




漁農自然護理署
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department



A Guide to Taking Care of **Your Dog**

An introduction to proper dog care



Keeping a dog is a
big responsibility and the decision to get one
should not be made on impulse. It is important to
find out more about dog ownership
before you get one. This guide has been made
to help you to do just that. If you already have
a dog, you will find lots of
useful information about
keeping a dog in Hong Kong.

Table Of Contents

1. Before getting a dog

- 6 🐾 Pets are for life. Think before you have one.
- 10 🐾 Adoption
- 12 🐾 How to choose a healthy dog
- 14 🐾 What to consider when buying a dog

2. After getting a dog

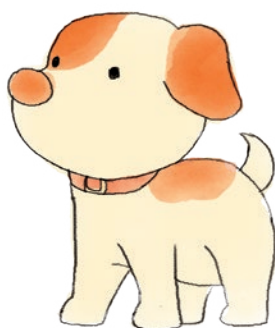
- 22 🐾 Dog care basics
- 28 🐾 Vaccination and licensing
- 31 🐾 Rabies
- 38 🐾 Neutering
- 42 🐾 Better control of dogs
- 47 🐾 Lost and found
- 50 🐾 Saying "NO" to pet abandonment

3. Other information

- 54 🐾 Choosing food for your dog
- 62 🐾 Dogs and poisons
- 66 🐾 Preventing dog bites
- 76 🐾 Heatstroke in dogs
- 81 🐾 Preventing cruelty to animals
- 83 🐾 Contacts



come,
come





1

Before
getting
a dog

Pets are for **life**. **Think** before you have **one**.

Responsible Pet Ownership

Do I have time
to take care
of a dog?

Does my
family support
my decision?

Can I be a
responsible
dog owner?

What is my
budget?

Should I adopt
a dog or buy one
from a licensed
pet shop or dog
breeder?

Is my living
environment
suitable for
keeping a dog?



Introduction

Keeping a pet can bring great joy. Besides being an enjoyable experience, it is well documented that keeping a pet can be beneficial to health and reduce anxiety. However, owning a dog involves responsibility, and there is a lot to consider before getting one. You must train and look after your dog properly in order to benefit from the long-term relationship between you and your dog.

A dog can live for **15 years** or more. If you get a dog, it is your responsibility for all that time. Are you prepared to make this commitment? Don't buy a cute puppy on impulse. Lots of puppies bought this way end up being surrendered or abandoned.

**Before getting a dog, you
need to think about:**



🕒 **Where you live**

Public housing estates and many private housing estates do not allow the keeping of dogs. Always check with your landlord and your estate's management office before getting any pet.



🕒 **Space**

Dogs need lots of space. Before you buy a dog, check how big it will become when fully grown, and how much space it will need. Puppies don't stay as little balls of fluff for very long! Don't get a big dog unless you have a big home in which to keep it.

1 Before getting a dog Pets are for life. Think before you have one.



• Dogs as gifts

Never give dogs as a surprise gift – owning a dog is a big responsibility, and choosing to keep a dog or not is a personal decision.

• Dogs and children

Caring for a dog can be a rewarding and educational experience for children. By keeping a dog, kids can learn about caring for others, responsibility and respect for living things. No matter what the dog's size or needs are, parents and adults should provide adequate guidance and support to young children.



• The best time to get your dog

A new dog needs lots of love and attention. You will need to spend extra time with your new dog to help it adapt to its new home. Choose a period when you are not too busy, and will have time for your dog - not a holiday period when your home is full of visitors and not when you are going out a lot.

• Budget

A dog can cost you **thousands of dollars** every year. There are many costs to bear in mind; feeding, grooming, veterinary bills and boarding charges all need to be considered. If you are getting a dog, you will need to set aside money for veterinary bills which include vaccination, sterilisation, routine health checks and any emergency treatment.





• **Lifestyle**

How will a dog fit into your daily routine? Do you have the time to care for a dog's needs? If you're out all day, or travel frequently, or work irregular hours, then a dog may not be a suitable pet for you. Only get a dog if you can walk it, play with it and go for exercise with it! Dogs need lots of exercise and need to be taken out to go to the toilet several times a day. It is not appropriate to leave a dog with insufficient space, tied up or alone on a balcony all day.

• **Select the right type of dog for you**

Different breeds have different characteristics and requirements. Consider your lifestyle and how the dog will fit into your household. Read up on the different breeds to find out which one is best for you. Also consider a cross-breed dog – they can be just as rewarding to keep as a pure breed dog.



• **Getting a dog**

- * Always consider adopting a dog through an animal welfare organisation before buying a puppy.
- * If you decide to buy a puppy, don't choose a puppy just because you sympathize it, and never accept a weak or a sick one. Never buy a puppy from a street hawker.
- * Only buy a puppy from a licensed animal trader, licensed dog breeder or holder of a valid one-off permit.

Adoption

Before buying a dog, why
not consider adoption to
save a life?

Your wise decision can
alter the destiny of
abandoned dogs!



Many dogs deserve a second chance of being a pet again after they were abandoned or given up by their owners. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) encourages the public to adopt abandoned or surrendered dogs through our partnering Animal Welfare Organisations (AWOs).

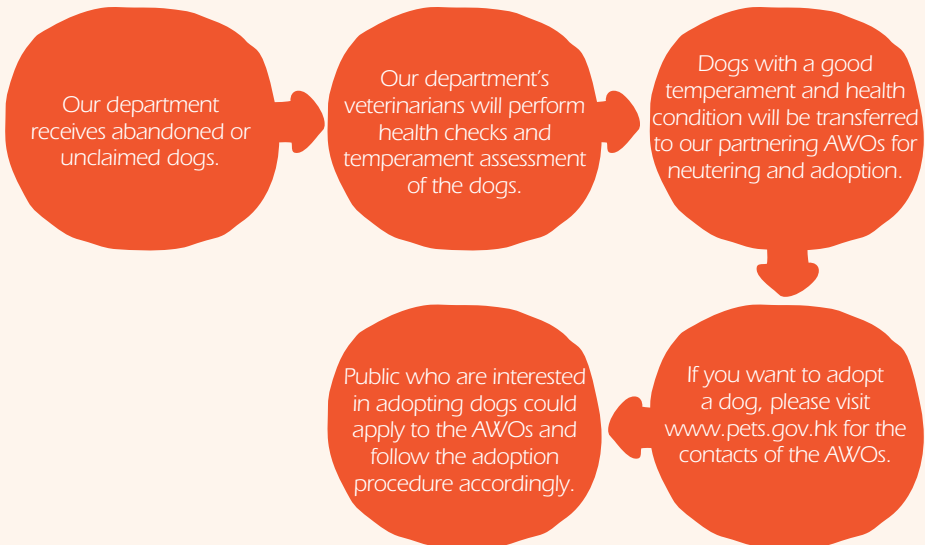
Abandoned and unclaimed dogs which have a friendly temperament and are healthy will be selected for re-homing.

Merits of adoption

Why should I adopt?

- You can save a precious life by giving a dog a chance to be an affectionate companion again.
- You get a dog with a friendly temperament.
- You get a dog that has been neutered which makes it a healthier pet.
- You help to prevent overpopulation of dogs.

Source of dogs for adoption



For more information,
please visit our department's website at
www.pets.gov.hk

How to choose a healthy dog

Before buying a dog,
always examine it closely.





✓ Choose a dog that

✗ Avoid a dog that

✓ Has bright and clear eyes, a clean nose and no coughing

✗ Has dull or weeping eyes, a runny nose or coughing, which can be caused by:

- * general illness
- * infection

✓ Has clean ears

✗ Has dirty ears which can be caused by:

- * ear infection
- * ear mites

✓ Has a clean and glossy coat

✗ Has a dull coat or obvious hair loss which can be caused by:

- * fleas, lice, mange (e.g. scabies, demodicosis) or ringworm
- * intestinal worms
- * poor hygiene
- * poor nutrition

✓ Is alert and bright

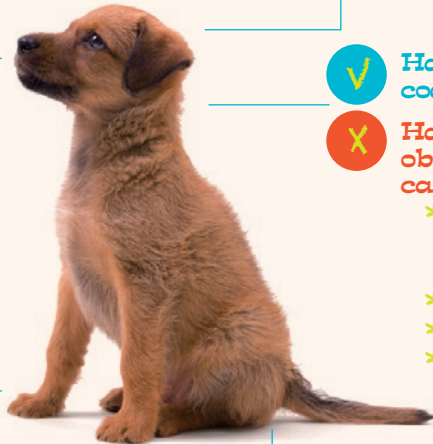
✗ Is tired and weak which can be caused by:

- * general illness
- * poor nutrition

✓ Has a clean rear end

✗ Has a dirty rear end which can be caused by:

