

Dog Supplies

Every well-kept dog needs some basic supplies. Many kinds of supplies are available, so your choices will depend on your and your dog's needs and preferences. Here are some basic guidelines regarding dog supplies.

Food and Water Dishes

Metal or ceramic dishes are best because plastic can cause a skin reaction in some dogs. Make sure that you give your dog fresh water every day.

Brush and Comb

Brushing your dog helps to remove dirt and loose, dead hair and to prevent mats and tangles. The various types of brushes and combs are designed for different purposes. Read more about them in the Dog Grooming Care Guide.

Collar With License and ID Tag

Many kinds of dog collars are available. Make sure that your dog's collar is fitted properly to prevent escape without being too tight; you should be able to fit two of your fingers under your dog's collar. Most locations throughout the United States have state or local laws that require dog owners to license their dogs. In most cases, you will receive a metal license tag that must be placed on your dog's collar.

Dog Supplies Checklist

- Food and water dishes
- Brush and comb
- Collar with license and ID tag
- Leash
- Carrier
- Crate
- Bed
- Dog toothbrush and toothpaste
- Housing
- Toys

Leash

Many kinds of leashes are available. Choose a leash that you feel comfortable using. Some people prefer the feel of leather leashes, whereas others find different materials easier on their hands. However, a type of leash that's appropriate in one situation might not be appropriate in others. For example, you might walk your dog on a retractable leash in the park so that he or she can roam and get plenty of exercise, but when walking in crowded places, at your veterinarian's office, or in pet stores, you'll probably want to use a leather, nylon, or fabric leash to keep your dog closer to you. Your veterinarian can offer advice and answer any questions you may have about this.

Carrier

A safe, comfortable carrier is essential for small dogs.

Crate

Pet supply stores and online vendors sell wire crates, plastic airline crates, and mesh crates. Each style has its own advantages. Wire crates usually collapse for storage and portability, and they provide more ventilation than plastic ones. Plastic crates might make dogs feel safer. Mesh crates provide privacy for dogs and are the most portable, but they aren't very durable; some dogs chew through them and escape. Enhance your dog's comfort by putting a bed or blanket and a toy inside the crate. If you purchase a wire crate, your dog might like to have a blanket or towel draped over it to help him or her feel more secure.

Bed

A warm, comfortable bed is very important for your dog. Be sure to clean your dog's bedding regularly.

Dog Toothbrush and Toothpaste

Use a specially designed pet toothbrush or baby toothbrush with pet toothpaste (do not use toothpaste for people because it can upset your dog's stomach).

Caring for Your New Pet

Housing

If your dog will be spending time outdoors, be sure he or she has access to shade and plenty of cool water in hot weather as well as a warm, dry shelter in cold weather.

Toys

Most dogs enjoy a variety of toys. However, dogs can be particular about the toys they'll fetch. Preferences can include a tennis ball, a Frisbee, or a stick. Try different toys to see which one your dog prefers. Don't use anything edible, and don't use small or smooth balls that your dog could swallow. If your dog prefers a Frisbee, buy one specially made for dogs; Frisbees for humans are too hard and could chip your dog's teeth.

Many dogs will play tug with any type of toy, but most people prefer something soft and comfortable to

hold, such as tug toys made of fleece or soft rope that are 1 to 3 ft long. Tug toys made of bungee material are easy on the hands and will put less stress on you and your dog. Some people like using tug toys with handles.

Food puzzle toys are sturdy containers, usually made of hard rubber or plastic, with holes in which food or treats can be placed. Dogs must shake, paw, roll, chew, or lick the toy to remove the food. Food puzzle toys offer a natural solution to canine boredom.

Dogs also chew for stimulation and to relieve anxiety. Therefore, it's important to provide various chew toys, such as synthetic bones, hard rubber toys, commercial dental bones, and other hard chew treats. Contact your veterinarian for recommendations about which toy or treat is best for your dog or if you see your dog swallow a large piece of a chew toy, bone, or treat.