

YOUR PUPPY; THE EARLY YEARS

House training can be a struggle. Most pups will try to be clean, so take him to his spot after his meal, a game or a sleep, or when he moves towards the door. Be observant; you will soon learn when pup "feels the need" - certain actions, certain times of day etc. Take him outside (don't send him on his own at first, you need to be there to praise him after he performs). Avoid getting cross over mistakes, and NEVER rub his nose in it.

Teach your dog to empty his bladder or bowel on command by gently repeating key words like "be clean" (or "hurry up" if you want to be more subtle!) as he does so naturally, praising him when he has finished. He will soon associate the word with the action - once he does you can make sure he uses the garden before you go out and avoid him fouling public areas or needing a "pit stop" on the motor way.

Even if your dog has used your garden you should always carry a poop scoop or plastic bag just in case, and USE IT! Local bylaws are in effect in most places and they apply to YOU and YOUR DOG. Whether bylaws are there or not, it's the responsible thing to do.

Elementary obedience starts on the day you bring your pup home. ALWAYS USE FUN NOT FORCE, and persuade the kids that tricks come after basic training. Your dog needs to know his name, "no", "come", and "sit" and later "down", "stay", and "heel". A few place words can be useful too - "in the car", "on your bed". To stop him getting confused, keep your commands simple and make sure everyone in the family uses the same words in the same way. Keep training sessions short, teach one thing at a time and use plenty of rewards - toys, titbits or praise. If you don't know how, go to a dog training club which will teach both of you.

Never allow your pet to become a nuisance. Not everyone loves dogs - some could regard your pet as an "affliction" not with "affection"! You know he's being friendly, but other people may be afraid of his "bouncing". You go out in your dog walking clothes, but others may not want footprints on their best jacket. If in doubt, keep him on a lead.

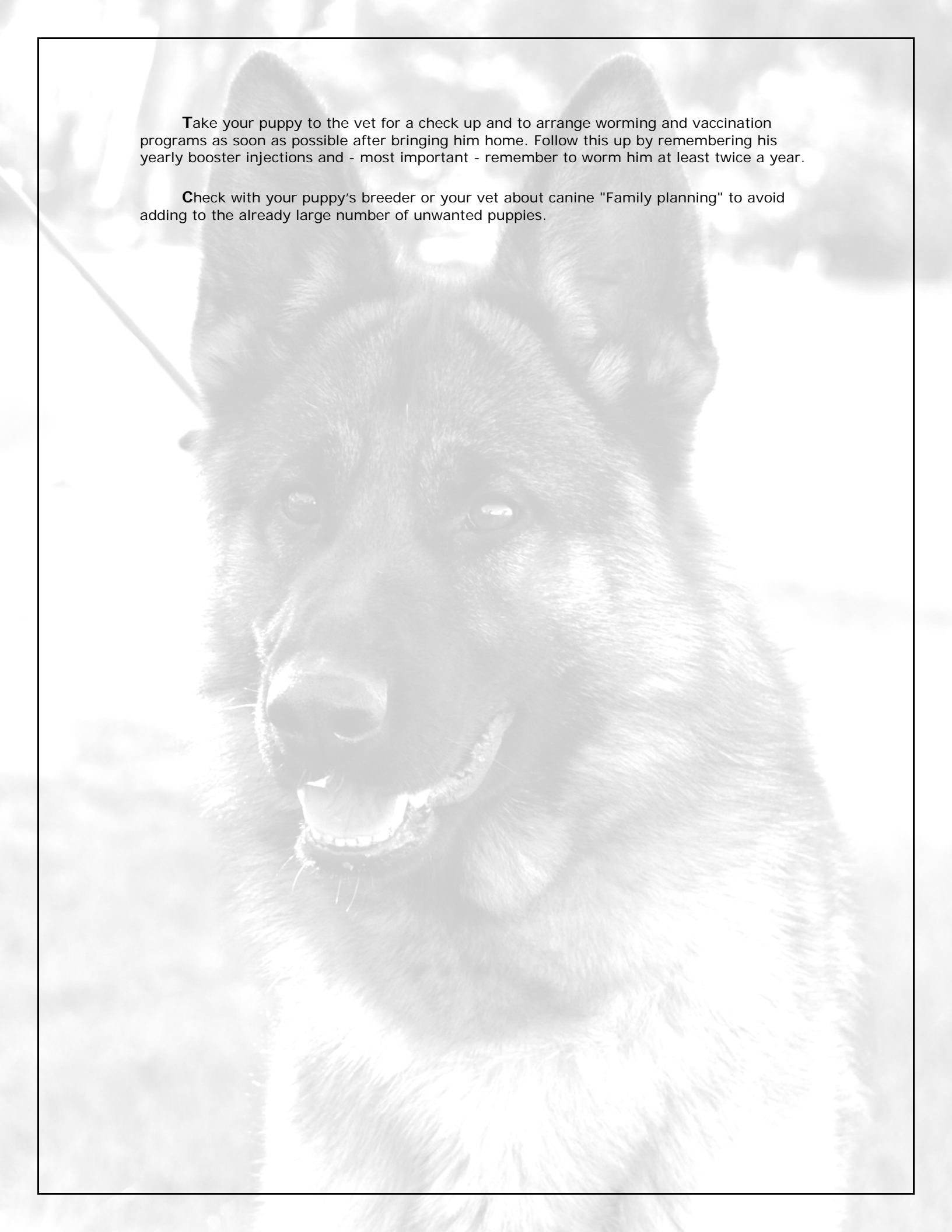
Make sure your dog has a collar with an ID disc attached. Not only is this common sense but it is also required by law.

Road safety with a dog is essential. Teach yourself (yet again), your children and your dog the Green Cross Code. Your dog should automatically stop whenever he reaches a kerb and not move on until you give permission.

Form habits that will last a lifetime by getting him used to being handled and brushed while he is still young. Grooming should always include a check of ears, eyes, teeth, gums, claws and skin as well as fur. You may also wish to clean his teeth with a soft toothbrush and water or a proprietary (dog) toothpaste. Know his body and what is normal for him. Look for signs of injuries or infections, and for foreign bodies (moving or otherwise!) As well as keeping you aware of potential problems, this helps your dog to be relaxed and unafraid during veterinary examinations.

Kep your dog fit not fat! A growing puppy needs plenty of food but once he is adult he no longer needs the calories that were being used for growth and he may need to eat less. Neutering may also alter his metabolism and call for a further reduction of food. Remember that the amounts on the dog food packet are just a guide - experiment a little with the amount until you find what suits your dog.

Be careful about what your dog eats and be just as watchful as to what comes out the other end. Check that your dog does not have an upset stomach due to the family's left-over casserole or a "bug" needing veterinary treatment.



Take your puppy to the vet for a check up and to arrange worming and vaccination programs as soon as possible after bringing him home. Follow this up by remembering his yearly booster injections and - most important - remember to worm him at least twice a year.

Check with your puppy's breeder or your vet about canine "Family planning" to avoid adding to the already large number of unwanted puppies.