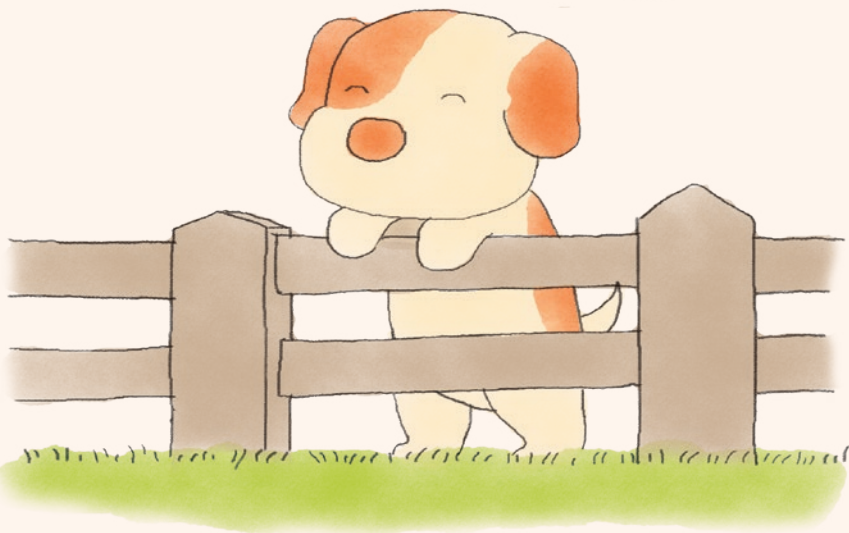
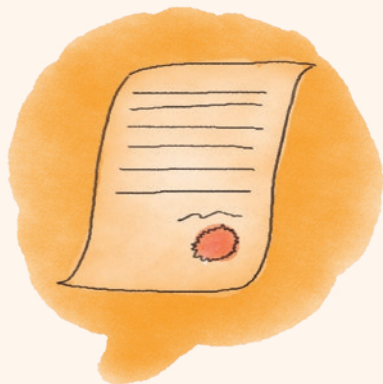
- * diarrhoea
- * gastroenteritis or colitis
- * intestinal worms



What to consider when buying a dog

You should only buy a dog from a licensed animal trader, licensed dog breeder (category A or B) or holder of a valid one-off permit **issued by our department**. Never buy a dog from an unknown source.

To reflect the serious responsibility involved in buying and looking after a dog, you must be at least 16 years old to buy a dog.





What to check before buying a puppy

A. If you buy a dog from a licensed animal trader or dog breeder, check that they have a valid licence issued by this Department, and make sure you are given the following:



1. Documents proving the source of the puppy

- * If imported from another place – a health certificate issued by the exporting place and a special permit issued by AFCD.
- * If locally bred – a “Dog Breeder’s Declaration” endorsed by AFCD. You should be given the duplicate copy (yellow).



2. Vaccination Certificate (original) issued by a registered veterinary surgeon



1 Before getting a dog What to consider when buying a dog



3. Receipt of the transaction with a full description of the dog including its microchip number

*A microchip must already be implanted in the puppy for sale. Ask the licensee or staff to scan the microchip of the puppy in your presence using a microchip reader (scanner) and show you the microchip number displayed on the reader. The microchip number must be identical to that stated in the vaccination certificate and other documents.

9-digit microchip number

4. If the dog is over 5 months old, you should also be given the dog licence





Remember:



- **You should visit the licensed premises to view and buy the dog**
- the licensee is not allowed to physically display the dog anywhere else.

- **A licensed animal trader or dog breeder should be able to advise you about how to care for the dog** including dietary requirements, basic training and socialisation, and breed characteristics. They may also ask you questions to determine your suitability to care for the dog, and may ask for proof of age.



- **Ask for an independent examination of the puppy by a registered veterinary surgeon before buying.** A reputable animal trader or dog breeder should allow a veterinary examination in order to check that the animal is healthy.

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B. If you are buying a dog from a one-off permit holder, make sure you are given:

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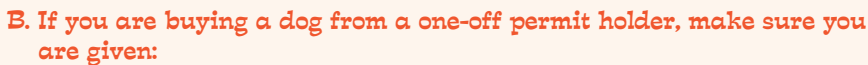
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Remember

If you have any doubt about the health of the puppy, or the seller refuses to provide you with the above documents or refuses to agree to the above requests,

**THIS DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS THAT
YOU DO NOT BUY THE PUPPY!**

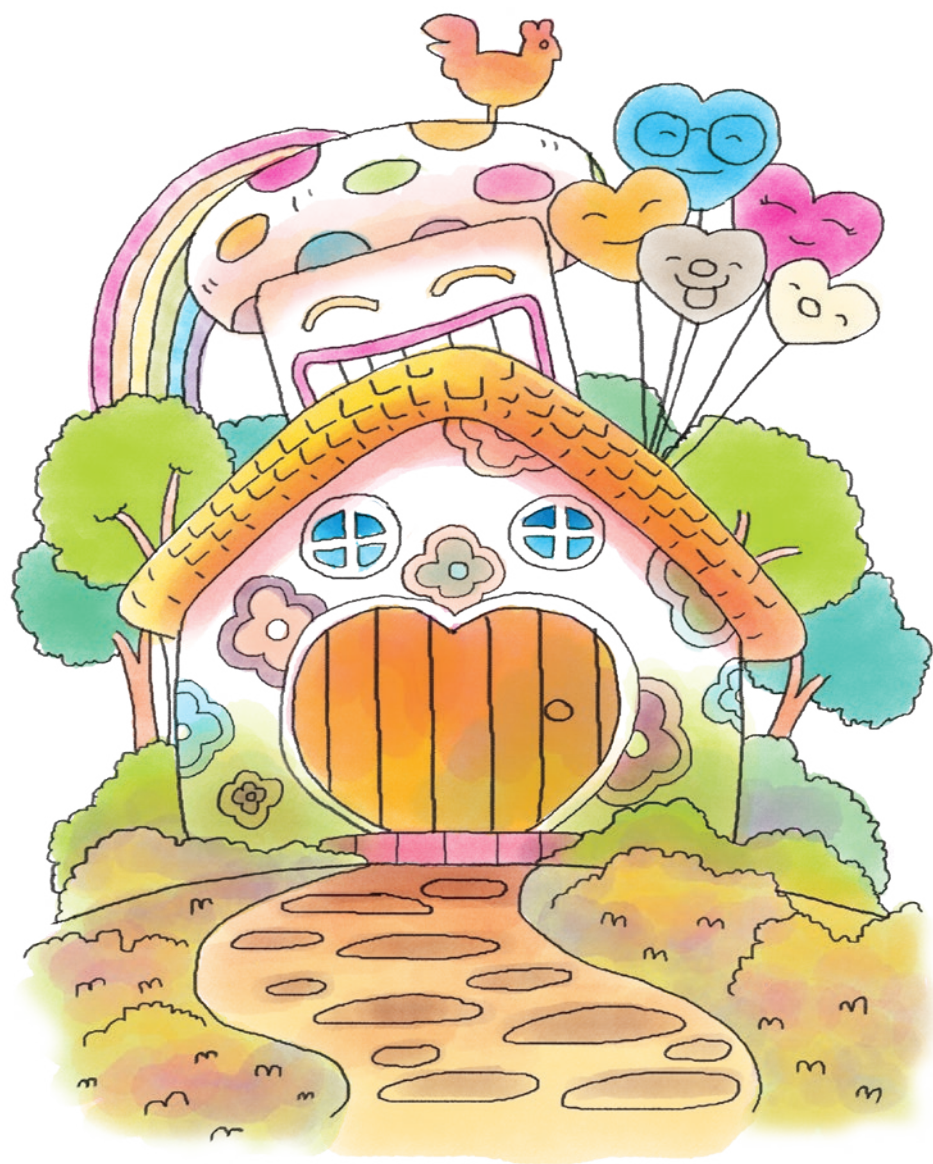


Applicable Legislation

Cap. 139B Public
Health (Animals and
Birds) (Trading and
Breeding) Regulations



Buying a dog is not the only option; please consider adopting a dog from animal welfare organisations approved by our department. Please visit our department's website at www.pets.gov.hk for more information.



2

After
getting a
Dog

Dog care basics





1. Learn all you can about your dog

Try to learn all you can about keeping a dog as soon as possible - even before you get a dog. A registered vet can provide you with professional advice on the needs of your dog, including the components of a balanced diet, the amount of exercise required, grooming procedures, daily hygiene and preventative care measures to be taken such as de-worming and vaccination. Be wary of advice from unqualified salespersons.

2. Socialise your dog

If you get your dog as a puppy, it is very important that you socialise your dog properly. Socialisation is the process whereby your puppy experiences all the different things in its environment (sights, sounds, smells, other people, other animals, vehicles, etc.) and learns how to cope and react. It must be done when the puppy is young – ideally before 12-16 weeks of age, although there will still be some benefits when the puppy is older. Failure to properly socialise your puppy may lead to it being fearful in situations it is not familiar with – for example when meeting new people or other dogs. Try to expose your puppy to all the things it will encounter in its day-to-day life and teach it not to be fearful by making each new experience a positive one, for example by rewarding it appropriately.

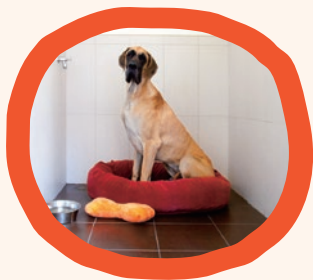


3. Health care

Only registered veterinary surgeons are qualified to give you advice on vaccinations and medical treatment for your dog. Check with your vet about what vaccinations your dog needs (see also "Vaccination and licensing").

