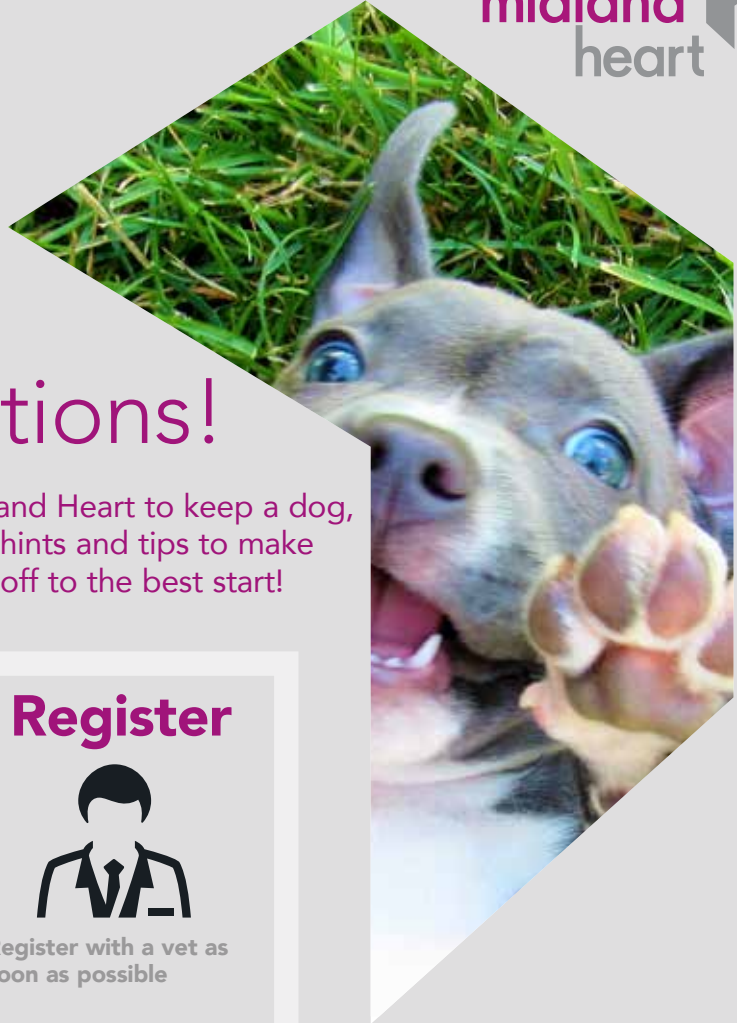


Caring for your new pet puppies and dogs

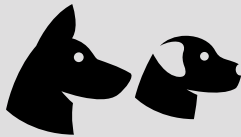




Congratulations!

You have permission from Midland Heart to keep a dog, so what's next? Here are a few hints and tips to make sure you and your new pet get off to the best start!

Breed



Choose your breed of dog carefully

Register



Register with a vet as soon as possible

Insure



Take out pet insurance for peace of mind

Identify



You must get your dog microchipped – it's the law

Vaccinate



Get your dog vaccinated to keep them healthy

Neuter



Neuter or spay your dog to stop it from breeding

Training



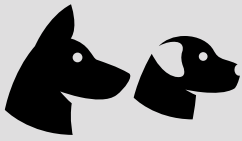
Make sure your dog is well trained and gets lots of exercise

Play



Keep your dog entertained so they are happy and healthy





Getting started

Every breed of dog is different, with different needs, behaviours and activity levels. Make sure you do your research before choosing your new pet, always use a reputable breeder and seek professional advice if you have any questions.



Veterinary care

It's a good idea to register your new pet with a vet as soon as possible. Vets offer a number of important services, including vaccinations, microchipping (a legal requirement), neutering and spaying and treatment if your pet is ill. Registering with your local vet is easy and can often be done online.



