

As you bring your Tejano Havanese puppy home.... important info to remember

Feeding

Your puppy has been eating Iams Proactive Health Smart Puppy Small and Toy Breed kibble. It is usually available at Petco/Petsmart. Each puppy eats a total of about 1 cup split into 2 or 3 feedings (morning and night along with noon if needed). They still prefer to have the kibble moistened with a small amount of warm water as their teeth are still developing. I've also provided a Ziploc bag full of Hill's Prescription Diet T/D (the large pillow shaped kibbles). This is only available through your vet, but we use it here as a treat, giving our dogs about 1 piece a day. It works well to keep their teeth clean so they don't require frequent dental cleanings (since they must be sedated for those). The dogs usually love it and one bag should last for quite a while.

If your puppy isn't excited about the kibble, you can mix it with a bit of canned food, but I would stay with the same manufacturer as the kibble. Do not mix in more than about 2 tbsp. of canned food as the main goal is to eat the kibble. Another alternative is to use one of the "chub" foods sold at Petco like Natural Balance. They look like salami and we will either dice or shred a small amount on top of the kibble from time to time. The pups all love that and you can also use small chunks of this food for a training treat. Our puppies here have been used to eating the kibble by itself without problem, but sometimes the transition to a new home can cause them to stop their normal eating pattern for a brief time.

They also enjoy frozen venison or chicken medallions made by Nature's Variety. These are raw food that are nutritionally balanced and can be thawed out and given to your puppy either as an added incentive to eat or you can even use them exclusively for food. Here in The Woodlands, those are usually available through Natural Pawz. They love them!

If you would like to transition your puppy over to a different dog food, you certainly may do that but remember that you need to make that change over the course of 2-3 weeks to allow their digestive systems time to adjust. If you forget to do this slowly, they will usually have diarrhea. Also, please be very careful as to which food you choose. We ask that our owners (especially those who wish to show their dogs) feed a high quality, premium food such as Nature's Variety, Eagle Pack, Fromm, Innova, etc. So many bad ingredients are in some brands of dog foods and we would be happy to discuss that in more detail with you. Another source of good information is the Whole Dog Journal which you can subscribe to online at www.wdj.com.

Water

You will probably be amazed at how much water your puppy drinks. Here they have used both a bowl and a rabbit type water bottle which was attached to the ex-pen. The rabbit type water bottle will keep their faces much cleaner in the long run, so you may want to continue to use one of those at home too. That's probably more important to those of you who will have a puppy with a light colored face as most folks like to avoid facial staining. We have been using filtered water. Sometimes a change in water can cause soft stools so you will want to either continue to use distilled/filtered water or switch them over to your water gradually. Please note that if you have a light colored puppy, using distilled or filtered water is one of the best ways to avoid eye and face staining which can often occur when using tap water.

Playtime

At this stage of their development, the puppies absolutely love interaction with their humans and lots of play should be encouraged. It can be rowdy play with games of chase and balls. It can be calm play on your lap. We encourage lots of play to help form that bond between puppy and family. Play is also how your puppy will become a well adjusted, happily socialized little guy. By allowing your puppy to meet and be handled by a wide variety of people now, you can avoid some of the fears that might arise in the future. They should spend time with both men and women, children and strangers outside of their family. The more contact, the better! Meeting a wide variety of people is also important...young and old, men with facial hair and without, people of all skin colors, etc. Although it is critical for a show dog (some will panic if a male judge with facial hair starts to examine them wondering if he is man or beast...grin) it is also important for all dogs. Call it doggie diversity if you will.

Play games such as pulling on a sock are best avoided at this stage though as that does not encourage bite inhibition. While getting their teeth, they will like to nibble on anything that is near. That includes your nose, your ears, your toes, etc. It is best to have a substitute nearby in every room in which you might play with puppy. A chew toy or a bully stick works well and in the long run is a much better chew toy than part of your body.

I would recommend that until your puppy is fully immunized that you avoid allowing them to walk in places like the pet supply store, the vet's office or in public areas/dog parks where they will come into contact with so many communicable diseases. I also advise that you do not allow your puppy to visit public park areas or rest areas, outside restaurants or hotels while traveling until their puppy series of shots are complete. In these areas, you can put down a potty pad for puppy to use however. Their initial shot series will be complete sometime after they are about 16 weeks old.

