

# Jane Anderson's Puppy Information Pack for Bluegrace Portuguese Water Dogs

**Objective:** The objective of this page is to provide those people who are getting a Bluegrace Portuguese Water Dog information on how to care for their new pup. It should be particularly useful for those who are needing some refresher training and tips on how to look after a new pup. That, in itself, can be challenging enough! If you are getting one of our pups and you have kids, they may find our kid's page of information helpful.

***Be sure to check back often to this page as we update it with useful information.*** Congratulations, you are now the new or impending guardian of a Portuguese Water Dog. In this document you'll find several pieces of information designed to help you look after your puppy, and ensure that you all enjoy each other's company as much as possible.

Firstly, your puppy has been carefully raised and socialised before it came to your home. Your job is to continue this. Raising a pup is just like raising a child. This means they need:

- food and water
- shelter
- love and attention
- boundaries
- mental stimulation
- exercise
- training and behavioural parameters
- grooming
- vaccination
- worming
- where to go for further help

We like our puppy people to be independent thinkers, so don't be afraid to do more research and then come and discuss ideas and issues with me.

So let's go through each of these in turn, plus talk about a few more things:

## Food and water

Your pup has been raised on a natural diet. This diet must continue if you are to receive the optimum health in your pup. Most simply, these means plenty of raw meaty bones, raw egg, raw fish, raw offal, but no veggies, fruit, or grains.

Your pup will eat approx 2-3% per day of expected adult body weight. This means between 500-750grams of food per day. But, it is normal for your pup to eat more on cooler days, less on hotter days, more when it's exercised more, more when its going through a growth spurt. It is likely that up until 7-8 months of age, your pup will not over-eat. However, after that you'll need to practice more portion control.

You do not want to grow your pup quickly. There are no prizes for an oversized dog, nor a fat dog.

Rule of thumb for portions: meat/bone/offal – 80/10/10 %

That being said, I don't weigh food I feed, and I don't get caught up too much with percentages. If the stools are too loose, you may not be feeding enough bone, or are feeding too much offal. If the stools are white and crumbly, you're probably feeding too much bone.

Often as youngsters, the pups won't be able to chew through the bone, but it is important they get the chance to work their muscles and jaws on their bones.

Check out your sources of food – items “grown too quickly” such as most chicken, are not necessarily the best food source, and I restrict chicken to less than 10-20% of my pups'/dogs' diet, and I don't feed chicken at all to pregnant bitches.

For further information on diet, please check out:

[www.bluegrace.com/rawpwd.html](http://www.bluegrace.com/rawpwd.html)  
[www.rawlearning.com](http://www.rawlearning.com)

Critically never ever feed your pup a commercial dog diet. This means no dried food, no kibble, no canned food. This pup should never have anything containing grains, or cooked food.

Don't let anyone try and use scare-mongering tactics to convince you to feed commercial dog food. If you ever get worried **call me immediately** to discuss further. If you have any trouble with your vet, call me and I will phone them myself to discuss the issues. I will tell you now, that although my phone number has been given to several vets who have tried to bully my puppy people, none have been brave enough to call me.

Additionally, ensure that your pup has access to plenty of cool drinking water. I often will leave out 2-3 bowls of water in case one gets knocked over, and I have a bucket which I've tied to one of the fences.

It's important for you to know that by feeding your dog a commercial dog food, you will significantly increase its chance of getting Hip Dysplasia, IBD, thyroid problems, gum disease, UTI's, tooth decay, and several other health problems.

### **Our health guarantee is based on you feeding a correct raw diet.**

Therefore, if you ignore our advice and feed a commercial dog diet, you will be compromising the health of your pup and voiding your health guarantee.

Please let me know at any stage whether your dog has any health problems. And remember, please call me immediately if you have any concerns.

If I advise you to get a pup to a vet without delay, this means get it to a vet immediately. This does not mean delay it until the next day of the next week.

Never ever let your pup growl over food. Growling over food is completely unacceptable. It is not allowed by the pup while it has been living with us here, and must not be allowed by you. If you ever have problems with this, please **call me immediately** to discuss.

