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## PET ADVICE – PUPPY TOILET TRAINING

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One of the earliest training objectives is to train him/her to urinate and defecate outside rather than in the house. Puppies can be very variable as to how easy they are to train - some can require a lot of patience!

In young puppies the kidneys are not yet fully matured and they are unable to produce concentrated urine. However, their nutritional requirements are very high, which leads to the necessity of eliminating large amounts of waste products. This means they tend to produce large volumes of dilute urine. However, the puppy's willingness to please makes training possible from day one. Positive reinforcement is the easiest way to proceed. It is not very common for you to catch your puppy in the act of urinating on the floor. Far more often you come into the room and find a puddle. If you tell the puppy off when you come in, he/she perceives this as being told off for greeting you, even if you rub its nose in the urine. Take the puppy outside and if he/she passes urine or faeces praise him/her, including giving a treat. The puppy will soon learn that he/she gets rewarded for toileting outside, but ignored inside. This can be reinforced by placing newspaper on the floor. Puppies like to toilet in a warm, safe place and will use a newspaper quite readily. This can then be moved nearer to the door and then eventually outside. The only drawback with the use of newspaper is that very occasionally, some puppies become so well trained to it, they will then not wish to go outside on grass or soil. Also, using a cage or collapsible kennel for sleeping at night restricts puppy to its own bed, where they don't like to mess; taking them out straight away in the morning is usually guaranteed to result in the correct toileting response.

Another aid to toilet training is to use a low residue diet, which results in passing smaller volumes of faeces. This means your puppy defecates fewer times during the day and less clearing up! Always remember to be a responsible dog owner: When you start taking your puppy out on walks always carry a couple of bags to clear up where it has messed. These can then be easily disposed of, leading to a more pleasant environment for us all and reducing the health risks to children.

Some puppies will readily eat their faeces. This does not indicate any nutritional deficiency but can become habit forming. If this is the case, then try feeding him/ her pineapple chunks – this makes the motions taste bitter, and can stop the habit quickly.

One thing you need is a generous supply of patience. Often you will feel you have the situation cracked and then puppy will have an accident. Keep persevering – you will get there in the end, and remember – never scold, but encourage correct toileting.

