**AUSTIN LABRADOODLES**

**PUPPY CARE INFORMATION**

**Book suggestions:***Love is all You Need* by Jennifer Arnold  and *The Power of Positive Dog Training* by Pat Miller are our favorites. *The Dog Listener*/  *How to Behave So Your Dog Behaves/ Living with Kids and Dogs Without Losing Your Mind* by Coleen Pelar /The Puppy Primer /Puppy Training: Owner's Week-By-Week Training Guide by Charlotte Schwartz are other good training books. We also love: *The Art of Raising a Puppy by the Monks of New Skete*. **For those who like videos,** You Tube’s Zak George also has some good training videos. Dr Sophia Lin's web site has great videos/books on dog training as well as posters to print off for kids: Sophia Lin.

**Feeding:** Puppies need to be fed three times a day until they are 6-7 months old, when they can be fed 2x a day, morning and evening.  Information on the food we recommend can be found on this web site under Nutrition. You may add   in some canned dog food from our recommended food for variety. It is packed with nutrition and not junk food like most canned pet food.  Most puppies will need about 1/3 cup to 1/2 cup dry food per time. Increase as needed, such as for highly active dogs.  By 7 months puppy can eat twice a day. Don't over feed your dog.  Overfeeding has been proven to contribute to the incidence of Hip Dysplasia in certain cases.  Your dog should not look or feel plump. Overfeeding can also cause loose stools.

**Puppy Schedule:**Puppies do best on a regular schedule. The day should be broken up into play time and rest time in a crate or puppy fenced pen in the house. You will be provided with a suggested schedule in your puppy packet when you pick him up.

**Water:** Always have fresh water available for your dog. Change water and clean bowl at least 2x a week. Add one teaspoon apple cider vinegar to every pint of water to repel fleas, ticks and mites. The vinegar will also help your dog resist urinary tract infections.

**Puppies and upset stomachs:**Should your puppy develop an upset stomach and soft stools during his first few days with you, do not be alarmed.  This is normal and his body’s response to being stressed.  Being removed from mom and litter mates, traveling, and possibly having a change in food can all contribute to this issue.  Pure canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling) can quickly and easily help this problem.  A tablespoon mixed in with each meal will quickly clear this up.  You may want to have some on hand just in case you need it.

A dog’s digestive system can be sensitive to changes in food. You can give her a bit of human food to get them used to it such as chopped chicken, beef, carrots, salmon, apple, eggs. Best to give a little at first as some dogs can be sensitive to some foods and any type of new change can upset a dog’s stomach. Adding a bit of dog healthy human food or canned dog food  adds a bit of joy to a dog’s eating experience.

Some foods, such as some nuts, grapes and chocolate, should never be given to a dog. Items that can’t be fully chewed can sometimes get stuck in the their intestines. Make sure to check each food before introducing for dog friendliness. The SPCA has a list online of both foods and plants that can act as poison to dogs. Keep fresh Drinking water available at all times.

Puppies and dogs sometimes do not eat for a few days at a time. No worries, as long as they have energy and do not seem ill. They will go back to normal eating when they feel hungry again. The food we recommend, LA, is very rich in nutrients

**Vaccination Protocol:**Newer studies show that vaccines given too frequently are not effective and can actually cause numerous immune related problems, neurological problems, behavioral problems, allergies, skin conditions, and other disorders. You can have titers drawn yearly to show immunity is still present. Vaccines have been shown to last at least 3 years, and many times for a life. There is a rapid and  inexpensive test that tests for the 3 main vaccines: Parvo, Distemper and Hepatitis Virus.

Lepto and rabies vaccines must be given 3 weeks before and 3 weeks after any other vaccines and by themselves or the health guarantee we give is void. These 2 vaccines are the most reactive. In Texas, the rabies virus has to be given by law by 16 weeks. Be sure to wait until then and no earlier. This is a very strong vaccine.  Consider Leptospirosis shot only if you feel your dog is at risk. If given, the Lepto vaccine is more reactive than other vaccines, must be given alone.

For one study on the harm vaccines do our pets read [The Purdue Study on vaccines](http://www.dogsnaturallymagazine.com/purdue-vaccination-studies/)

**Coat Transition:**Your puppy will go through a coat transition sometime from 8 months to a year old.  His adult coat will begin to come in, and you will need to do some extra brushing to remove the dead puppy coat so that the adult coat does not matt into it.  This process can take several months to complete until the adult coat is fully in.  In many cases, it is simplest to have your dog shaved down and let the adult coat come in without the added maintenance of removing the puppy coat over a period of a few months. The adult coat will be the same as the puppy coat: Allergy friendly, soft and low shed.

**Monthly ear cleaning :**Due to the non-shedding nature of the labradoodle, the ear canals do not shed. The ear hair has to be removed manually and the ear shaft cleaned. We recommend monthly ear grooming. Be careful to not be too aggressive if plucking hair, using ear powder, as open sores can cause infection. Better to use a small scissor to cut ear hair short. Our pet products provider, LA, has an excellent natural ear care product that should be used bi-weekly.