## **Shelter**

Your pup will require adequate bedding and shelter. Whether your pup will be sleeping on your bed, in the laundry, or on the back porch, it requires an area which is interruption free, clean, and dry in all weather. Don't give the puppy your favourite pillow - it will without a doubt, chew it up, and ruin it. You can get appropriate bedding from a pet store. We've found trampoline beds to be best, easy to clean, and cost effective. Please note: I do not recommend that your puppy sleeps on your bed, or that of your kids

## **Love**

like a child, a pup requires love. You are its guardian, and you need to protect and nurture it, particularly over the next few months. Be careful that young children do not give too much love, and that the pup does get a rest from their attention.

We suggest you restrict how often your pup is picked up, and we suggest that your pup is kept off all human beds, and off your couch.

Ensure you pup can find a nice quiet place to sleep without interruptions and poking fingers!

## **Boundaries**

It is very important you read the "10 simple rules" document.

There are links from the Bluegrace website too.

A pup, just like a child, needs to know what the boundaries are of their behaviour. It is absolutely normal for the pup to try and stretch those boundaries, and I've seen examples of this before where the humans let the dogs push those boundaries. This means if I ever visit you, and the dogs are lying on the furniture, and the humans are sitting on the floor - expect me to have a little discussion with you over boundaries. Another example of ensuring boundaries are clear is on the issue of biting. All puppies will bite. It is completely natural as they attempt to use every one of their senses to learn and explore their environment. However, they have teeth like pins, and it does hurt! If your puppy bites you, you must stand up, walk away, and completely ignore the puppy for the next 5 minutes. Do not talk to the puppy at all at this point. Remember, if you think some behaviours are cute as a pup like biting and jumping up on people and furniture, imagine what that will be like in a fully grown dog between 20-25kg. These behaviours don't magically disappear as the dog gets older. It's up to you to outline the parameters now.

If your pup continues to nip you, this is because there is something in its environment that is giving it the wrong message. That something is the humans. Call me to discuss what is going on and we can work through issues.

## Exercise

Your pup needs mental and physical exercise. By far, the easiest way we have learned how to exercise the Portuguese water dog is to teach it to retrieve. They have a natural retrieving instinct. Don't over-exercise your pup, and don't exercise your pup between 8am and 6 pm from mid Spring to mid Autumn (fall). Over exertion of pups in the hotter months can kill them, or lead to serious damage (and significant health bills). Use your common sense. Eg: if you wouldn't be running out in the sun, don't let your dog.

Do not over-exercise your pup, or over-stimulate it! The pup needs 16-18 hours of sleep a day. It does not need to be out on anything but a quick walk once a day (if that). I know you're friends are dying to meet the new pup, but please remember, over-stimulation can cause the pup to get sick. It will start to behave like an over-stimulated child, and there's nothing funny about that. So be conservative with your pup, and remember that "more" is not often best for anyone.

Don't take pups for long walks or runs until they are at least 18 months old. Again use your common sense. And if in doubt, **call me**.

Encourage your dog to go swimming. This does not mean throwing them in the deep end of the pool and seeing if they can swim. Slowly introduce them. Some of the pups are already showing a natural inclination. Once you are confident in their retrieving and swimming abilities, you can even start throwing a tennis ball into water for them. Remember don't throw it too far as they are usually smart enough to know their limits, and you will lose the object you have thrown in (can you tell I speak from experience here!).

## Fencing

You will need to have fencing for your dog. This is to keep puppy in, and unwelcome visitors (both animal and human) out. Never ever encourage your pup to climb fences. Make sure that little holes on fence lines are fixed before puppy can discover them, and venture out into the big wide world without you. (Again, I speak from experience!)

## Fleas

Sometimes fleas can be a problem. It is not a sign of uncleanliness. Fleas are predators that can be waiting on a bush, and as your dog passes, they use this opportunity to leap on board.

There are a number of commercial products available to treat fleas. The vast majority of these products have potential side effects, including death. Do your research before you use them. Many are banned in some countries, including ones that are readily available in Australia and the US.

Fleas do build up a resistance to products, so you may find some products completely ineffective.

## Grooming

As you would know, the Portuguese Water Dog has a coat that continues to grow. This means that it doesn't naturally shed. You will need to groom the dog for 5-10 mins twice a week. Don't spend lots of money on different sorts of grooming brushes. All you should need are a comb (stainless steel is best), a slicker brush, and an oval shaped brush. The easiest way to get your dog supplies is online through **Pet Network** - [www.petnetwork.com.au](http://www.petnetwork.com.au) in Australia who are usually cheaper than the local pet store.