Vaccinations

Your puppy has received its first round of puppy vaccinations while here with us and these were given by our vet on 7/29/2010. We have provided a copy of the vet records for this visit, so please have your vet make copies of these to add to your file there. Please do not allow your vet to vaccinate your puppy against Corona Virus as it is totally unnecessary and please discuss the value of Leptospirosis (Lepto) in your unique situation. Most vets will be willing to discuss these things and good communication between you and your vet is important.

If they insist on Corona, find another vet since all vet schools and professional vet organizations have dropped that vaccine from their protocols. Your vet's insistence on Corona means either they are not educated regarding the latest protocols (not a good sign) or that they are more concerned with profit than your puppy's health (an even worse sign!). Corona is a self limiting disease which usually occurs in puppies younger than 10 weeks. In other words, if your puppy was going to get Corona, they most likely would have already had it.

Use of the Lepto vaccine is a little more controversial. The state health lab reports an average of 12 cases of this disease in Texas dogs annually. While it is zoonotic and can cause disease in humans as well as dogs, that is rare. A total of five serovars of Lepto bacteria have caused the cases diagnosed in Texas. The Lepto vaccine routinely administered by vets here only protects against two of those five serovars, so protection is incomplete at best. A newer vaccine exists which does provide protection against four of the five serovars, but the length of immunity provided by this vaccine is estimated at only four to six months, yet the vaccine is administered on an annual basis. I am certainly not a vet, but that makes no sense to me.

Again, make your own decision, especially since Lepto can be transmitted to humans and you know your own family situation best.

If you and your vet decide that your puppy should be vaccinated against Lepto, please advise your vet that many Havanese will have an adverse reaction to this particular vaccine. Your vet can give you recommendations to minimize any risk and may advise that you pretreat your puppy prior to vaccination with Benedryl. They will give you the appropriate dosage. I would suggest that you plan to remain in the waiting area at your vet's office for about 30 minutes to 1 hour after the vaccination so the vet will be on hand to deal with any possible reaction to this vaccine. This applies to each time your dog receives this vaccine, but most reactions will occur after the 2nd lepto vaccine. I would also have liquid Benedryl on hand at home along with your vet's recommendation as to dosage for a delayed reaction. Possible symptoms of a reaction to this vaccine include bulging eyes and seizure like activity. I have not experienced this personally with any of the dogs we have bred, but do know of several Havanese owners who have had problems.

Now, on to the good news about vaccines! They are a very necessary part of puppyhood and your puppy received their first round of vaccines at the age of 8 weeks and will be due to receive their second round at 11 weeks.. That means they will be due for their last booster shots at 14 weeks of age. Please be sure that at least 3-4 weeks have elapsed in between each booster shot in order to allow their immune system to recover. We recommend that Rabies be given by itself to lessen the chance of an adverse reaction and that it be given no earlier than 17 weeks of age. For your puppy to have long lasting immunity to the diseases we vaccinate against, it is very important to time this series of vaccines properly and to allow their immune system enough time to recover in between each vaccine. Don't be rushed through the process. Remember that the first dose of a vaccine sensitizes the puppy's immune system and that often the second dose of a vaccine will cause whatever side effects they may have. Usually this means that your puppy might run a very low grade fever and appear a bit lethargic for about 12-24 hours after his second vaccine. Talk to your vet about this at the time your puppy receives their second vaccination and follow their recommendations regarding what is normal and what is not as well as how to handle any side effects at home.

Routine Puppy Care and Grooming

I do recommend several different shampoos formulated specifically for dogs, but while your puppy is still a wiggling ball of fur during bath time I use Johnson's Baby Shampoo or some other variety of tearless shampoo to avoid any pain or damage to their eyes. Since the pH of most human products differs from that of animal products, you can switch to one of the recommended dog shampoos/conditioners as soon as you have a dog who can be fairly well behaved at bath time. The only human product I use on our adult dogs here is Thermasilk shampoo and conditioner. I like the Vellus products (available online at www.vellus.com) as well as Plush Puppy (available online at www.plushpuppytx.com), Nature's Specialties (www.NatureSpecialties.com) and EQyss products (EQyss is available at feed stores, tack shops, etc. as well as online).