Deworm your dog regularly to protect it from hookworm, roundworm, tapeworm and whipworm. Your vet can advise you on the best programme for your pet. Make sure you also get advice on how to control parasites such as fleas, lice, mites and ticks. Your vet will also advise you on other essential preventative medication, such as for heartworm.

4. Holiday time



If you plan to leave your dog behind while you go on holiday, make sure it will be well looked after. Ask a reliable neighbour, friend, family member, or a licensed animal boarding establishment to look after your pet for you. Never leave your dog alone. Make preparations in good time and don't leave it until the last minute to arrange care for your dog!

5. Training

Proper training of your dog is vital to ensure that you can control it properly and that it responds to your commands. It sets boundaries for the dog and lets it know what is expected of it. Start to train your dog from an early age. You can train your dog at home or with the help of a reputable dog trainer. Training should be a positive experience for you and your dog, and should be conducted in short sessions away from other distractions so that your dog does not get bored or lose concentration. The principle of training your dog is to praise and reward them when they do the right thing. This is called positive reinforcement. You should never hit or shout at your dog – any reprimand should be given in a firm voice only and must be done immediately otherwise the dog will not understand why it is in trouble.



You should aim to teach your dog the basic commands of “Sit”, “Stay”, “Come”, “Drop” and “Heel”. In addition to making your dog easier to live with, this will help you to control your dog so that it does not cause a nuisance to other people when you are outside.



6. Neutering (Sterilisation)

It is advisable to have your dog neutered. Thousands of dogs are put down each year because irresponsible pet owners allow their animals to reproduce unnecessarily without preparing homes for their offspring. Neutering will not upset the personality of your dog, instead, it will make your dog a better and more easily controlled pet. Neutering can discourage aggression and help prevent medical problems in the dog's later life.

7. Vaccinate your dog

Have your dog vaccinated by a vet against common infectious diseases from 6-8 weeks of age.



8. License your dog

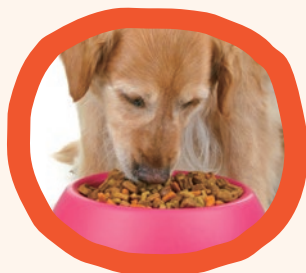
Licensing involves microchipping your dog for identification, and vaccination against rabies. This can be done after the dog is 3 months of age and **must** be done by 5 months of age. If the dog is already licensed but the licence is not held in your name, you must apply to change the ownership. See www.pets.gov.hk for more information.

9. Always take good care of your dog

More basics for taking good care of your dog:

☺ Water

- * a constant supply of clean fresh water



☺ Food

- * a good-quality, nutritious food in correct quantity

☺ Shelter

- * provide access to shade and shelter from the sun, rain and wind



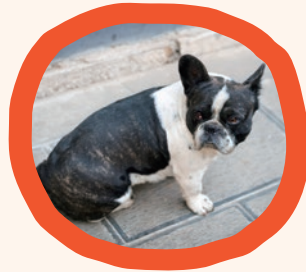


☺ **Exercise**

- * Provide adequate exercise for your dog

☺ **Don't leave your dog unattended**

- * Never leave your dog alone for more than a few hours
- * Never leave your dog tied up for a long time

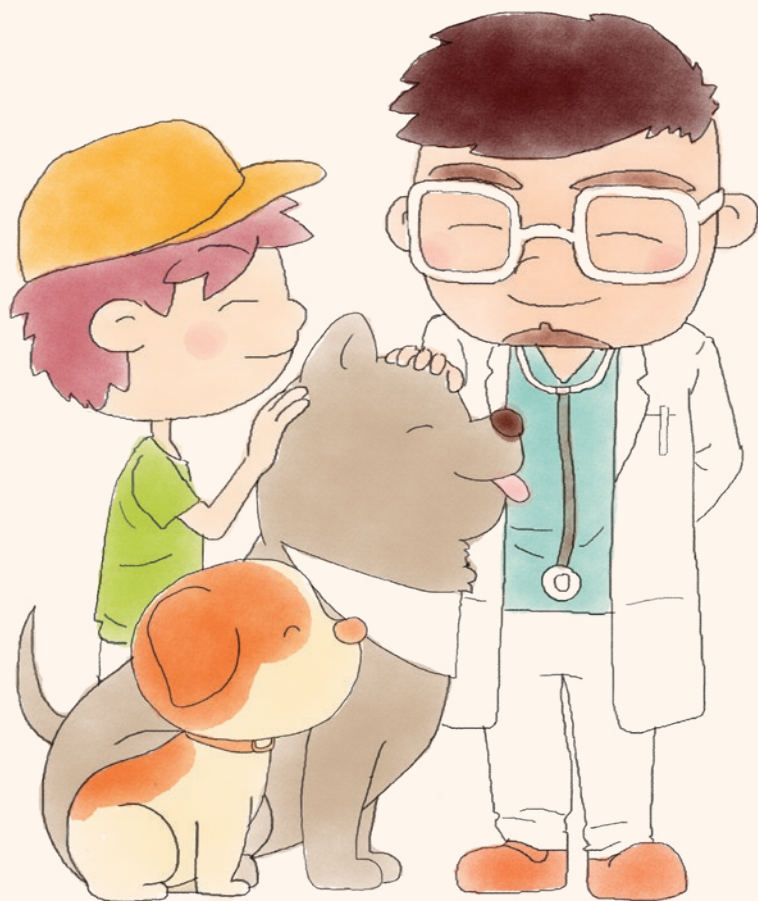


☺ **Be extra careful in hot weather**

- * Always take note of situations where you may be requested to muzzle your dog but beware of muzzling your dog unnecessarily especially in hot weather
- * Never over-exert your dog in high temperatures or high humidity

Above all, enjoy looking after your dog! Dogs are very sociable creatures – they love company and love to play. Give your dog some quality time every day to build a close and mutually rewarding relationship with it.

Vaccination and licensing





What vaccinations does my puppy need?

Puppies should be vaccinated against common infectious diseases, including **canine distemper, parvovirus, infectious hepatitis and leptospirosis**.

The primary vaccination course usually consists of 2 or 3 injections 2-4 weeks apart and can be started from 6-8 weeks of age. After the primary course, regular booster vaccinations are required. Please consult a veterinarian about the best time for your dog to receive vaccination as the requirements of each dog may differ.

How about licensing?

- ④ Dogs aged over 3 months can be vaccinated against rabies, microchipped and licensed. According to the law, you are required to license your dog by the time it reaches 5 months of age. Keeping an unlicensed dog over 5 months of age is liable to a fine of up to HK\$10,000. You can bring your dog to any one of our department's Dog Inoculation and Licensing Centres or Animal Management Centres (AMCs) for licensing and rabies vaccination. No advance booking is necessary. The dog licence will be issued to you after payment of the licence fee.
- ④ You may also take your dog to any registered veterinary surgeon for rabies vaccination and microchipping. The licence will be forwarded to you via the veterinary clinic in due course. The private veterinary surgeon may impose an additional charge for the service provided to you.
- ④ A dog licence is valid for 3 years and the dog has to be revaccinated against rabies to renew the licence every 3 years. If your dog has been implanted with a compatible microchip, there is no need to implant again.
- ④ The licence is not transferable. A dog keeper must advise our department in writing within 5 days of any change in ownership or address.

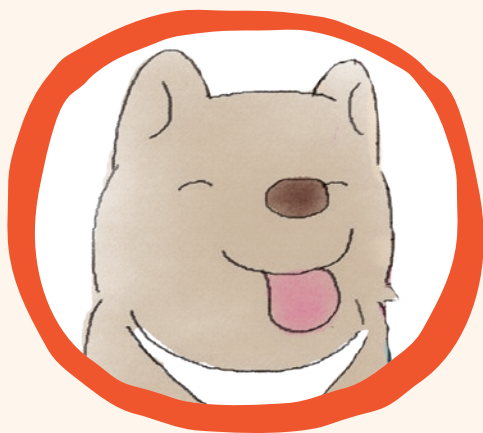


What should I take note of when my dog receives rabies vaccination?

If your dog has any history of allergic reactions to any drugs or vaccinations, it is recommended that you bring your dog to a private veterinary clinic for assessment by a veterinarian first before giving rabies vaccination to your dog.

