



CARLA MURPHY
BVMS MRCVS
&
MELANIE BROAD
BVMS MRCVS

Puppy Power

Becoming a family pet is actually quite a difficult thing to ask of a dog. We expect a lot of them; they have to fit in with the rest of the family including children, other dogs, cats and hamsters. They have to learn to be clean & tidy, not to chase the cat or bite the kids, not to steal food from the table, be left alone in the house and be practically perfect in every other way. A bit like Mary Poppins!

Finding a good breeder is the first step towards finding your perfect new puppy. Puppies learn so much in the first 8 weeks of life before you have taken them home. If they are well socialised and handled in this period they are much more likely to grow up as confident, calmer dogs which makes their subsequent training by you much easier.

To help new puppy owners and breeders, the Kennel Club and Dogs Trust have got together to develop what they call "**The Puppy Plan**". It is a step by step socialisation plan for the breeder to start and for the new puppy owner to continue until the puppy is 16 weeks old. You can download a copy from our website or order a hard copy directly from www.thepuppyplan.com. It makes a really interesting read and it is full of useful information. For example the Breeders checklist which covers birth to 8 weeks advises that by 7 weeks old a puppy should have met 7 different people, been on 7 different types of surface, played with 7 different toys and heard 7 loud noises. It's all easy stuff to do that makes a big difference in the long term. There is also a new owners section which takes your puppy through to 16 weeks old with advice about going outside for the first time and encountering new things.

If you are a breeder we think this is a really useful tool – just print off a copy or order a nice glossy booklet version for each puppy and then pass it on to the new owners. They will then see how much work you have put in to preparing their puppy for their new life. Also recently launched by the RSPCA is their Puppy Contract, that you can find at www.puppycontract.rspca.org.uk. The idea of the puppy contract is to help encourage responsible pet ownership by allowing breeders to demonstrate the thought and care they have devoted to their puppies' development and to ensure that new owners understand the commitment required of them as they take a new puppy home.

So if you're thinking about taking on a new pet, pop in and speak to us, and as soon as you get your new puppy or kitten bring them in so we can meet them and check that they are fit and healthy.

Carla & Mel
Galashiels Veterinary Surgery
 Gala Terrace, Galashiels. TD1 3JT
01896 752 156

www.bordervets.co.uk

Office: Weekdays 8.30 - 6pm, Sat 8.30 - 12noon

Consulting times:

Weekdays 9 - 10am and 5 - 6pm, Sat 9 - 11am

Gala Life - Be A Part Of It.....01721 729 314 info@galalife.co.uk