Pet insurance

It can be very upsetting when your pet is unwell, and worrying about paying for treatment only makes the situation more stressful. Pet insurance is relatively inexpensive and can cover many common treatments and procedures, giving you peace of mind and one less thing to worry about.

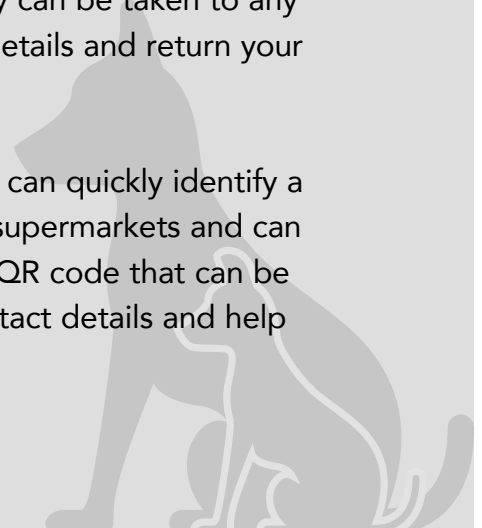
Pet insurance can be set up easily online, or at your local bank or supermarket. Insurance plans offer different levels of cover so make sure you read the small print thoroughly before signing up.



Identification

It is important that your new pet is easy to identify if it is lost or strays away from home. Microchipping your pet is now a legal requirement and is a cheap, safe and easy way to help identify them if they are lost. A tiny electronic device, about the size of a grain of rice, is put under your pet's skin. If your pet gets lost, they can be taken to any vet where they will scan the chip to find your details and return your pet home safely.

You can also buy a collar and ID tag so people can quickly identify a lost pet. These are available at pet shops and supermarkets and can be engraved with your details, or even have a QR code that can be scanned with a smartphone to access your contact details and help return your pet to you.





Vaccinations

To make sure your new pet lives a long, healthy and happy life it is important to make sure they get the regular vaccinations they need. To boost their immune system, puppies need regular vaccinations from around 6 weeks old. Remember – some vaccinations, such as Rabies, are a legal requirement. Your vet will give you more information and recommend any extra vaccinations that may be beneficial.

Puppy's Age	Recommended Vaccinations	Optional Vaccinations
6 - 8 weeks	Distemper, measles, parainfluenza	Bordetella
10 - 12 weeks	DHPP (vaccines for distemper, adenovirus	Coronavirus, Leptospirosis, Bordetella, Lyme disease
12 - 24 weeks	Rabies	Speak to your vet
14 - 16 weeks	DHPP	Coronavirus, Lyme disease, Leptospirosis
12 - 16 months	Rabies, DHPP	Coronavirus, Leptospirosis, Bordetella, Lyme disease
Every 1 - 2 years	DHPP	Coronavirus, Leptospirosis, Bordetella, Lyme disease
Every 1 - 3 years	Rabies (required by law)	Speak to your vet

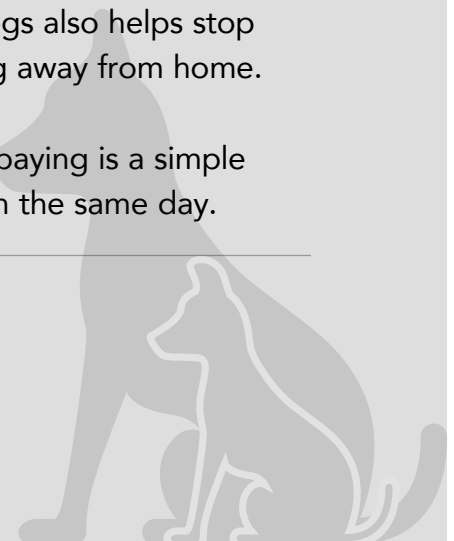
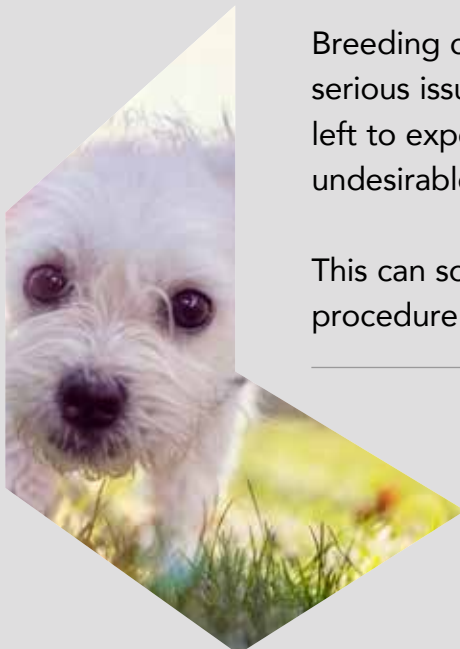