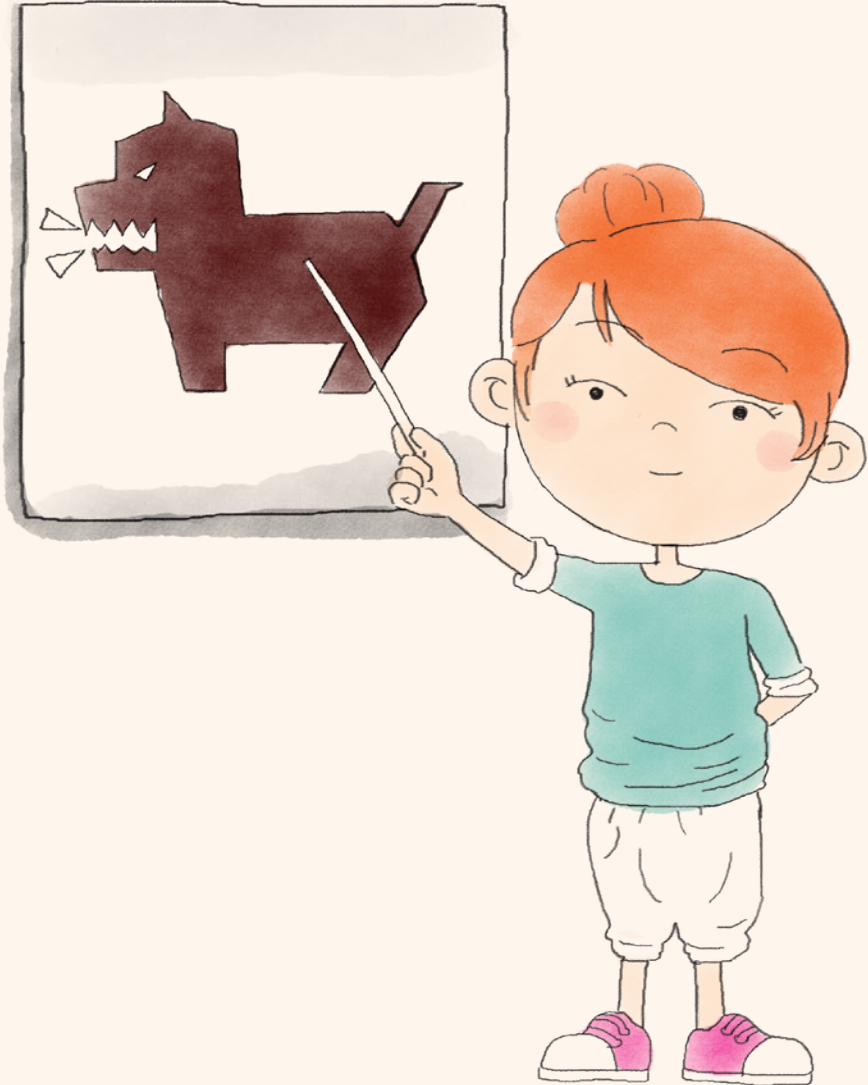
If your dog has been ill or displaying symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea in the past few days, you should consider taking your dog to a private veterinary clinic for a consultation and ask the veterinarian for advice on whether your dog is suitable to receive the vaccination.

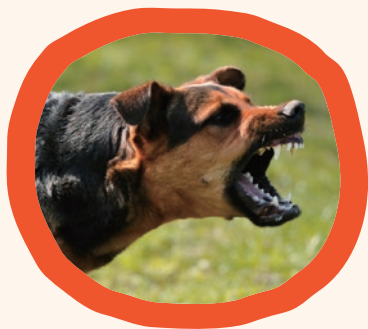
Depending on individual dogs, some may develop allergic reactions to the vaccination, but the chance of that is quite low. Symptoms that may appear during the first few hours after the injection include vomiting, breathing difficulty, generalised skin hypersensitivity (rash), facial swelling and/or localised swelling at the injection site. If the above symptoms are noted, you should take your dog to a private veterinary clinic for treatment.





Rabies





What is rabies?

Rabies is a serious viral disease of mammals. It is zoonotic which means it can be transmitted to humans from other animals. A large proportion of human rabies cases are due to bites from infected dogs. It affects the brain and nervous system and can lead to death. It is almost invariably fatal if post-exposure treatment is not given in a timely manner. It is therefore important to prevent infection. Rabies has a long and variable incubation period (up to 6 months in animals) and the animal is only infectious from the time shortly before clinical signs appear.

Rabies is a notifiable disease; if you suspect that your dog has contracted rabies or has known contact with animals suspected of having rabies, you should notify our department immediately.

Transmission

Rabies results from infection with the rabies virus which targets the nervous system. Rabies is not normally transmitted by casual contact between animals and humans; rather it requires contamination of open wounds by infectious saliva. Most human cases occur as a result of a bite or scratch from a rabid animal, especially dogs, bats and foxes. The virus from the saliva of an infected animal enters the peripheral nerves through the wound and later reaches the central nervous system, ultimately causing inflammation of the brain. The incubation period is usually a few months in humans, but may also range from a few days to one year.



Photo of a rabid dog from the Public Health Image Library of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA)



Symptoms in dogs

• Early Signs (subtle)

- * fever
- * erratic behaviour



• Furious Phase

- * restlessness, disorientation
- * erratic, unusual behaviour
- * aggression, seizures



• Paralytic Phase



- * drooling, difficulty swallowing
- * weakness, paralysis
- * change in voice/bark
- * depression, coma and death

How can I prevent my dog from getting rabies?

Simple steps can be taken to **protect your dog from rabies.**



- **Rabies vaccination** for your dog is highly effective in preventing the disease and rabies is rare in vaccinated dogs.

- **Only import pets legally** and those that are vaccinated properly.



- **Avoid contact** with wildlife and stray animals.



- When purchasing a dog, you should ensure that your dog is from a legal source, for example, only buy a dog from a licensed animal trader, dog breeder or the holder of a valid one-off permit, or adopt a dog from our partnering animal welfare organisations (AWOs).

- If you are planning to bring your pet animals from abroad back to Hong Kong, make sure you contact AFCD before bringing them back as the animals are subject to importation requirements (including 4-month quarantine for animals imported from certain countries).



- Rabies vaccination** is available from private veterinary surgeons and our department. All dogs aged over 5 months must be licensed, microchipped and vaccinated against rabies. The licence is valid for 3 years and your dog must be re-vaccinated against rabies every 3 years along with renewal of the licence.

How can rabies be prevented in humans?



- **Pre-exposure vaccination** is available for those at increased risk (e.g. vets or those travelling in rabies endemic areas and without access to safe and prompt medical care).



- **When travelling**, avoid contact with stray animals, including dogs, cats and monkeys, and keep all scratches covered.



- **If you are a dog owner**, make sure your dog is licensed and vaccinated against rabies.



- **Only import pets legally** and those that are vaccinated properly.

- **If you get bitten or scratched** by an animal suspected of having rabies (or if you are not sure), wash the wound with clean water and soap (or antiseptic if available) immediately and seek medical attention as soon as possible to see if you need to have post-exposure treatment.



HK – a rabies-free area

Hong Kong has been free of rabies since the 1980s and has kept a good record of maintaining a rabies-free status.

To keep Hong Kong free of rabies, the AFCD applies compulsory dog licensing, importation requirements and quarantine restrictions to dogs, cats and other animals.

World Rabies Day

World Rabies Day is a global event organised annually on the 28th of September to raise awareness of human and animal rabies, and to deliver the message that rabies is preventable and can be eliminated.

Since the launching of “World Rabies Day” in 2007 by the Alliance for Rabies Control, it has been supported by veterinary, medical and other specialised professionals, student organisations and corporate and non-profit partners from around the world. Since the inaugural campaign in 2007, World Rabies Day events have been held in more than a hundred countries. As more dogs from around the world are now being vaccinated, the incidence of rabies in humans and animals has also been reduced, demonstrating that the control and prevention of rabies are of great importance.

For more information about
World Rabies Day, please visit
<https://rabiesalliance.org>.

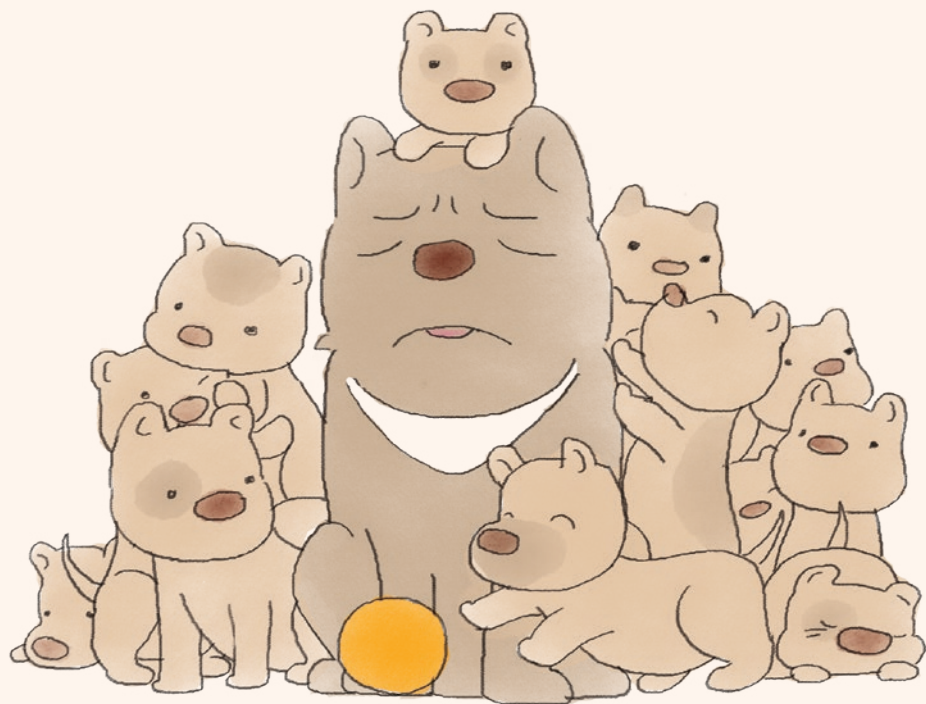


The AFCD also actively supports World Rabies Day by organising events in September each year.



