

HIGH DESERT LABRADORS

PREPPING FOR YOUR PUP

Things to be prepared with BEFORE you bring your puppy home:

- **CRATE:** XL wire training crate (these are around \$80 at WalMart or you can often find used ones on Craigslist). See link to crate training tips at bottom of this page.
- **FOOD:** Kirkland brand Puppy Food from Costco. This is a super premium puppy food sold only by Costco. We know not everyone has a Costco membership, so we provide you with a starter bag of food to take home with you. (You may gradually switch to whatever quality puppy food you desire, but it is important to start them out on the same food to avoid gastro distress or diarrhea). **Offer ½ cup 3 times daily to start.** Follow feeding guide on bag; 2 times daily should be sufficient by 10 weeks of age. Ask your vet about when to put your puppy on adult food. Because of labs' rapid rate of growth, many vets advocate switching to a large breed adult food when your pup is 6 months of age.
- **BOWLS:** Bowls for food & water
- **BEDDING:** Pet bed or rag towels as bedding inside crate
- **HOUSE TRAINING SUPPLIES:** We train the pups to relieve themselves on natural pine pellet litter separate from their bedding and play areas. We'll send you home with a small bag of pine pellets so you can put a handful of them in the area of your yard that you want your pup to go potty. Jingle bells on a ribbon hanging from the doorknob you want your puppy to exit to relieve him/herself are a great way for to alert you that your puppy needs to go out! (I have a limited number of decorative leather jingle bell door hangers available for \$20 each.)
- **TOYS!** We recommend the large Kong toy (put peanut butter or a small Milk Bone inside to keep them busy for hours), Nylabone (these last forever without giving them poor nutrition like pig ears and rawhides), soft toys and stuffed animals (but be sure to watch for loose eyes and throw them away as soon as they start falling apart).
- **BALLS:** We've found throwing a tennis ball is one of the easiest and best ways to give your pup plenty of daily exercise as they grow. Real tennis balls hold up much better than those sold as pet toys! (Note: he/she may not be retrieving just yet when you get home, but keep trying... they will soon!)
- **LEASH:** We have found that the earlier you start leash training, the better they will be on the leash. We will send you home with a small puppy collar and leash to get started right away.

After you get home:

- **WITHIN 3 DAYS:** Visit your vet for a new puppy exam and schedule additional appointments to complete vaccinations. (We will send you home with initial shot records.)
- **WITHIN 6 WEEKS:** Research and enroll in a puppy obedience class or educate yourself to confidently train at home. Labrador puppies WILL require training to be a well-behaved member of your family!
- **IN 6-10 MONTHS:** Put a reminder on your calendar to spay/neuter your puppy, per your purchase contract. Our vet recommends spaying females at 6 months and neutering males at 10 months.

Other good resources:

AKC Printable Tips on a variety of topics: <http://www.akc.org/public-education/resources/>

Crate Training: <http://www.inch.com/~dogs/cratetraining.html>