

Ramblin Ridge Australian Shepherds

Puppy Tips and Recommendations

1) Food: We feed and recommend Pro Plan Savor Shredded Chicken and Rice (Puppy), fed dry with plenty of fresh water. Puppies need lots of good nutrition as they are growing, so we recommend either free-choice puppy food, or a minimum feeding schedule of 3 times daily until pups are about 3 months of age, and which at that time they can be weaned down to twice a day.

2) Exercise: Your puppy needs lots of playtime and exercise which will help in their growth and strength, not to mention they will sleep well at night! Please do not do forced rigorous, physical exercise such as running hard and jumping for long periods of time as their growth and joint development can be disrupted. After a pup reaches about 6 months of age, they will be able to do more running with you as a running partner if desired, but should be started slowly as with any athlete.

3) Vaccinations: While here at Ramblin Ridge, your puppy will receive age appropriate puppy shots starting at 6 weeks of age. The usual vaccination regimen for puppies is 6, 9, and 12 week shots with Rabies shot at about 4 months of age. (**) Please try to avoid areas that are high in dog traffic such as dog parks until your puppy has had at least 2 of the 3 puppy shots that will protect them against a puppy killer called PARVO, as well as other easily transmitted diseases. Puppies (and adult dogs) will smell and sometimes even eat other dog's poop, which can carry many parasites and diseases.

4) Worms: Puppies are notorious for having worms...this is a normal part of puppyhood. Some of the possible offenders are Roundworms, Hookworms, Whipworms, Tapeworms, and occasionally a protozoal parasite called Coccidia. Regular treatment for worms and other parasites is required to maintain the health of your puppy as it grows into adulthood.

5) Heartworm: At Ramblin Ridge, we have used **SENTINEL by Novartis**, as our favored combination Heartworm treatment for many years. It is called a combination because of its prevention of Heartworm as well as treatment for regular worms and flea control. Used as a monthly chewable tablet, it is comforting to know our pets are protected against these invaders. There are many other medications available for prevention of Heartworm, but please be aware that some Aussies can have sensitivities to some drugs in a particular class of drugs which include **IVERMECTIN**, one of the biggest culprits for causing reactions. We just plain try to avoid anything with **IVERMECTIN** listed as an ingredient. Please discuss this with your Veterinarian when choosing a Heartworm or combination treatment. In safe dosages, many of these worrisome drugs are proposed to be safe.

6) Training: Your Aussie comes pre-programmed to be SMART!! Put an appropriate sized collar on your new puppy as soon as possible and allow them to wear it around the house while under supervision. Be careful to not leave the collar on if not supervised or while you are away. They can get caught on things in the house and possibly choke them. Start them on a leash as soon as possible as well. When first attaching the leash, let them just walk around freely while you follow. Try not to pull on the leash when you are first starting out, but allow them to slowly get used to having something attached to their neck. Harnesses and other things are available that are also wonderful alternatives to a collar around the neck. We highly recommend Obedience classes which help not only your puppy to become a great pet, but for you to understand certain behaviors as well. Aussies can at times be a little too smart for their own good, and it sometimes takes a strong leader to make sure they know where they stand in the "Pack". You must show them that you are the "Pack Leader"

7) Chewing and Toys: As young puppies up until about 10 weeks of age, it is okay to offer fuzzy toys with squeakers etc., but puppies will start to chew on things at a very young age, and can eventually chew a fuzzy toy apart to get to the squeaker and possibly swallow it (You don't want your puppy to squeak!!) Please be very careful to watch out and avoid this from happening. Offer your puppy things that are indestructible for chewing. Good options are "NYLABONE" which is good for teething. Of course Frisbees and balls are perfect for playtime with supervision!

8) Housetraining: We always recommend "Crate Training" for your puppy. Not only does it give them their own safe place to stay, sleep, and just relax, it is a safe place for you to know that when you are away, they will not be getting into things in the house that could be dangerous for them. We recommend the collapsible wire crates that have a partition that can be adjusted as they grow. The best way is to keep their area in the crate small to start with because they will not soil a small sleeping area. In order to have successful housetraining, you must be consistent and persistent! Among other times there are 4 times that you should take your puppy outside to go potty: when they finish eating; when they have been playing and abruptly stop and put their nose to the floor; when they wake up from a nap; and when their crate door opens for any reason. If you can be diligent about getting them outside after these activities you will succeed very quickly in having a housetrained puppy. Many people have even hung a big bell on the doorknob to the outside and teach the puppy to ring the bell when they need to go out!

We are always available to help in any way we can if you have questions or concerns, and are just a phone call away.

****Disclaimer**** I am not a Veterinarian nor do I claim to be an expert, but am offering these tips and recommendations based on my many years of experience as a dog-lover, breeder, and previously a Veterinarian Technician. Please always use the advice of your Veterinarian or professional trainer in addressing issues outlined above.