

PUPPY INFORMATION SHEET

How lucky you are to have this new furry little member of the family! There will be years of joy ahead for everyone if your new puppy and family get off on the right start. By now you have probably studied a bit about the Shih Tzu breed. Remember, that this little dog was bred for one purpose, to be a companion. Shih Tzu are lap dogs and have a very strong need to be with people. Shih Tzu do not do well if isolated and ignored by their families.

The first few weeks with your puppy are critical. The more time you can give your puppy in these weeks, the quicker he will adapt to your family. Keep the puppy's first few days quiet and calm. Let him become accustomed to his new home and family before he is expected to meet the neighborhood and all the relatives. Give him time to bond with you and learn that both you and his new home are safe. Give your puppy a chance to explore his new home, always supervised. Your puppy will be more ready to meet his world once he feels secure with his new family and surroundings. Be patient, gentle and always be consistent. Don't expect him to behave like a mature dog. Puppies will be puppies. Just as a toddler needs to be supervised, so does your puppy. Use baby gates or other means to limit his roaming. I strongly recommend crate training. Crate training is a win-win situation for everyone. Your puppy will feel secure in his crate and will also be able to see out easily. A Shih Tzu-size crate is easily moved about the house, as you move from room to room. This gives your puppy the advantage of being able to see and be with his family members while confined when you do not have time to be one on one with him.

I like to start tethering my puppies to me once they have starting getting the idea of potty training. This is a great way to spend time with your puppy when you are busy in the kitchen or at other tasks. It is a great way for him to learn house manners and to become accustomed to the lifestyle in your home. Remember to keep a close eye on him and give him many opportunities to go to his correct potty spot. Put the time and effort into potty training. Shih Tzu, like many toy breeds, can often seem a bit slow in this department. At Sugar and Spice we potty pad train our puppies before they go to their new homes. This will be a big help in house training. Be consistent. The answer is not disciplining mistakes but rewarding success. Remember accidents are just that -- your puppy just has not figured it out yet. Set him up to succeed. The fewer accidents he is given the opportunity to have, the quicker this process will go. Do not jump the gun and let your puppy have too much freedom too soon. Always be cautious when introducing the new puppy to other family pets or young children. Never leave your new puppy unsupervised around young children or other animals for several weeks. It is safest to have children sit on the ground while holding the puppy. Often puppies are wiggly and do not have a concept of falling. Use common sense and do not rush this process. Soon your puppy will have matured and everyone in the family, including the puppy, will learn how to safely interact with one another.

Sleep and rest are important for your puppy. Make sure he has his "own" place. This is a place he can be when he needs alone time. Puppies up to a year old need to sleep 18-20 hours per day. Children need to be taught to respect the puppy's need to have his "own" place. A crate makes a great place. It is always fun to have a new puppy to play with, but remember he is a baby and needs naps and quiet time. The first few days can be stressful for your new puppy. Keep him with you as much as possible. I suggest letting him sleep in

his crate near your bed at night. Remember, he has never slept in a quiet dark room by himself before. If you choose to have him sleep by himself or need to leave him home on his own, give him a t-shirt to snuggle with that has your scent on it. Sometimes a radio playing softly will add comfort. A night light will remind him of home. After the first few nights, you can move your puppy to wherever he will be expected to sleep. Expect some crying, he is just a baby. Harsh words or loud noises will only create more anxiety in the puppy. He needs time to learn to sooth himself and sleep on his own. Every family has different expectations of where a dog is allowed to be and how he is expected to act. If your adult dog will not be allowed on the family couch, don't hold and play with your puppy on the couch. You cannot have two sets of rules: one for the cuddly puppy and one for the grown dog. This will only confuse him and frustrate you.

It is important to feed your dog a high quality puppy food. The puppies have been eating *Nutro Ultra Small Breed Puppy* food. You can find this at Petsmart or Petco, I buy mine from Chewy.com. If you decide to switch him to a different food, make the change very gradual, gradually adding more of the new food to the old. If you switch his food too quickly he will likely develop diarrhea as a consequence. Puppies need to eat frequently. The small size of a toy breed puppy does not allow for a lot of fat reserve and leaves him susceptible to hypoglycemia. Your puppy should be fed four times a day until he is 14 weeks old, three times a day until he is 6 months old, and twice a day after that. Your puppy can be switched to an adult formula food around 12 months. If you are unable to be home for this feeding schedule then allow the puppy to have free access to his food. Remember to keep fresh water available for your puppy at all times. If the puppy is not interested in his food, after a period of time, coax him into eating. Start by softening his food with a little water. Some foods to try and stimulate his appetite with are: a little boiled chicken or hamburger mixed in his food, or a little beef baby food or canned dog food. Once your puppy is eating well begin decreasing the amount of goodies you are putting in with his food. Keep in mind they are little and do not eat large amounts per meal. Soon he will be eating his dry kibble again.

It is important that you keep your puppy's vaccinations and heartworm preventative up to date. Your veterinarian will advise you on the proper schedule and needs for your dog. Here at Sugar and Spice, we have followed a very organized socialization program, which has helped prepare your puppy for his next steps. It will be your responsibility to teach him about his place in your home over the next months. The more effort you put into your new family member now, the greater your pay off will be for many enjoyable years to come. I also recommend you read and implement some of the methods of raising a puppy found in "How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With" by Clarice Rutherford and David H. Neil. I am always available to answer questions if they arise. Please do not hesitate in contacting me. I also love to receive pictures and emails about how your new puppy is doing.