For more information about
our events, please visit
www.pets.gov.hk.

Neutering





What is neutering?

Neutering, also called desexing, makes your dog unable to reproduce. In males the procedure is called castration and involves removal of the testicles. In female dogs it is called spaying, and involves removal of the ovaries and uterus. As well as a method of birth control, and thereby preventing unwanted puppies, there are many health benefits to neutering.

What are the benefits of getting my dog neutered?

• Neutering benefits your dog's health:



* In females, it reduces the risk of mammary gland tumours, ovarian and uterine cancers and infection of the uterus (pyometra).



* In males, it reduces the risk of testicular cancer and decreases the incidence of prostatic disease.

• Neutering has positive behavioural effects:



* Females will not have heat cycles so males will not be attracted, which may reduce potential stress or aggression in dogs.



* Males will have less urge to roam. Certain forms of aggression are reduced as are some unwanted behaviours such as mounting people or objects.

• Neutering prevents unnecessary breeding and therefore helps to reduce the number of unwanted puppies.



FAQs



❗ Is neutering expensive?

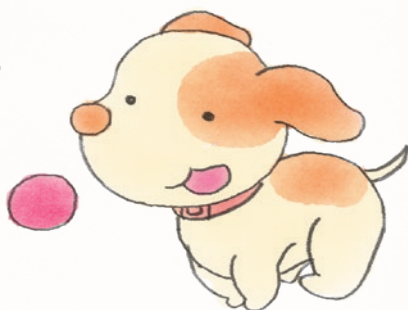
Try to think of it as a lifetime investment for the benefit of your dog's health. Unneutered dogs are at much higher risk of contracting more diseases and having cancers related to the reproductive system – which will cost a lot more money in vet's bills in the long run.

✓
Neutering

❗ Will my dog's behaviour change after neutering?

It might, however changes are minimal and minor. Male dogs might be less likely to roam and fight. Females will no longer go into heat.

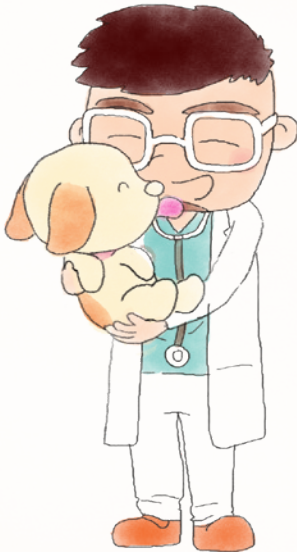
Some owners may worry that their dog will gain weight after neutering. Giving your dog an appropriate amount of food and providing regular exercise, such as walking your dog and playing with it will help to keep your dog healthy and should prevent it from putting on extra weight. This should be a key part of your dog's lifestyle whether it is neutered or not.





• **How old does my dog need to be in order to get neutered?**

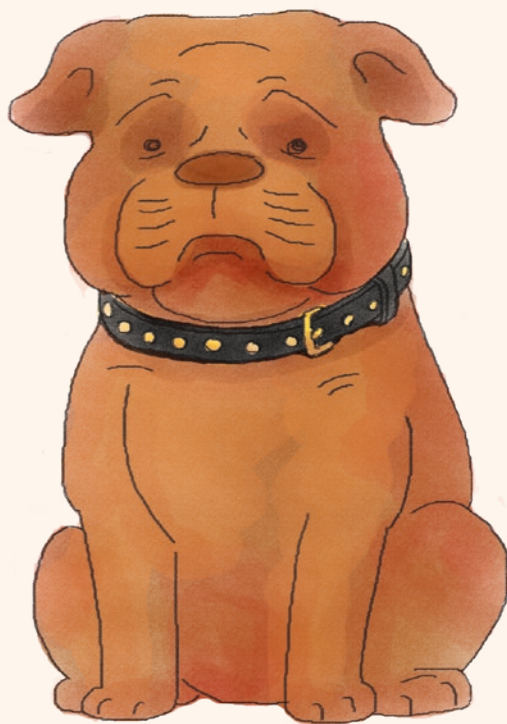
Consult your veterinarian about the best time to neuter your own dog as recommendations may vary depending on individual circumstances, but bear in mind that dogs can get pregnant as young as 6 months of age.



• **Is neutering painful?**

The operation is performed with the dog under general anaesthesia, therefore the dog won't feel pain during the surgery, and painkillers will be given by the vet as required. There may be minor discomfort for one to two days after the operation, but it will go away soon afterwards, and your dog's chances of having a better, healthier and happier life are enhanced significantly.

Better control of dogs





The control of “fighting dogs”, “known dangerous dogs” and “large dogs” under the Dangerous Dogs Regulation

Fighting Dogs

- Under the current legislation, Pit Bull Terrier, Dogo Argentino, Japanese Tosa, Fila Brasileiro and their crossbreeds are classified as “fighting dogs”.

- Fighting dogs must not be imported into Hong Kong.

Japanese Tosa



Pit Bull Terrier



Dogo Argentino



Fila Brasileiro



- The Regulation bans the breeding of fighting dogs. Existing fighting dogs must be neutered by a registered veterinary surgeon.

- Fighting dogs must be securely muzzled and held on a leash not longer than 1.5 metres at all times in public places. They must also wear a special collar.



Known Dangerous Dogs



- **Under certain situations**, a dog may be classified as a “Known Dangerous Dog” by a magistrate. Known dangerous dogs must be neutered by a registered veterinary surgeon. They must be securely muzzled and held on a leash not longer than 1.5 metres at all times in public places. They must also wear a special collar.

Large Dogs

- **Dogs weighing 20kg or more** are classified as “large dogs”.



- In public places, “large dogs” must be securely **held on a leash not longer than 2 metres** at all times.



- **In country parks**, “large dogs” may be exercised without a leash, provided they are still under effective control.



Suggestions for the control of “large dogs”



* Choose a suitable place to exercise your dog to prevent it from causing nuisance to other people.



* Be a responsible dog owner. Please dispose of your dog's droppings properly.



* Please keep your dog on a leash once you leave a country park.



* Train your dog properly so that it responds to your commands.

Some examples of “large dogs” (breeds of dogs that are usually over 20kg when mature) include:

Afghan Hound, Alaskan Malamute, Bernese Mountain Dog, Chow Chow, Collie, Doberman Pinscher, English Bull Terrier, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever, Great Dane, Greyhound, Husky, Labrador, Mastiff, Old English Sheepdog, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Rottweiler, St. Bernard.

Other breeds, and many mongrels and crossbreeds may also weigh over 20kg.

Exemption Examination for Large Dogs

Under Hong Kong law, “large dogs” must be on a leash not longer than 2 metres in public places. However, if you believe you have a well-trained large dog and would like to exercise your large dog off-leash, you can apply to take the exemption examination for large dogs.

The AFCD holds examination sessions twice a year. For details and the schedule of the examination sessions, please refer to the department’s website www.pets.gov.hk.

Please note that participation in the examination is voluntary. Owners of large dogs who are content to exercise their dogs on-leash in public places need not apply for this examination.



Applicable Legislation

Anyone contravening the Dangerous Dogs Regulation is liable to a maximum fine of HK\$50,000 and imprisonment for 6 months.

Dogs under 20kg

Dogs under 20kg also need to be kept on a leash or otherwise under control when they are in a public place, or may reasonably be expected to wander into a public place.





A Guide to Taking Care of
Your Dog

Lost and found



How can I avoid losing my dog?

- Neuter your dog. A neutered dog is less likely to wander off to look for mates.
- Keep your dog properly confined so that it cannot escape (but make sure it gets sufficient exercise and space to move).
- Make sure that you and your family socialise and train your dog so that if your dog runs loose, it will still listen to your command and stop or sit and wait for you.
- Keep your dog on a leash when going out and always keep it under proper control.

How can I trace my lost dog?

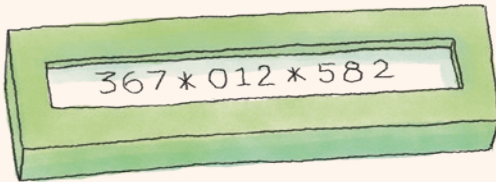
- Fit your dog with a collar and place an identification tag on the collar. Include your dog's name and your contact number on the tag for identification.
- Microchip and license your dog by the time it has reached 5 months of age. If your dog gets lost and is eventually found by our department, it can be quickly traced to you through our department's microchip and licence records.
- Keep your contact information up to date by notifying AFCD of any changes.

What should I do if my dog is lost?



1 • Report to

- The nearest police station;
- The nearest Animal Management Centre (AMC) of AFCD or 1823;
- The animal welfare organisations in your neighbourhood; or/and
- The veterinary clinics in your neighbourhood.



2

• Provide the following to the police or the AMC

- Your dog's microchip number;
- Your dog's name, age, breed, colour, sex and a description of any special body markings your dog has;
- Information such as when and where your dog was lost; and
- A description of any other identifications your dog may have and/or be wearing such as the appearance of its collar and identification tag.

3

• Release information

- * Put up flyers around the neighbourhood, at veterinary clinics or pet shops near your home. The flyers should have your dog's photograph and your contact number. Search your neighbourhood and ask your neighbours for help.



You should note that

stray dogs without microchip identification may be disposed of or re-homed 4 days after detention by AFCD. You should also note that a detention fee will be charged if your dog is found stray and detained by AFCD.

