

# Printed by Permission of Boyd's Bull Dogs

## Helpful Puppy Information



**Our pups are socialized with children**  
This is our son, Robert, "helping" the puppies



**Caleb with Mikie**  
Our kids help feed the dogs

Congratulations on the purchase of your American Bulldog! We love this breed and are confident you will too, if you are not already a fancier of it. Below are a few suggestions to make your experience with this very high-energy, intelligent, loyal, and protective breed the best possible.

### **Immunizations:**

The puppy already received a parvo shot at 5 weeks (Intervet, mother's milk doesn't interfere with antibodies), and a DA2P + Pv at 7 weeks. The puppy still needs booster shots at 3 or 4 week intervals until the age of 16 or 18 weeks. We recommend you finish out with a series of DA2LP + Pv. Also, at 16 weeks your pup is due for its first rabies shot, which will only be good for one year. After one year, the next rabies shot will be good for 3 years.

### **Parasites:**

The pup has been wormed at regular intervals for roundworm, the most common infestation of parasites in puppies as they get it through the mother's milk. Other common parasites/bacteria that cause diarrhea are coccidia and giardia. If the puppy is being medicated for either of these, you will receive this medication along with your pup, and it should recover rapidly since it is not getting reinfected by its littermates. We do not have a flea problem in our kennel, but if you have fleas, be aware that you need to be on the lookout for little rice-looking kernels in your dog's feces in case it gets tapeworm from

the fleas. Also, depending on your location, you should keep your dog on a heartworm preventative.

We recommend Sentinel, since it contains Program (which keeps fleas away), prevents heartworm, and is also effective against whipworms and roundworms. We prefer Sentinel or Intercept over Heartgard as heartworm preventatives since they don't have ivermectin in them. Ivermectin is not only a wormer, but a treatment for demodex, thus masking the dog's susceptibility to demodex (which we guarantee against and thus want to know if our dogs have it so that we can take them out of our breeding program). Some American Bulldogs have allergic reactions to a compound in Heartgard, too. An additional note regarding demodex: 5 spots is considered generalized demodex and the dog needs to be treated. If there are only a few spots, then don't dip your dog with Mitaban until you have waited to see if the demodex clears up on its own. Once you have treated your dog, you need to consider it as generalized demodex and should spay or neuter the dog. Be aware that demodex shows up under stress-related conditions.

### **Food:**

This litter has been fed Nutro's Natural Choice for Large Breed Puppies, that has glucosamine and chondroitin supplements. This is a chicken and rice based food, so if you are going to switch to a lamb and rice or corn based dog food, we suggest that you do it gradually, or at least have a lot of Kaopectate handy to stop the runs!

Food is a highly controversial issue, so make your own decisions. The basic thing is that this is a large breed and you don't want your puppy to be overweight or to grow too fast. However, you do want to be giving it enough calcium, especially as the pup will be teething between 4 and 6 months. We do not recommend free-feeding because that makes it difficult to housebreak the dog and more difficult to control how much the dog is eating. It is quite convenient when the dog learns that food should be eaten within 5 to 10 minutes. Whatever it can't finish, take back and don't feed until the next mealtime. Initially 3 feedings a day is advised, then cut it to two times a day around 3 months of age, and then if you wish you can feed just once a day. Since these dogs have a propensity to eat poop, we recommend two feedings a day. For amounts, follow the recommendations on the dog food bag per weight of pup, then use your head to see if the dog is getting fat or skinny. If its figure is sausage-shaped from an aerial view, that is, no indentation at the back, your dog is overweight.

Always make sure your dog has clean, fresh water that can't be easily spilled.

### **Toys and Chew Bones:**

Do not give your dog cooked chicken bones, raw chicken skin, pork fat, etc. These will splinter in your dogs intestines, make the dog sick, and give the dog horrible gas and diarrhea. We recommend those big soup bones. They're stinky and messy, but a great source of calcium, and great for developing the head muscles and coordination, since the dog has to manipulate the bone with its paws. Less stinky chew toys are nylabones and chewhooves (well, they're stinky too). Stay away from rawhide stuff because American Bulldogs gobble them up so fast they choke on them. Keep watch over stinky laundry (socks and underwear) because your loyal pup will love your smell and ingest these, causing possible blockage. If you think or know your dog has eaten something big, stuff a

generous daub of Vaseline down its throat to help pass the object. Be prepared for loose stools.