Clippers can be bought at the cheapest price I've found so far at: [www.clipperworld.com.au](http://www.clipperworld.com.au) - look for their specials and buy clippers that have a blade as well. My current favourite blade is #7, which doesn't cut too short.

Traditionally, the Portuguese Fishermen would shave down their dogs once a year at the beginning of summer. If you choose to do this, then you will save yourself a heap of grooming, and the coat will have good warmth by winter.

You will probably need to shave your pup completely at 12 months as they will go through a coat change then, and will usually matt considerably. I will often shave off a dog in spring and again in early autumn.

Whether you choose to keep your pup in a lion trim, or a working trim (an inch long all over) is up to you. Those pups who will be making show ring appearances, will be required to be clipped into the lion trim before hitting the ring. This is a spectacular trim, with the additional benefit of being easier to maintain as there is less coat.

**Rule of thumb for grooming:** Don't wait until you feel a knot in the coat before you groom. Like housework, the dog should be brushed before it looks like it needs it. Be sure to groom the pup regularly as a pup. If you wait until the pup is 6-7 mo old before you start brushing it, I guarantee you that it will behave as if you are trying to kill it, or cut its throat at the very least. Additionally, it will behave like this every time you try to groom it for the rest of its life. It will wriggle, it will not sit still, and it will be out of control. And I have no "fix-it" for this type of behaviour. So don't let that happen to you. Start grooming them now and get them well and truly used to the routine before they need it. Afterall, we're aiming for success all round, so set yourselves up to win here!

At any stage, if you ever need help with learning how to groom, please **contact me** , and I will offer you assistance on this.

Some of you may choose to take your dog to a grooming parlour. My only advice don't let them make the dog look like a poodle!

## House Training

House training is a very important process for both you and the pup. A puppy does not pee inside intentionally. All the pups have a natural inclination to pee outside in the bushes in private usually. It is critical that you look at this as a learning opportunity for you both. On average, while the pup is awake, you should take it outside every hour on the hour, to pee. We use the word "busi" (pronounced "busy" - and short for "do your business") to encourage the pups to pee. Afterall, you don't want to be waiting outside in winter for the dog to pee. You want the pup to know that when they are placed outside the expectation is that they pee relatively quickly. So, have some old towels or wipers to clean up any accident. Expect the pup to need to do their business after playing about, after eating, and after sleeping. Never ever rub their noses in it, and never think that they are doing it on purpose to upset you!

Because your pup is fed a raw natural diet, its stools should be hard, without much odour if any, and are good for your garden. Tip: If your pup does dig a hole, fill up the hole with the stools. That will discourage the pup next time.

## Jumping Up

You do not want to encourage your pup to jump up on you. Think of it as if you want them to keep all 4 feet on the ground when you are around. If they jump up on you, push them away. Don't push them too hard, but enough to get them off you. Don't talk to them when you do this. This means, don't give the pup/dog any more additional attention other than pushing them away. Certainly when the pup/dog puts its paws up on your body, don't scratch their head. It is important all humans are consistent with this approach.

Also, the pup can be a terrific leaper. Definitely do not encourage this as a pup. Let their bodies develop naturally. They are too young for agility right now. And don't encourage them to jump off the couch, or to jump up on counters. Call me if you have any questions.

You will find, however, that the dogs as they grow older like to find a perch outside to sleep on and observe their surroundings. This is completely natural behaviour. We have provided an old outside table for our dogs to lie on top of. In summer we put the table in the shade, and in winter we move it out into the sun. The dogs appreciate this greatly. We have also built a small hillock for them to look out from. And if they ever get off it, we look forward to growing grass on it one day!

## **Kids and Pups**

Kids and pups can make a terrific combination. However, both the kids and the pup need rules and supervision. Never ever leave a dog, no matter how well you trust it, with a child. Most of the problems I have ever seen with kids and dogs is caused by the children's inappropriate handling of the pup. All the pups have had access to children handling them prior to leaving my home. Remember socialise the pup well with a variety of people in different situations.