Saying "NO" to pet abandonment





If you really can't keep your pet anymore

A pet is for life. It is every owner's responsibility to ensure that their pet has a full and fair life. If you have considered all the options to keep your dog but decided that you really cannot look after your dog anymore, you should try to find a new and reliable owner for your dog or check with the SPCA or AFCD's partnering Animal Welfare Organisations (AWOs) to see if there is a chance of rehoming your pet. **DO NOT TURN A PET OUT TO FEND FOR ITSELF.** Abandoning a pet is a cruel act, and it is also an offence under the law. A pet left on the street or brought into a suboptimal environment suffers unfairly and profoundly. Another option is to surrender your pet to any of the four AMCs.



You can find

the contact of AFCD's partnering AWOs at https://www.pets.gov.hk/english/animal_health_and_welfare/adoption.html#tab_02

Applicable Legislation

- Anyone found guilty of pet abandonment may be fined up to HK\$10,000 and imprisoned for up to 6 months.
- It is an offence to sell or offer to sell a dog without a licence or permit. The maximum penalty is HK\$100,000.





3

Other
information

Choosing food for your dog





There are many different breeds of dog and they vary a lot in terms of size, growth rate, lifestyle, etc. Because of this, different dogs have different nutritional requirements. A variety of dog food products are available on the market for owners to choose from based on their dog's individual needs such as breed, age, lifestyle, health status, etc.



Life stages

The majority of dog food brands provide different products for dogs of different ages. These dog foods are formulated to provide different nutrient levels for dogs in different life stages. For example, puppy food is usually the most energy dense in order to fulfill their growth requirement while senior dog food often has fewer calories to match an older dog's lower exercise levels.

Breed-specific food

Different breeds of dog are different in size, shape, activity level, breed-specific health conditions, etc. Therefore, some pet food companies manufacture breed-specific dog food to provide for specific dietary needs. For example, some dog foods are specifically designed for breeds with long-hair coat to promote coat health.



Types of dog food

In general there are two main types of dog food - dry dog food in the form of kibbles and wet or semi-wet dog food in the form of canned or pouch products. Dry food has a harder texture and it is more likely to help clean the dog's teeth when they bite on the kibbles. Wet or semi-wet food has a softer texture and is usually more aromatic and may be more palatable for dogs with poorer appetite. Another type is dog food made with raw ingredients which needs to be kept frozen or refrigerated.



Veterinary prescription diet

Veterinary prescription diets are usually formulated to help with specific health problem and disease such as obesity, urinary, skin, heart or kidney problems, etc. You must consult a veterinarian before feeding this kind of special diet to your dog.

What is raw pet food?

Raw pet food is an alternative diet that has gained popularity in Hong Kong in recent times. A raw dog food diet typically consists of a mixture of raw meat, bones, organ meats (e.g. liver or kidney), eggs and vegetables. It can be homemade but can also be found in the form of commercially packaged products.





Some pet owners believe that feeding raw pet food to their dogs will result in a better health status. On the other hand it has been shown # that compared to other types of packaged pet food that has been processed, raw pet food is more likely to be contaminated with disease-causing bacteria, such as Salmonella and Listeria. It is also important to be aware of the risk of nutritional imbalance unless the diet is carefully formulated and there are potential risks associated with feeding bones such as obstruction or damage to the digestive tract.

If you choose to feed raw dog food to your dog, here are some tips for handling it properly:



- * Thaw raw dog food products in your refrigerator or microwave; don't thaw them on your kitchen surfaces or in your sink to avoid cross-contamination.

- * Thoroughly clean and disinfect kitchen utensils and surfaces that come in contact with raw dog food.



- * Carefully handle raw dog food products as the raw juice can potentially contain bacteria and when being splashed to other food and surfaces it may cause contamination.

According to a two-year study between 2010 and 2012 (Special Project: Pet food testing for selected microbial organisms.) carried out by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Center for Veterinary Medicine of the United States.

- * Handle raw dog food and human food separately.



- * Immediately cover and refrigerate what your dog doesn't eat, or dispose of any leftovers.

- * Store raw dog food in a fridge or freezer in an air-tight sealed container according to the manufacturer's instruction.





- * Don't let your dog lick your face and don't kiss your dog around its mouth especially after your dog has just eaten raw dog food.

- * Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds) after handling of any raw food, or objects that have come in contact with the raw food, as well as after touching or being licked by your dog.



Remember

- * Your veterinarian is the best source of advice on your dog's health, including its dietary requirements.
- * When choosing a special dog food product such as breed-specific food, organic diet, prescription diet or raw diet for your dog, it is best to consult your veterinarian first.





- * You should adjust how much you feed your dog so that they don't become under- or overweight.



- * Don't change your dog's diet too quickly. You should do it gradually by mixing the new and old food over a week or two.

- * You should buy pet food products from reliable sources such as a pet shop that you are familiar with or veterinary clinics.



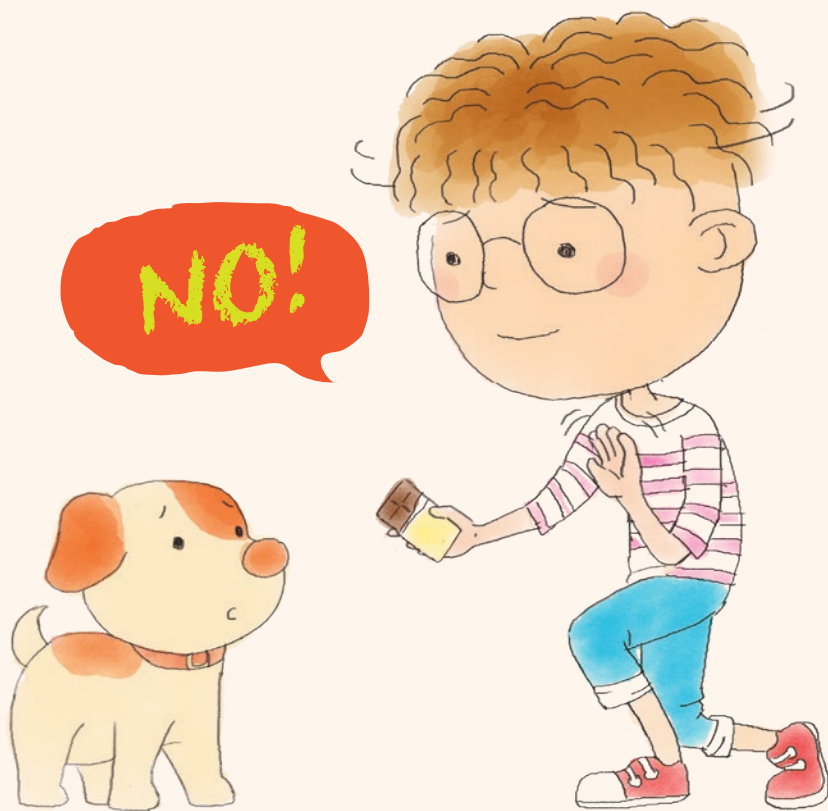
- * Bigger pet food companies and their distributors usually have better quality assurance systems and customer service in case of any concern with the quality of pet food after purchase.

- * Hong Kong is humid and warm for most of the year; you should store the dog food properly as otherwise food deterioration or contamination may occur. For example, store dry dog food in an air-tight sealed container once opened.



- * Your dog needs a well-balanced diet to stay healthy. A lot of human food will not provide dogs with the nutritional requirement they need. Some human food might be too salty and fatty for dogs and might cause them to have diarrhoea and other digestive and health problems. Some human food is harmful to dogs; common examples include avocado, chocolates, coffee, grapes, garlic, macadamia nuts, mushroom, onions, raisins, etc.

Dogs and poisons





A list of some common toxic substances that may poison your dog

(there are many more, so please check with your vet or research online if you are concerned about specific items in your home or garden):

Medications



Pain relievers
(including paracetamol)



Prescription drugs



Veterinary drugs
(at incorrect dosage)



Vitamins
(at incorrect dosage)

Foods / Plants



Chocolates, chewing gum



Garlic, onions



Wild mushrooms



Some other plants



Grapes / raisins

Products



Fertiliser / Herbicides



Pesticides



Household
cleaning supplies



Rat poison



Personal care products



Car coolant (antifreeze)

How to prevent your dog from being poisoned?

- Keep fertilisers, herbicides, household cleaning supplies, personal care products, pesticides, rat poison, etc. **in cupboards or high shelves**. Do not leave liquids in buckets or bowls to which dogs have access.

- Identify plants in your home** to see if they are poisonous to your dog. Dogs like to chew on plants so make them inaccessible to your dog.

- Never give dogs medication intended for humans. **Only give medications prescribed by a veterinarian.**

- Do not give your dog chocolate as a treat.** Do not leave chocolate boxes lying around as dogs could chew through the wrappings.

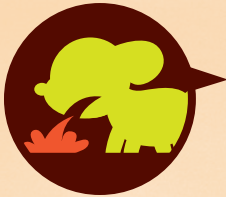
- Dogs often get into trouble because they have a strong urge to chew especially when they are young. **Give them plenty of safe dog chews and toys** to occupy them and to satisfy their desire to chew (but never give cooked bones as these can splinter and cause serious complications).