Neutering and spaying

You must not allow your new pet to breed. This is a breach of the conditions in your permission letter and can be very stressful for your pet. Puppies can be very destructive, so having 8 more of them running round would be really hard work! It is important to get them neutered or spayed as soon as possible. Your vet will be able to give you more information and advice.

Breeding can be very stressful for a female dog and can cause serious issues if they don't receive the right care. Breeding should be left to experienced breeders. Neutering male dogs also helps stop undesirable behaviours, like mounting or straying away from home.

This can sound a little scary, but neutering and spaying is a simple procedure and you should have your pet back on the same day.





Grooming

Dogs need to be brushed or combed regularly to avoid matting - which can be very painful for the animal - and avoid build-ups of bacteria and fleas. Dogs also need their teeth brushed, just like humans. Dogs can be especially susceptible to gum disease, so you need to brush their teeth 2-3 times per week to avoid complications.

You can get flea treatments, dental care accessories, brushes and combs from your local pet shop or your vet can offer more advice. Giving your dog a bath can also help them stay clean, smelling fresh and avoid infections.



Training

Training your dog is important for their behavior and development, rewarding for both of you, and a great way to bond with your new dog. All dogs can benefit from learning some basic commands and will make them much easier to look after.

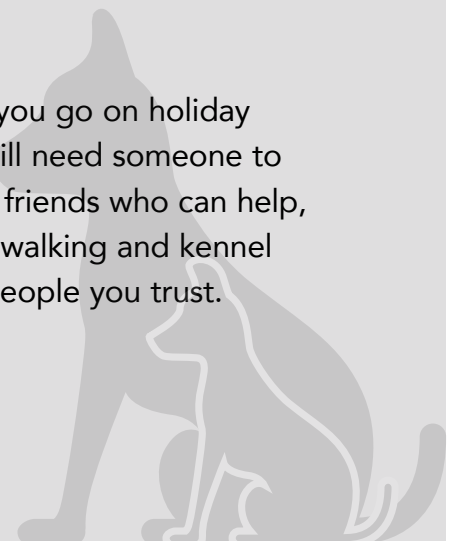
Training can help your dog understand road safety, discipline, how to behave around other dogs and most importantly how to act around humans. As well as training at home, you could consider dog-training classes, especially for older and rescue dogs or more challenging breeds.



Keeping your dog fit and entertained

Most importantly, your dog or puppy will need lots of exercise to keep them fit and stop them getting bored. Only letting your dog out in the garden is not enough. Taking your dog for a walk every day helps keep them, and you, fit and healthy. When out for a walk, always clean up after your dog.

Remember, dogs don't look after themselves. If you go on holiday or won't be home for long period of time, you will need someone to look after your dog. If you don't have family and friends who can help, there are many people who provide dog-sitting, walking and kennel services. Always do your research and only use people you trust.



Useful contacts for further support

Citizens Advice Bureau
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
03444 111 444

Dogs Trust
www.dogstrust.org.uk
0207 836 0006

Midland Heart
www.midlandheart.org.uk
0345 60 20 540

PDSA
www.pdsa.org.uk
0800 731 2502

RSPCA
www.rspca.org.uk
0300 123 0346 (Lines are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