I know many of you do not want to trim your puppy's nails. If that description fits you, please ask your vet tech to do this at those every 3-4 week puppy shot appointments. Then, after your puppy is fully immunized you may take it to the groomer for this task. If you plan to show your puppy it would be wise to simply do this at home as much damage can happen at the groomers to the show coat so stay away. To make trimming easier for those of you who choose to do this at home, I recommend using a small scissors used to trim cat nails to take off just the tips of the nails each week. As an alternative, you can use the type

of nail clippers we would use on a human baby to simply take off the tips. If you continue to handle their feet and trim nails frequently (every week) they should eventually become calm and comfortable with the procedure. If you wait until they are 6 months old to start trying this, you will have a wiggly, scared dog that will be difficult to handle when trimming nails. That's not fun for either of you.

Also, take some time now to accustom your puppy to the "feel" of a soft brush against its skin. Your "grooming" session does not have to be long – just a minute or two will do. You can do this on a bed, table or in your lap. Eventually, your goal is for your puppy to lay calmly on its side for you to brush it out. Keep working on a regular basis and you can do this, even if your puppy is far away from that behavior now! Just use a gentle touch and lots of calming words. You may want to give a treat as a reward for settling down or for tolerating the grooming session. It is also helpful, if you establish one place as the grooming area in your home so that your puppy knows what to expect while there and associates it with good things.

I know...they do not need to be brushed at this stage, but you are developing a good habit that will last for the life of this dog. Even if you plan to take your pup to the groomer, there will be many times when you will need to brush your dog at home. Also, your dog will be much more relaxed at the groomer's if they regard grooming as a positive activity.

Since the Havanese is a coated breed they will occasionally have what we fondly refer to as "dingle berries", "cling ons" or just plain "poop bottom". Our boys have all sorts of creative names for this situation, but the end result is you will need to clean their bottoms before it creates a problem both for them and for you. Some owners like to keep baby wipes on hand to wipe the bottom clean when needed. Some owners will give their dogs a mini bath in the sink or tub simply rinsing off the dirty area of the dog's rear. Just be prepared and know how you would like to handle this. If you see your puppy straining to have a bowel movement, it could be that a previous stool has hardened into the coat creating a "log jam" (yes, that's what our boys call it...grin). Other signs are a puppy that scoots its bottom across the floor or a puppy who is trying to lick that area.

Housebreaking

While the Havanese is a breed who wants to please their owners, **it will still take at least six months for your puppy to become reliable regarding housebreaking.** OK, go back and re-read that as it is a LONG time! Get used to picking up messes and blotting puddles when the two of you goof. That's right... both of you are being housebroken! The puppy depends on you to be regular and reliable in your scheduling of potty breaks. Even more important is that you need to consistently watch your puppy for signals that they are about to go potty. The best thing you can do to assist is to establish a schedule of frequent outdoor potty breaks (as often as every 1-2 hours at first). When your puppy goes potty outside, give them plenty of praise and a small treat. Go ahead...look silly, very silly, when your puppy goes potty outside and give them so much praise that they know they have done something good that pleased you. They love being praised! It won't take long before they expect that as part of their routine. We still have some adult dogs here who will still turn their heads over their shoulder to look at me while going potty just waiting for me to praise them and nod my head in approval. If you live in an area without a private backyard where you cannot take your puppy outside until they are fully vaccinated, continue to use the puppy pads and/or litter box indoors. Again, give your puppy plenty of praise for hitting the target or coming close! At times, a puppy will have their front legs on the pad while the business section is still off. Reward them for trying and perhaps think about putting two pads down next to each other to give them a larger target to hit.

Remember that puppies will usually go potty after every meal, so be sure to take them outside or to their puppy pad as soon as they have finished eating, 3 times a day. Also, puppies will need to urinate as soon as they wake up (yes, in the morning you should carry them out or to their puppy pad even before you have that first cup of coffee or else you will be sorry). They also will frequently stop to urinate during an extended play session or immediately after running for some time. Be alert to the behavioral cues your puppy will give you when they need to potty....circling, sniffing, starting to wiggle furiously if in your arms, etc.