What to do if you suspect your dog has been poisoned?



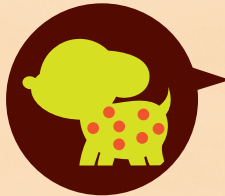
- **Do not panic.** First remove the source of poison from your dog. Then try to identify the toxic substances. Look for traces in or around your dog's mouth. Empty bottles or containers may be a clue. Check for distinctive odours.



- If the dog vomits, **note the appearance** of the vomitus carefully. If there are pills or plant fragments, bring them along to the veterinarian for identification.



- **Try to estimate** the amount that the dog has eaten. Some substances are only toxic in large doses.



- **Note** any symptoms that your dog may be displaying.



- **Call your veterinarian** and/or bring your dog to the veterinarian immediately.



- **Do not make your dog vomit** unless advised to do so by your veterinarian.

Preventing dog bites



Introduction

Owning a dog can be a rewarding family experience. Children learn to interact with the dog and learn to take responsibility for the health and well-being of the dog. However, while the ownership of a dog may have enormous benefits for children, parents need to be aware of the risk of injury to their children through dog bites.

Who is at risk of injury from dog bites?

Children are most frequently bitten by their own family dog or by a friend's dog. Children most at risk of dog bite injuries are usually under 5 years old, and the dog bite incidents usually happen in or around their own homes. Whilst children are particularly at risk, people of any age can get bitten whether it is at home or in a public place.

Young children are often bitten on the face, head and neck because of their height in relation to the dog. Dog bites can lead to permanent scarring and disfigurement and the wounds may become infected. Dogs with a history of aggression are not suitable for a household with children.



How to prevent dog bites

To avoid being bitten, you should abide by the following rules:



- Do not approach a sleeping dog.



- Do not approach a dog that is eating or gnawing on a bone.



- Do not approach a bitch that is caring for her puppies.



- Do not make sudden movements, run or scream near a dog.



- Do not stare at a dog.



- Do not come between dogs that are fighting.



- A child less than 7 years of age should never be left alone with a dog even for a short time, even if it is his/her own dog or it has not shown aggression before. Children may not know how to interact with dogs properly and even the best-behaved dog may react when provoked by a child unintentionally. It would be too late to take action if your child was already scarred for life.



- Adults are also responsible for introducing dogs to children and making sure the interaction between them is always a positive one.



- Adults should supervise their children around dogs and vice versa.



When you approach a dog



- Do not actively approach a strange dog; instead, let the dog come to you to get to know you.



- Ask the owner if it is okay to approach the dog and do not let children approach a dog without the permission of the owner.



- Dogs should not be patted on the top of their head or their shoulders unless you are familiar with them.



- Remain calm and quiet; do not make loud noises or sudden movements.



- Once you get closer to the dog, slowly extend the back of your hand and allow the dog to sniff your hand before stroking it under its chin or stroking the side of its chest.



- The dog should be approached on an angle or from the front but never from the rear – the dog should be able to see the approach so it is not surprised.



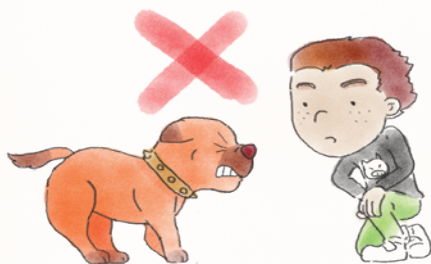
- You should teach young children the proper skills to interact with dogs safely through your own correct behaviour which acts as a model.



- An open palm facing the dog may be seen as a threat by the dog and may cause the dog to act defensively. If the dog doesn't sniff or if it backs away, do not attempt to pat it.

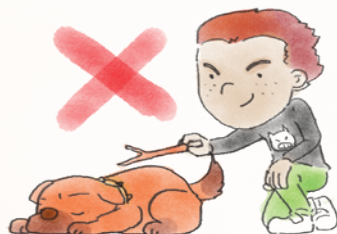
When approached by an unfamiliar dog

- When approached by an unfamiliar dog, children should be taught to stand still with their arms by their sides. In all probability, the dog will sniff the child, then walk away.



- Do not make eye contact with the dog.

- Do not run or scream near a dog, otherwise you may be chased and the risk of injury increases.



- Children should be taught to leave stray dogs alone and to report them to an adult who can then report them to our department for further action.



Important dog behaviour to recognise

Dogs have a special way of communicating with each other and humans. A dog's body language gives us clues on how it might be feeling.

**Do not approach
a dog if it:**

lifts its lips

**barks with
ears lying flat**

growls

backs off

**raises the hair
on its back**

**jumps up at
people**

As a responsible dog owner, you should:



- socialise your dog when it is young;



- muzzle your dog in public places whenever necessary;



- neuter your dog to reduce certain types of aggression;



- keep your dog under control at all times;



- keep your dog on a leash;



- consider taking your dog for training classes.

Training

Dogs do not communicate in the same way as humans. Training is the key to preventing dog bites and has many other benefits. Dogs, children and adults all need to be trained on how to approach each other safely and how to communicate with each other effectively.

Training is essential for all dogs regardless of their age, breed and size. Training helps dogs learn good “manners”. Proper training helps dogs learn how to behave appropriately around humans including strangers and children.

All dogs should be taught basic commands that will keep them and others safe. For advice on training, contact the SPCA and/or private trainers. There are also many excellent books on the subject which you can read to get advice.





If your dog bites someone

- ☺ Immediately restrain your dog.



- ☺ Help the victim to clean the wound at once. You should advise the victim to seek medical treatment right away.



- ☺ The incident should be reported to the police and our department and you should cooperate fully with the officers investigating the incident by providing your own personal information and details of the incident.



- ☺ The dog will either be brought to one of our department's Animal Management Centres for a 7-day observation period or it may be allowed to have home observation for the same period of time provided that its rabies vaccination status is valid (other conditions apply).



- ☺ Consult your veterinarian about your dog's behaviour and consider taking it for training classes.

If you get bitten by a dog



- Clean the wound immediately and thoroughly for 10-15 minutes with plain water and soap. If available, also use povidone iodine disinfectant.

- Seek medical treatment right away. If necessary, immunisation against rabies may be given.



- Even if you have had pre-exposure immunisation against rabies before, it does not eliminate the need for post-exposure immunisation if there is a risk of rabies.

- Since there is a high risk of the wound getting infected, antibiotics may be needed.



- Try to make sure that the biter dog does not bite anyone else. But at the same time do not take any more risks.



- Have the dog owner restrain the biter dog (e.g. holding the dog on a leash and muzzle it) or if the biter dog does not have an owner or its owner is not around, attempt to cage or confine the biter dog until the authorities arrive. Again, only do so if this is possible without further risk to yourself.



- Inform the authorities and try to remain calm. The incident should be reported to the police and our department and you should cooperate fully with the officers investigating the incident by providing your own personal information and details of the incident.

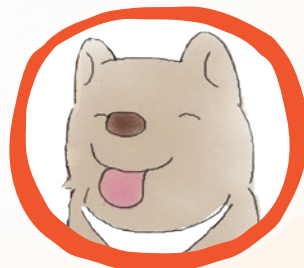
- Find out if the biter dog has had rabies vaccination.



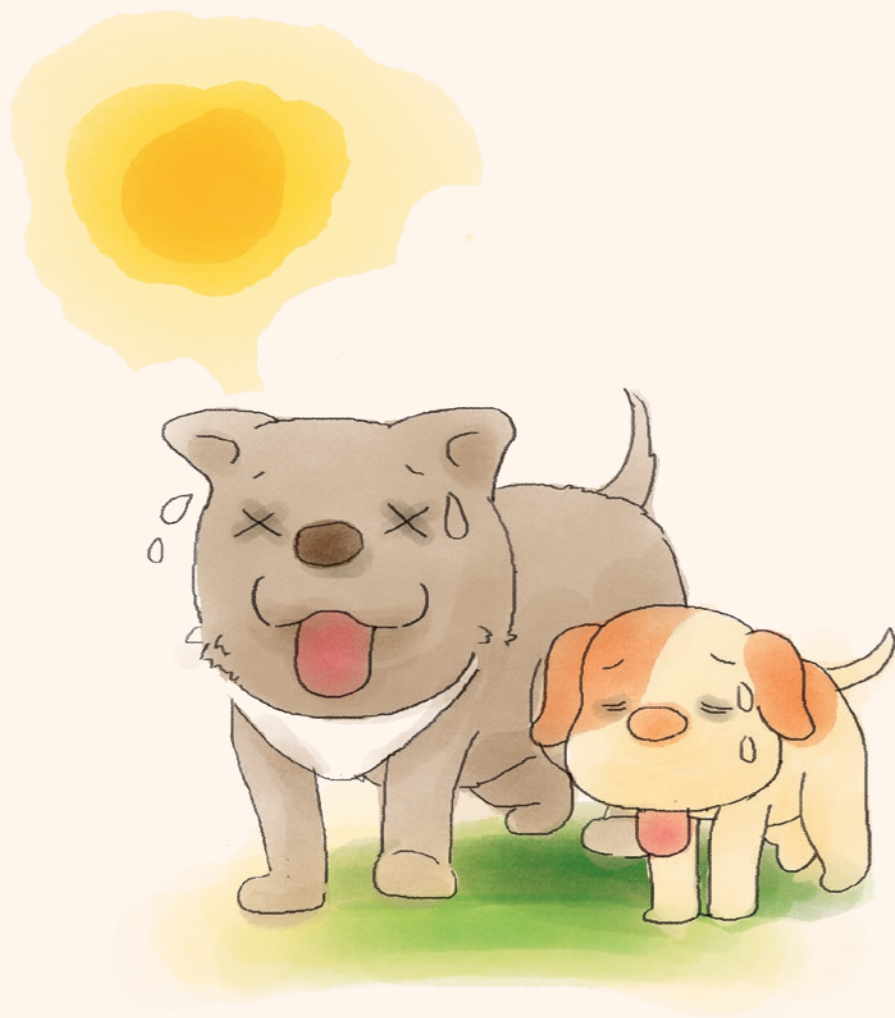
- The biter dog will either be brought to one of our department's Animal Management Centres for a 7-day observation period or it may be allowed to have home observation for the same period of time provided that its rabies vaccination status is valid (other conditions apply).

