccinations and been screened for general health. If you adopted a puppy, he or she has not received full protection. Puppies must be given a series of vaccinations over several months because they are too young to receive full protection from just one vaccination. This can mean the difference between life and death for your puppy.



We encourage you to establish a relationship with a local veterinarian of your choice as soon as possible by taking your dog in for a checkup.

Your dog is entirely dependent on you for her health and well-being. She should be alert and active, in good spirits, with a shiny, healthy coat. Watch your dog while she walks, runs and plays. A dog who receives adequate nutrition periodic veterinary examinations will most likely live longer. At your initial visit, your veterinarian can discuss this further and provide recommendations for your dog's health and safety in more detail.

Dogs should wear a flat collar at all times with a current identification tag attached. If your dog wanders away from home or becomes lost, wearing current identification is the best method to help others know where to return him to your family. In addition to wearing a collar with current identification information, micro chipping is recommended for all dogs.

We recommend having a securely fenced yard for your

dog. If that is not possible, your dog should be on a leash when taken outside. It is safest for your dog to be inside your house when you are gone.

Tethering your dog as a means of confinement is not recommended as it is a fact that a chained dog is three times more likely to bite.

When your dog is riding in the vehicle she should be taught to sit calmly while traveling or be contained in a booster seat or crate. Having your dog sit on your lap while driving is very dangerous. Dogs should never ride in the back of an open pick-up or on a flatbed.

Keeping Your Dog Flea-Free. For the most part, fleas are not a problem in our area. However, if you should move to another part of the country the following information may be helpful.

Frequent vacuuming of your house and laundering of your dog's bedding can go a long way toward reducing fleas. In addition, there are some good products that can be applied as little as once a month that can virtually eliminate fleas on your dog. Talk to your veterinarian.

Training Your Dog

Teaching your dog how to behave will not only make her more pleasant to be around, but will also help keep her safe in a world full of manmade dangers such as busy streets.

Training your dog can be fun and you'll both learn a lot. Well-trained, obedient dogs are more content and so are their caretakers. A little love, patience and training will eliminate most annoying behaviors.

Never use punishment as a means of training, since this will only confuse your dog. Yelling, scruff-shaking, alpha-rolling and hitting is not only unnecessary, but these methods are cruel and ineffective. The dog will experience the mental and physical punishment but will not be learning that she should be doing instead. Telling ourselves that the dog "knows better" because she is acting guilty is untrue.

Physical punishment of dogs under the guise of "it's for her own good" is hardly a way to bond with your dog. Dogs can, and should, be trained free from physical and mental punishment.

The 1990s saw an explosion of training and behavior modification techniques that use positive reinforcement rather than physical punishment as the principal means of motivation. These techniques are now widespread, well-understood, user-friendly, and dog-friendly. They are available for virtually every training task and behavior "problem."

If you need help with understanding and resolving any behavior problem with your dog, give us a call at (406) 727-7387. One of our Animal Help Desk staff or volunteers will get back to you within 48 hours and will be happy to help.



Exercising Your Dog

Even a dog with access to a yard needs the mental and physical stimulation of regular walks. Some dogs require a great deal of exercise; others remain happy and healthy with less. Daily exercise of some kind is necessary, but you don't have to walk or run for miles. A dog can chase a ball or retrieve a stick. All dogs should be allowed to build up to exercise gradually, just like a human.

Keep in mind that heavy exercise with young dogs under two years of age may do permanent damage to their growing bones and muscle tissues.

Taking your dog to the dog park can be a wonderful way to exercise and socialize her to other dogs and people. However, before going to the dog park you should introduce your new dog to other dogs in a controlled situation to determine how she gets along with unfamiliar dogs. If you find your dog is a good candidate for the dog park, when you go there before entering the park watch to see whether the dogs already in the park look like they will be good playmates. Puppies who have not had all their puppy vaccinations (usually those under the age of four months) should never be taken to a dog park.

Unhappy Dogs

All people would agree that intentional physical abuse of a dog is a terrible thing. Yet there is another cruel practice to which dogs are subjected far more frequently than

physical abuse. It is a form of mistreatment that is also devastating and painful to a dog, yet it's often not regarded as abuse at all. It is neglect.

As a society, we have yet to recognize and appreciate the emotional and psychological needs of animals. As a result, while our laws demand that an animal kept as a companion receive the basic requirements of sustenance and shelter, there is no way to guarantee that an animal will receive love and attention. For the dog, the absence of human attention and affection is tragic.

Because dogs, like human beings, are social animals, they, like us, need to socialize in order to remain psychologically healthy. Since domestication, however, companion dogs seldom have a group of dogs with which to live. As a result, they consider humans to be their families. Moreover, both people and dogs are "den" animals, which is why dogs can be housetrained so easily. They want shelter in a safe, secure den—our homes—and they want to go outside to relieve themselves. Because of the need to socialize and the need for a den, keeping a dog isolated in a backyard goes against a dog's most basic instincts; ignoring these needs results in miserable, lonely dogs who exhibit abnormal and often annoying traits, such as persistent barking and whining. These behaviors, which are the dog's way of pleading for attention, are often met with hostility by the dog's human family, hurling insults and sometimes objects at the dog in a misguided attempt to quiet the animal. This interaction further fuels the dog's sense of rejection and often fosters in the human guardian a resentment of the animal.

The realities of modern life, as well as the dog's own needs, often require that dogs spend some part of the day in the backyard. Many of these dogs receive plenty of love and attention and are happy and healthy companions. But, to banish a dog permanently to the backyard, while the rest of the family enjoy one another inside, is a betrayal of this loving pact.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: "I just adopted a cute puppy. She likes to get into everything. Does my puppy have special needs?"