Here, your puppy has been used to a “puppy playpen” type area we set up for them to use whenever we cannot keep a close eye on them. We use a large exercise pen and inside the ex-pen we place a soft bed, some toys, their food and water, and a puppy pad. If you can duplicate this setup in your home, your puppy will transition more easily and you will have your own “playpen” area for use when training your puppy. You can purchase an exercise pen online at retailers like PetEdge (www.petedge.com) or you can find them at local retailers like Petco or PetSmart.

When you cannot pay total attention to your puppy, place them in their ex-pen area along with a puppy pad and/or litter pan. This provides them with an acceptable indoor potty area. Again, you can praise and treat them when you catch them going potty in the “right” area. You will want to make certain that they do not spend too much time in the ex-pen and that you still have plenty of time for socializing and bonding as you do not want them to perceive the ex-pen in a negative manner.

At night, you will want to place your puppy in their kennel/crate with the door closed or confine them in the ex-pen area with their kennel/crate attached with the door open. We personally prefer the ex-pen approach as it provides more freedom for the puppy and that is what they have been used to here. If you have them in the ex-pen area, you will have a puppy pad and/or litter box in there too so they can use those if they can't hold their bladder/bowels all evening long. Dogs will naturally try to avoid soiling their crate since that is their “den”. Your puppy might only be able to hold their bladder/bowels for 6 hours during the night while in their kennel/crate. If you hear whining or barking in the middle of the night they probably need to go potty, so please take them out. This stage will not last forever, but their organs do need time to grow to adult size before their endurance can increase.

Nighttime Routines

We recommend an extended play session to help tire your puppy out before bedtime. This will go a long way toward beginning the night with a quiet puppy! Make sure your puppy has had a trip outdoors or to the puppy pad/litter box to go potty before putting them to bed for the evening as well.

If you plan to keep your puppy in a kennel/crate at night, please make sure they have something to snuggle with inside the crate along with a couple of their favorite chew toys. This will ease anxiety for the puppy. You can still expect them to whine and cry for a short period, especially during their first few nights home, so be forewarned. Sleep with them nearby if needed so you can place a finger through the wire in their kennel to soothe them. We have actually slept with the crate between us in bed for some puppies here who had trouble transitioning!

If you plan to keep your puppy in the ex-pen area at night, be sure to attach their kennel/crate to the sides of the pen so they can retreat into their den area. Also include a donut type or pillow type bed in the ex-pen along with toys. Be sure to place puppy pads on the floor and/or place their litter pan in the pen too. I really prefer this type of setup for new puppies in our home as they have plenty of room to stretch out,

have their toys and a crate in which they can sleep. The puppy pads will allow them to still have a place to go potty that is acceptable and you will not have to get up for a possible early a.m. or middle of the night trip outdoors.

Other Bits and Pieces

Favorite treats? Try pizzle sticks, bully sticks or flossies available online at www.sitstay.com. Since the health problems with chicken jerky treats from China (and almost all of them are from China) we make our own chicken jerky for the dogs and they love it. If you would like the recipe, just ask. Also, the pups LOVE cow ears (no pork ears as those are greasy and will make your puppy stink after chewing on them) and you can get those at http://www.merrickpetcare.com/store/dog_treats_ears.php. If your puppy has bad breath during the teething phase, you will want to give them the vanilla flavored ears that are available at Pet Deli (<http://store.petdelistore.com/vanillacowears.html>). **(Please NO rawhide or greenies/dentabones ever as they present very real choking and/or intestinal blockage hazards!)**

Messy? Yes...puppies are messy, time consuming and will undoubtedly chew on something very important to you. Be prepared for the amount of time you will need to devote to the pup at this stage and you will be rewarded with a well behaved, well adjusted dog later.

Most Important

Please know that we are here to answer any questions you might have as you and your puppy get used to each other and your lives together. We are happy to spend the time to help in any way we can with this process. Our goal is a happy family who thinks their puppy is perfect! We are aware that a new puppy can introduce some degree of craziness into your home and your schedule during the transition though and want to help ease you through this time.

Also, please send us frequent updates with your puppy's progress. We love to hear the stories and especially love to see the pictures of these puppies as they grow with their new families.

Call us anytime...home is 936-321-7849, temporary apartment phone is 832-813-7187 or cell is 281-684-8278. E-mail is cherie@tejanohavanese.com. And, be sure to send plenty of photos...we will miss these guys!