Applicable Legislation

If a dog is not on a leash or otherwise under control in a public place and bites a person, the keeper of the dog may be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of HK\$ 10,000.



Heatstroke in dogs





In summer, the temperature can become very high. Hot weather can pose risks to dogs because they cannot sweat like humans do and their primary means of losing heat is by panting. In hot and humid weather they can easily get overheated. A dog with heatstroke usually has a rectal temperature above 40 degrees Celcius. If detected and treated at an early stage, your dog can recover, but in severe cases, multiple organ failure and death can result. Therefore, immediate veterinary care is vital.

Symptoms of heatstroke in dogs

Weakness/appears wobbly

Dry red mucous membranes, or pale mucous membranes if in shock

Rapid breathing or panting

Increased heart rate

Vomiting, drooling

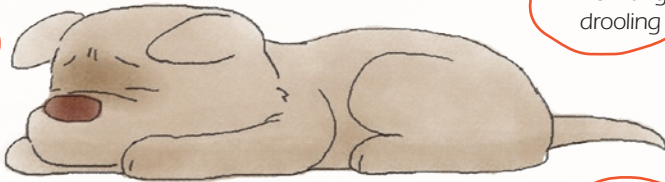
Coma

Diarrhoea

Initially distressed/agitated but depressed as heatstroke progresses

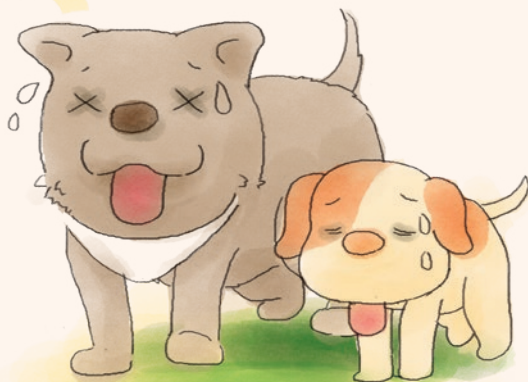
Shock

Seizures



How to prevent heatstroke in dogs

- 1 Provide your dog with access to cool and clean water at all times.
- 2 **Never** leave your dog inside a parked car even if the car is parked in the shade or you will only be away for a short while. The temperature inside a parked car can quickly rise up to 60 degrees Celsius or higher.
- 3 If you are keeping your dog outdoors, make sure you provide it with sufficient shade and adequate shelter. If the weather is too hot, you may need to move your dog to a cooler area (e.g. air conditioning area).
- 4 Try not to muzzle your dog unless necessary. Use a muzzle that allows open mouth breathing and panting.
- 5 During hot weather, restrict outdoor exercise to the early morning and late evening when temperatures are lower. Humidity increases the risk of heat exhaustion. On a hot and humid day, try to walk your dog after sunset. Even then, avoid too much exertion.
- 6 Bring cool water with you when you walk your dog. If your dog shows signs of fatigue or heatstroke, stop in a shady area and give it water to drink immediately. If the symptoms remain, bring it to the vet immediately.
- 7 Put up window shades in your car if you are going on a long car trip with your dog. Keep the inside of the car well ventilated and cool. Air conditioning is one of the most effective ways to keep your dog cool. Bring cool water with you to help keep your dog hydrated and cool. On especially hot days, allowing your dog to lick an ice cube helps cool body temperature.
- 8 Avoid places where the sun is blazing. If you are at the beach, a dip in the sea water may help and frequent oral rehydration is absolutely necessary.
- 9 During hot weather, wet your dog with cool water or allow it to swim. If your dog has predisposing conditions such as heart disease, obesity or breathing problems, keep it cool and in the shade.
- 10 Be especially careful with short-nosed breeds such as Bulldogs, Pekingese and Pugs. They are very susceptible to heatstroke.





What to do if your dog gets heatstroke



- Check on your dog frequently to see if it is showing symptoms of heatstroke.



- Immediately move your dog to a cooler area such as a shady spot or preferably an air-conditioned building.
- Make arrangements to take your dog to the vet immediately.



- Try to reduce your dog's temperature. Cool water is effective – apply the water over the dog wetting the fur, especially the armpit, groin and belly. A small amount of rubbing alcohol can also be used on the skin of the armpit and groin if water is not available (but remember this is flammable). Do not immerse the dog in iced water that is very cold since this causes the blood vessels in the skin to contract, restricting the blood flow and making further heat loss more difficult.



- If available, use a strong fan to help the dog cool down.



- Recheck your dog's temperature every few minutes until it drops to 39.4 degrees Celsius and then stop the cool water treatments. Do not overcool.



- Provide your dog with cool and clean water to drink (little and often) if it is able to drink on its own, but do not force water into the mouth. Even if your dog appears to make a recovery, have a vet examine your dog to be sure there are no complications. In some cases, complications may only become apparent hours or days after the dog has seemingly recovered.

Things you should have in hot weather



A fall-back plan with a cool location for outdoor activity



Rectal thermometer (digital or mercury)



Cool water, ice or cool packs



A small bottle of rubbing alcohol



A fan



Contact for 24 hour emergency veterinary service

Remember,
if you think your dog is suffering from heatstroke, consult a vet immediately.





Preventing cruelty to animals



Owning a pet can bring you great joy. However, owning a pet also involves great responsibility, and there is a lot to think about before getting one. Please treat your pet with respect and compassion. Always say “NO” to animal cruelty.

Our department has always been committed to safeguarding animal welfare and raising the public’s awareness of animal welfare. It is in this light that the penalty of the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance, Cap. 169**, was increased in 2006 to further safeguard animal welfare, prohibit and deter cruel acts to animals and punish offenders.

Treat animals well

Do:

- treat animals well and take good care of them.
- provide animals with enough food and clean water.
- provide animals with enough space so that they can move around freely.
- bring animals to the vet as soon as possible if they are sick or injured.
- provide animals with adequate shelter from the sun and/or rain.
- take care of animals when carrying or transporting them to prevent causing any unnecessary suffering to them.

**Respect Life,
Treat Animals Well!**



The dog has a new home after adoption.

Applicable Legislation

An offender convicted of animal cruelty shall be liable to a fine of up to HK\$200,000 and 3 years' imprisonment.

A real case of animal cruelty

In July 2017, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) ("SPCA") and the police together found eight dead dogs in a single-storey flat in Fung Kat Heung Road, near Yuen Long, two of which had decayed such that their bones were visible. Six other dogs were found alive but severely emaciated, together with five underweight turtles. No food or water was provided to the animals and the surviving dogs were even forced to feed off the dead ones. The environment was poor and unhygienic and the dogs were covered with faeces. The live animals were sent to the SPCA for veterinary forensic examination, treatment and nursing back to good health before arranging for adoption.

After police investigation, a 32-year-old man was arrested and confessed that he neglected the animals due to his work and relationship problems. He pleaded guilty to cruelty to animals and keeping a dog without a licence, and was sentenced to one-year imprisonment plus a fine of HK\$2,000.

Report

If you witness any incident of animal cruelty, please report the case to the police, SPCA or call 1823 to inform our department. The caller's identity will be kept confidential.

Reporting Hotline

Hong Kong Police: 999

AFCD: 1823 (handled by "1823")

SPCA: 2711 1000



Contacts

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

5/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices,
303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon

Tel: **1823**

Fax: **2311 3731**

Website: **www.pets.gov.hk**

Animal Management Centre Addresses:

Hong Kong Animal Management Centre

📍 688 Victoria Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

Kowloon Animal Management Centre

📍 G/F, Animal Management and Animal Welfare Building Complex,
16 Shing Yau Street, Kai Tak

Office Hours for Hong Kong and Kowloon AMCs:

9:00a.m.-1:00p.m., 2:00p.m.-4:30p.m., open daily including
Sundays & Public Holidays

New Territories South Animal Management Centre

📍 11 To Shek Path, Sha Tin, N.T.

New Territories North Animal Management Centre

📍 13 Jockey Club Road, Sheung Shui, N.T.

Office Hours for New Territories South and North AMCs:

9:00a.m.-12:00noon, 1:00p.m.-4:30p.m., open daily including
Sundays & Public Holidays



漁農自然護理署
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department