### **Housebreaking**

Crates are the best tool for housebreaking. Puppies instinctively want their sleeping area clean and unless left for a very long time in the crate, will not soil their immediate sleep area. Every time your puppy wants out of the crate, put it outside first to go potty. When it is loose in the house, put it outside every 20 minutes initially, until it is 3 months old and has more bladder control. Also, be a student of your pup and learn the sniffing and circling cues it makes when it needs to go. Also, figure out when it normally goes poop, be it first thing in the morning, after each meal, both, or whatever, and then be prepared to put it out at those regular intervals. Regular eating times really helps out here. At 8 weeks of age you can't expect a whole lot of control, so if you have carpeting and don't want to put the dog out every 20 minutes, keep it outside or confine it to the linoleum in your kitchen.



"I wasn't supposed to be in here digging?"



Take your pup everywhere  
(photo courtesy of Al Eisenberg)

When these dogs are 6 or 8 months old, they're awfully big puppies and can do a lot of damage in a short amount of time. So if you're not going to be home, or aren't paying attention, put the pup somewhere safe, like in a crate or outside, or you may be taking an expensive trip to the vet to do stomach surgery to remove that old carpet from its stomach.

Crates are also helpful if you have little kids because the crate becomes the safe den to which the pup can retreat from all the love, pets, kisses and dragging around that occurs, and your children should be sternly taught to let the pup be when it goes to its crate. This will eliminate a lot of snappiness and hyperactivity on the pup's part. Every time you close the puppy in the crate, use a key word like "crate" or "kennel" and give the dog a treat after it goes in to reward the behavior. Your dog will quickly learn to willingly go into its crate.

### **Socialization and Exercise:**

These dogs should be friendly, happy, athletic dogs. As a puppy, you want to take it into as many new situations as possible so that it learns what and who is normal in this world,

and what isn't. Good socialization is the best thing you can do to make sure your dog will be a confident protector when the need arises. Anybody you let in the door should be happily greeted by your dog, not growled or barked at. At around 6 or 8 months of age, your pup should start to bark when people encroach on their property (as in the mailman walking up to the door, people walking on your lawn, or even a friend knocking on a closed front door).

The best preparation for any kind of training, be it obedience or protection, is getting your dog to enjoy playing with a ball, a tug-toy, etc. We highly urge you to take your dog to a puppy obedience class between 4 and 6 months of age. Not only will your dog be easier to live with, but it's crucial for the puppy to meet strangers and strange dogs. Good, regular exercise (walking or running) also makes your dog an easier housedog to live with and is also important in its muscle and bone development. It's very important that your dog learn to happily walk on a leash. Also, have friends and strangers pet your dog, look at its teeth, pick up its feet, etc. This makes vet visits and dog shows a piece of cake and saves with you a lot of grief when the dog is big and powerful.

### **Behavior**

Your puppy has needle sharp teeth. If you are raising it to be a Schutzhund dog, don't correct it for biting anything. That means it probably won't be able to play with your little kids much, and is better off outside. However, if this is just a family companion/protection dog, then by all means, correct the bitiness by pinching the tongue down to the lower jaw, saying a firm "no", closing its muzzle and saying "no", or by rolling the puppy over into a submissive position on its back and telling it "no".

Have the child say the firm "no" to the pup, too. Using a deep, growly, loud and disapproving, voice is more similar to how other dogs correct each other (growling) and is very effective. I cannot emphasize enough that EVERY member of the family must be dominant over the puppy while it is young, or when it is 10 months old, the dog will pick on the member who is afraid of it or who is never home or wants nothing to do with the dog. These dogs are dominant and are large and powerful, and you need to establish proper authority and training into your puppy, or you will have a large, out of control dog at 10 months and you will be tearing your hair out over this dog that you've spent all this money and time on. Believe me, almost every dog I've ever owned, I've gotten to the point where I'm so fed up with some behavior problem, that I'm ready to get rid of it. The best cure for the "I'm ready to kill you" feeling is . . . MORE TRAINING or BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE (as in outside dog run or inside dog crate). However, if you absolutely cannot keep your dog for any reason, please call us first, before taking it to the pound or trying to sell it or give it to just anybody. We are confident of our dogs and their breeding, and will happily rescue any of them (however, we offer no cash refunds).

### **Stay Informed**

We encourage you to subscribe to some kind of dog magazine, be it general such as Dogworld, or breed-specific, such as the American Bulldog Review. The website at [www.dogresources.com](http://www.dogresources.com) usually has the show info.