## **Puppy proofing**

Without a doubt, your little pup is going to try and chew things that he/she shouldn't. This will include shoes, plants, and furniture. This means that just like you would with a child, you need to set this pup up to win so that it doesn't get itself into mischief. This means putting away shoes, putting pot plants up and away, and ensuring that your puppy is supervised. If they have to be left somewhere while you are out, put them in an area with clean fresh water, a couple of raw meaty bones, and where they can't get themselves into trouble.

Rule of Thumb: If your pup chews something it shouldn't have, get a rolled up newspaper and smack yourself over the head repeating three times, "I will not leave my shoes (or whatever) out for the puppy to chew." And then ring me and tell me so that I can remind you!

## **Toys**

Ok, don't be fooled into buying the best and grooviest toy for your puppy. There's just no point. They will enjoy lots of things that don't cost a thing. And it's good to change over their toys every day or so, as they will tire of it quickly. Things that make good toys are empty cardboard boxes, lengths of garden hose, balls of different sizes, empty plastic bottles (minus the cap), and of course, your new pair of shoes that you bought yesterday (so make sure you put these away!)

One of my bitches enjoys picking up buckets and running around with them. Unfortunately this sometimes means that she runs around with them on her head. She seems to have a wonderful time though! This bitch has also been known to run around with my mobile phone, and the esky (half filled with water!).

## Training

This breed is smart. So smart that they need to have extra mental stimulation. This means that training at a young age is important. We recommend positive training methods only. There is a fabulous type of training that is finally taking off in Australia called "clicker training". There are trainers in every major city who now offer this sort of training. I strongly advise that you seek out a trainer asap.

Good training will not replace learning at home. It would be a bit like letting your child be a ratbag at home, and expecting a good private school to smarten them up. It doesn't work like that for either your child or your dog.

Good training schools recommend you start training immediately. Backward training schools recommend you start at age 6 months. By that stage all of the bad habits are well and truly learned. If you wait until 6 months, you potentially can ruin the pup. For the life of your dog, if you ever need help with training issues, **call me immediately**.

We always train our dogs to the word "bed". When we say "bed" we mean for the dog to go and lie on its bed and leave us alone. If their bed isn't in the room, we expect the dog to find somewhere on the floor to lie down and be quiet. Actually, we also teach this to visiting dogs too. We highly recommend that you teach your pup the command "bed" as one of the very first things they learn.

**Please avoid all books and tv programs by Cesar Millan and "the Monks of Skete". We do not approve of, nor endorse, their approaches.**

## Worming

There is a significant amount of mis-information about worms. Increasingly there is evidence that there is a link between worming solutions and some autoimmune disease. In other words, the more you worm your dogs, the more you increase their risk of developing an autoimmune disease. The theory is that the presence of worms stimulate and invigorates the body's natural immune response. When you remove the stimulus, the body loses its natural ability in immunity.

That being said, your pup has been wormed 3-4 times before it leaves us. Again do your research, but there are potential side effects to worming products.

We believe the better approach is prevention and good health.

## Vaccinations

There is currently a lot of debate about this issue, but nobody wants your pup to get sick, that's for sure. Your pup was vaccinated at 6 weeks. She/he will need to be vaccinated again at 12-16 weeks, using the C3 vaccination. We do not recommend vaccinating for kennel cough.

However, because of government regulations, boarding kennels will require you to give your pup current vaccinations prior to boarding.

There are pros and cons to vaccination. We prefer people to do their own research and make up their own minds. Vaccines can reduce the risk of getting certain disease, but they also come with a variety of potential side effects which can include actually getting the disease, and even death. We know from human vaccines that they have killed people who have received them, most recently the swine vaccine being in the news when it resulted in the death of some children in a few short hours after the vaccination. Vaccines are known to cause damage to the immune system. Vaccinating your dog is like vaccinating your kids – you'll find people at both ends of the spectrum, all of whom will claim they are 100% right.

Within the Australian scene, finally we are moving to a regime of vaccines every 3 years for our dogs. Many people believe this could be extended considerably with some evidence that vaccination can last for a lifetime.

Your dog can get any disease that it has been vaccinated against. Vaccinations are not fool proof nor offer any guarantees. There is also evidence that “over-vaccination” comes through with its own set of issues. So the old adage – “more is better” is definitely not necessarily the case.