For mites/yeast there is product called Thornit: http://www.thornitearpowder.com. Use Thornit to clear up the mites/yeast, then apply monthly (just a dusting in each outer ear - use a paint or makeup brush). The web site also explains how. Thornit can also be used for a mite that lives in grass and can cause itching. Directions are given on the web site with more detailed directions sent with product for treating paws and itchy spots on skins. Dry ears after swimming/bathing.

If you snip ear hair short and use our recommended ear product bi-weekly, plus dry outer ear after swimming or bathing, you many never have an issue with ear issues.

**DO NOT run**with your puppy before he is at least 16 months old!  Puppy joints are going through a lot of development very quickly.  If you put too much stress on your puppy’s developing joints, you could actually cause or contribute to joint problems that could affect your dog for his lifetime.  A puppy running off leash is just fine, but no running with repetitive movements on a leash with you.  Short walks are good, increasing with age. Easy Walker or another brand of harness system which turns the dog back to face you gently, will make leash walk training a breeze. Link to product on Puppy Starter List.

**Educate:** **Spend time bonding and socializing puppy for the first few weeks!**Take your puppy to a puppy class or read some books and train yourself. If you do not educate your puppy, you could end up with a dog that is not much fun to be around.  It is up to you to help your puppy become a pet that you will all enjoy spending time with. Spending a couple of weeks bonding with your dog is the best way to have him or her loving to learn from you. The book Love is All You Need has excellent bonding exercises.

Trim nails every two weeks with a dog nail trimmer. By cutting off the tip more often, the quick will grow back and they will be easier to maintain. Don't forget dew claws on front paws. If not kept trimmed they can crack and cause a trip to the vet.

**Grooming:** Labradoodles do not shed and that is why grooming every 2 to 3 months is important to prevent matting, beginning at 4 months old for a bath and blow dry. The groomer can look for any mats you've missed so that they can be brushed out before requiring a close shave. Ask the groomer to clip between the paw pads, trim the potty area and eyes. Shave under the ears, around the collar, If you bring your dog to the groomer every 4-6 weeks for the light trim, bath and blow dry, your dog should require a full groom every 3 months. For easy care, keep coat no longer than four inches.

Brushing coats in layers two to three times per week will allow you to extend time between grooming. Learn to brush from the skin to the ends of the fleece, starting with the bottom layer and moving up, not just the top of the coat as matting can be happening underneath. A video on grooming can be found at the ALAA web site: https://alaa-labradoodles.com/

You can bath and brush out your dog at home, but most owners do not have the tools to do the job well.  If a doodle is bathed and has any mats, these become tighter and bigger. So make sure you do a total brush out in layers before bathing. Use a dematting comb and slicker brush. Brush recommendation are the Chris Christensen brushes. We use the LA shampoo and a conditioner on the supply link that helps with de-matting and gives the coat a fluffy, silky texture.

Keeping a scheduled grooming with a competent groomer will mean you doodle will not need to be shaved, excepting the one time between about 7 -12 months when their adult coat comes in. Keeping a grooming schedule is important to proper coat care. Coat should be combed/brushed in layers 2-3 times per week. Remove all matts with the grooming tools recommended on the puppy starter list.

Thinning Mats Your labradoodle will tend to mat in certain areas. Have your groomer thin these areas with thinning shears. It may be necessary for you to purchase a good pair of thinning shears yourself to cut out mats. Cut at an angle and pull the mat out. If it is a large area, thin the entire area and brush the area with a wire brush. Then wet the area and let air dry. Our pet product company has a great product for getting out matts as well as cleaning between baths: LA Bath Fresh Mist.

Clip nails bi-weekly. Clip off just the tip. Your groomer can also help you with this with regular appointments.

**Fleas/Heartworm**We recommend natural products for fleas and ticks rather than using poisons. Check out [Wondercide f](http://www.wondercide.com/)or natural products. If you must use a poison, Frontline Plus has least side effects. Rather than give heartworm medication, you can test for it every 6 months and then treat if your pet ever gets it. Heartguard pills along with Frontline Plus is an alternative way to treat. Wonderside products are a natural flea/tick alternative. Oral treatments, such as Comforitis or Trifexis are known to cause dangerous reactions, including death. At the very least, they can cause vomiting and upset digestive track.

**Itching:** Food sensitivities can cause itching as well as over bathing. Chicken and grains are common allergens. Use quality shampoos and conditioners. Cut down on vaccines by having your dog's blood tested (titers) for antibodies. Over vaccinating weakens the immune system. If your dog is chewing his paws, soak his feet. It’s a common problem and there are lots of foot soak recipes online. Check this site for several of the common homemade foot baths. A great product for itchy skin and paws, LA Soothing Mist. It has a wonderful aroma that will calm the whole house.

You can also add a few drops of essential oils such as lavender, rosemary or mint.  Also, before going outside, spray your dog with either a homemade recipe of essential oils for pets. or purchase some from Wondercide  Here’s a homemade recipe: Add one drop essential oils of citronella, peppermint and lavender to a bowl of water. Dip your dog’s brush in this and brush through coat. You can also soak his paws in this water. See information on Thornit above (under ears) for using this product on itchy paws or skin.

**Teeth**Daily brushing with dog toothpaste and brush is all well and good. However, if you give your dog teeth cleaning chews such as bully sticks and porky puffs their teeth will be cleaned. Give them a daily LA dental treat and they will have healthy teeth and gums.