A: Medically, puppies require a series of vaccinations over the course of several months. Introduce her only to dogs you know have been fully vaccinated until she has received full protection herself.

On the behavior side, your puppy needs to learn limits. Almost anything a puppy does is cute, but don't fall so much for the puppy's charms that you ignore behavior you would not accept when your puppy becomes an adult.



From the beginning, establish rules that will apply to the dog when she is full-grown. For example, if you don't want a large dog sleeping on the bed, don't allow the puppy to sleep on the bed. Teach your puppy to chew her own toys (not your shoes), to sleep in her bed (not yours), and to eat dinner from her own bowl (not beg at the table for scraps). Socialization is extremely important for a puppy. Introducing your puppy in a controlled manner to a wide variety of people, other safe dogs, objects, surfaces, sounds, smells, etc. will help her understand these things are all a part of her world. Socialization is NOT simply taking your puppy to the dog park!

Q: "Some of my dog's behaviors, such as chewing, digging, and barking, are annoying to me. How can I change them?"

A: The first key to changing your dog's behavior is knowing that your dog is not being "bad." Most dogs adopted from our shelter have had early lives with another person, so they often have established habits or behaviors.

The second key is the recognition that dogs are not people in fur coats. They are dogs, with a unique view of the world. All of the behaviors that point to a mentally healthy dog—chewing, digging, barking, chasing moving objects, scavenging, excited greetings—are often seen as behavior "problems."

Dogs chew on shoes because in the eyes of a dog, that is what shoes are made for. Many dog lovers spend a great deal of time, develop a great sense of frustration, and cause a great deal of confusion to dogs by trying to dissuade a dog from acting like a dog.

This does not mean that dogs should be allowed to chew shoes, bite inappropriately, bark endlessly, or dig up the neighbor's garden. Dogs should be provided outlets for their natural behavior and be actively taught to employ these human-approved outlets, rather than having their behavior deemed unacceptable in any context.

Appropriate chew toys, designated digging areas, regular exercise, and off-leash dog/dog interaction, combined with positive, reward-based training, will go a long way toward reducing your annoyance and keeping your dog happy and healthy.

Q: "My dog or puppy urinates in the house. How do I houstrain my dog?"

A: The success and ease of house-training depends on the amount of time you devote to it. The two most important aspects of house-training are vigilance and rewarding good behavior. Also important is providing ample opportunity to eliminate outside. For adult dogs, this would be first thing in the morning, before you leave for work, at lunch time, as soon as you return from work, half an hour after a meal, and last thing at night. After a while, this can probably be reduced to three times a day. Puppies need to be taken outside every hour during the day for the first few months or until their bladders develop sufficiently.

Crate training is the easiest and most effective way to houstrain a dog (except if the dog has separation anxiety). Crates are nothing more than larger dog carriers that can be purchased new at any pet or ranch supply store or used through Craigslist or yard sales.

Dogs do not like to soil their sleeping quarters, so start out by keeping the dog in the crate for short periods (no more than 45 minutes or an hour for puppies). When you let the dog out of the crate, immediately take her outside to eliminate—and reward her when she does with praise and treats. If your dog eliminates in the crate, do not punish her. If the dog eliminates in the crate because you left her in there too long, the fault is yours!

Dogs should not be crated for extended periods of time, as they can develop both an aversion for the crate and other behavior problems. The MJM Animal Welfare Center has more detailed information on the importance and effectiveness of crate training.

Q: "My dog pulls on his leash when I walk him. How can I stop this?"

A: Your dog is excited. Going for a walk means new sights, sounds, and smells. Dogs that get plenty of attention and opportunities to experience new things are least likely to pull. Make sure to provide your dog with ample opportunities to visit with other people and other dogs.

The easiest way to manage a dog who pulls on the leash during walks is to purchase a harness designed to control such behavior. We do not recommend the use of choke collars or prong collars. These collars are designed to induce control through the application of pain; in addition, dogs quickly learn that it is safe to pull when the choke collar is off, but unsafe when it is on. The end result is more pain, as these dogs never stop pulling without the choke collars.

Happily for dogs, many types of harnesses are available and can be purchased at most pet supply stores.

You can also teach a dog that pulling on the leash gets him nowhere. Hold a treat in your hand at your side next to your waist. Make sure your dog sees the treat. Like the

proverbial horse chasing the carrot, walk so that your dog is at your side following the treat. Give him a treat every few minutes. (Don't wait too long or he may give up!) If your dog pulls ahead on his leash, stop walking. Every time he pulls, you stop. After some time, your dog will learn that keeping a slack leash gets him where he wants to go.

As a society, we have yet to recognize and appreciate the emotional and psychological needs of animals. As a result, while our laws demand that an animal kept as a companion receive the basic requirements of sustenance and shelter, there is no way to guarantee that an animal will receive love and attention. For the dog, the absence of human attention and affection is tragic.

Your Pledge to Your New Dog

We believe that our dog is a full member of the family. This means that he or she has the right to be cared for and loved.

Each person in the family agrees to help take care of our new dog and treat him or her with kindness, patience, love, and respect.

We know that caring for our dog means responsibilities and jobs that must be done every day. We will give our dog proper food and fresh water every day.

We know that it costs money to take proper care of our dog. We will bring our dog to a veterinarian for regular checkups and when he or she gets sick or is injured.

We promise to spend time with our dog every day to show him or her how much we love him or her.

We promise to love and care for our dog throughout his or her lifetime. We know that dogs can live up to 15 years and we will make every effort to keep our dog, no matter what changes life may bring. If we cannot keep our dog, we will make every effort to find him or her a loving new home.