Do your research. Google the issue and talk the issue through with your family. It is more than likely your vet will encourage very frequent vaccination, although I'm hearing anecdotally that vet education in this area is improving. I don't agree with that approach. But each of you needs to make up your own mind, as you have to live with the consequences of what decision you make.

In the last 15 years, we have only had one case of a pup contracting parvo. This was a vaccinated pup who had been in her new home for approx 10 days. We don't know how it happened, but can speculate. You can't keep your pup in a sterile environment, and viruses and bacteria can be tracked into any house or yard via shoes, car tires, bird droppings, etc. What is important – is if your pup is looking off colour, or showing symptoms such as vomiting, loose stools, lethargy, or something else that appears wrong – get it to a vet, and call me – 0412 113 824. If you are in Melbourne, I will try for you to attend my own vet, and if possible, I will also attend the appointment. Parvo is a “man-made” virus, and is probably the biggest risk you have, although that risk appears to be quite small.

Some vets will recommend for you to keep your pup away from anything else, and keep it inside until it is 16 weeks of age, and has received it's 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccination. Vets can't even agree on how many vaccinations should be given. Some will say 2, some will say 3. Some vets will say it's ok to take your pup out when it comes home. Some vets offer puppy school where lots of pups come in contact with each other at an early age. Some vets will be adamant and say “keep your pup inside for months!” If the vets are giving conflicting information, it's no wonder that people are confused, including me.

I will sometimes have my own pups out down the park at 8 weeks, or at dog shows from 12 weeks where there are hundreds if not thousands of other dogs present. With

my own dogs I keep, I have yet to have an issue with parvo or any other disease that is covered in the vaccine. I have had rare cases of kennel cough, but it has only been with those dogs that stay at home, and haven't been out on street or down the park. So go figure how that happens.

The best prevention for any diseases that can be vaccinated against is to ensure a healthy immune system - which is best created and supported by a raw diet. Additionally, do not bring your dog up in a sterile environment. Your pup has been raised so far with NO bleach, and NO anti-bacterial soaps.

Do not fall into the trap of being "too clean" - despite what your mother may tell you!

## **Breeding your Pup**

Unless specifically agreed by us, your pup is not to be bred from. As you would appreciate, we have gone to great trouble to breed from the absolute best to provide you with a top quality puppy. We then choose very carefully which pups will then go into the show ring as a starting point to choose suitable ones to breed the next generation.

Most simply if you are not showing your pup under our guidance, then the pup is not destined for our future breeding program. Instead, your pup should have the "life of Riley" as a fabulous companion to you, and should be desexed before it is 7 months old. In most cases, we will spay/neuter your pup before it comes to you. The benefits of this is that you don't have to worry about remember to get your pup desexed, nor do you have to worry about the risks associated with surgery. We bear all those costs and risks when we get the surgery done early on. So far, we have completed early desexing on over 100 pups and have not had any problems.

We have found, however, that a pup's recovery time at 8 weeks, is much easier than the recovery of a pup at 12 weeks. The other benefit is that council registration of your pup is significantly cheaper when it is spayed/neutered, therefore saving you a significant amount of money.

Remember, the difference between a dog for the breeding program and one that is not, can often be very small. The dogs are of no lesser quality, and cost the same to raise but there are usually slight differences that make one more suitable than another. Quite frankly, I would rather you have a fabulous show quality neutered pet, than an accident waiting to happen.

If you really, really want to learn how to breed, then we'll talk this through with you. We have a long and extensive learning program which will involve the need for you to show your dog. When you express an interest in a pup initially, you need to tell us then, not after you have received your pup. That being said, we have several people in our learning program who started with a companion pup, and have now got their second pup and have joined the show scene.

However, please note, of all the dogs that compete in the show scene, most of them do not make the breeding program - we are after the best of the best, not just any dog. This is why our pups are of such high quality. Hope that makes sense.

## **Troubleshooting**

Call me if you have any problems. Don't wait a few days or weeks before you pick up the phone. Call me today – 0412 113 824

If you can't get hold of me and your pup/dog is sick – get it to a vet. Now. If I advise you to get a pup to a vet without delay, this means get it to a vet immediately. This does not mean delay it until the next day of the next week.

For the vast majority of the time, however, it will be trouble free!