

## Doggie Daycare

Several years ago the movie “Daddy Daycare” came out starring Eddie Murphy as a dad who is doing his best to deal with the loss of his job by starting a daycare while his wife went to work each day. Eddie went through some serious stressful situations as he learned how to care for a bunch of youngsters. With several kids of my own, I know how stressful kids can be to us, but have you ever thought about the stresses that kids go through? Thinking about this, it reminded me of what puppies experience during the process of getting a new home. If you have children, you probably remember when they first started daycare or school. Mom’s cry, dad’s worry and everyone is stressed out including the child who is learning what to do without mom and dad around. It doesn’t take long until the child ends up with a cold or other kind of illness and has to miss a day or so of school/daycare. When a puppy goes to its new home, it too suffers from very similar stresses. It was recently weaned from its mother, typically has to take a trip to its new home, either by vehicle or airplane, and then typically gets greeted with a house full of anxious new pet owners and often children who want to stay up late and play with the new puppy. Can you see how this is STRESSFUL! There are some tools to help decrease this stress and eliminate many potential complications.

Stress can cause a variety of concerns with new puppies. Many of the reason’s behind these stresses make perfect sense if we understand the basic needs of puppies. Puppies sleep anywhere from 15-20 hours a day. When a puppy is not sleeping, it typically will eat a few bites of food, play for a few minutes and then return to sleep. When a puppy arrives at its new home, the natural reaction we have is to immediately play with it as long as we can possibly stay awake. We often try to teach it to sit, fetch, roll over, and speak all in the first night. Puppies need some down time, especially when they first arrive. It is best if we can play for several minutes and then let the puppy see where its new bed is and then let the puppy have some down time.

There are 3 common problems we see from the stress of the new home, the first is the most dangerous, hypoglycemia. Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, is a life threatening condition and is most frequent in toy/small breed puppies. Puppies that play and play without stopping to replenish their energy by eating some food are at the greatest risk of developing this condition. The symptoms include depression, lethargy, staggering when walking (appear drunk), and then worse symptoms develop such as a comatose posture, seizures, and then death. This condition can be easily treated by giving the puppy some Nutri-cal. If you do not have Nutri-cal, then honey or pancake syrup will work. If there is no response within 20 minutes, contact your veterinarian immediately. To try to prevent this condition from ever occurring, I recommend giving your new small breed or toy breed puppy Nutri-cal twice a day as a preventative for the first week in their new home.

The second common problem we see is upper respiratory illness. I commonly refer to this as a “cold”. There are varying infectious agents that can cause this from normal opportunistic bacteria that take advantage of the stressed immune system and set up residence, to kennel cough which can cause disease in even healthy strong immune systems. Prompt treatment for these “colds” is recommended and your veterinarian can get you the antibiotics you need to resolve this. Typically, colds only last a week or so

but in some cases may take 2-3 weeks. If your new pet is not improving within 7 days let your veterinarian know and they may want to try a different medication.

The third problem commonly seen in new pets is “stress diarrhea”. Stress diarrhea can be caused by a bacterial overgrowth or by a few protozoa. Coccidia and Giardia are commonly seen in new pets when they are first examined. Your veterinarian will take a stool sample and look with a microscope to try to identify these. Treatment for both these protozoa is very simple and typically requires a week or so of medication to clear the pet of the infection. Bacterial overgrowth is common in puppies as well as adults. This condition is commonly called gastritis or colitis. Switches in dog food, table scraps, or getting into the cats food commonly cause this. Treatment typically is similar to the treatment for coccidia and giardia.

New puppies are such a joy to be around! The thrill of a new family member excites everyone and will bring fun for years to come. Just remember that the new member of the family needs some down time too! Lay some rules down about how long the kids can play with the new pup during the first week or so until the newest addition gets accustomed to its new home and family. These tips will hopefully make the transition a smooth one for everyone involved!

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