



Care for a Chicago Dog - 1

Please keep in mind that each Chicago Dog is unique and will adjust to their new environment differently. The following best care practices will help them settle in while setting them up for a lifetime of success.

Set up their space: As tempting as it is to let your dog have the run of the house, it's too much freedom too soon. Instead, designate a confined space to be their safe zone while acclimating to their new home. It should be a quiet area, away from the main traffic of your home, but close enough that your Chicago Dog can see and hear what is happening. Put a bed, food and water bowls, toys, and a crate (if you plan on crate training him) in this area. You can section off a corner of the living room or kitchen, or any room that is easy to block off. This space should be easy to clean in case your dog is not house-trained or forgot their previous training. Wherever you choose, make sure your dog does not have access to the whole house unless you are there to supervise.

Develop a routine: Dogs do better on a schedule. Knowing the routine eliminates stress and helps your dog understand what you expect from them. Establishing a routine with your new dog is essential. Make sure all family members understand the importance of maintaining a schedule.

Gather supplies: Chicago Dogs are often big, energetic, and strong. Owners should be prepared with tools and supplies at the ready to ensure their dog's wellbeing. We recommend the following supplies:

- **A leash and harness:** Your Chicago Dog should be on a leash at all times when outside the home. It is important to have a sturdy leash that allows you proper control. A good size leash ranges anywhere from four to six feet in length. Having an appropriately-sized collar and a fitted harness for your dog is also important. Along with having a clip for the leash to connect to, a collar displays necessary tags such as ID, rabies, and licensing. There should be enough space to slip two fingers between the collar and the dog's neck. A fitted harness will provide you with additional control and training opportunities. Recommendations include the Easy Walk Harness and the Gentle Leader.
- **Chew toys:** To keep your new companion from chewing on things they shouldn't, offer a variety of chew toys such as Nylabones and Kongs. Not only will these toys satisfy your dog's chewing needs, but they're also safe and hygienic options.
- **Hard and soft toys:** Toys varying in size, shape, texture, and sound will be very stimulating to your Chicago Dog and will help keep them entertained. Also consider puzzle toys to keep your dog's mind engaged. These include slow feeders, treat dispensers, and snuffle mats. When buying these toys, durability is key. It's important to make sure that the toy can withstand intense use without falling apart. Rather than having all the toys out at once, try having a few out and then switching it up. This will ensure your dog will not lose interest in the toys.





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- **A crate:** Everyone needs a safe space to rest and relax - including your Chicago dog! When dogs are tense or stressed, a crate is a comfortable place to retreat for a nap or to unwind. The best time to start crate training your dog is right from the get-go. Crate training should always be a positive experience and it is important to buy a crate that is the proper size for your Chicago Dog. A dog should be able to comfortably and easily stand up, sit down, lay down, and turn around in their crate. Crates come in three types: wire, which folds flat and has better ventilation; plastic, which is cozy and approved for airline shipping; and cloth, which is lightweight but can be shredded by dogs who want to get out. We suggest you try a plastic or wire crate before buying a cloth crate.
- **Training treats:** Along with regular treats, you should have a separate stash of training treats on hand. These treats should be especially yummy and should be used as positive reinforcement when training your new friend. It's important that these treats are only used for training and not as a snack to ensure that they don't lose their specialness to your dog.
- **Poop bags:** It's the law to pick up your dog's waste. Not only is it good manners, but dog waste can also transmit parasites and other infectious diseases. To go the extra mile, try purchasing eco-friendly poop bags that are capable of breaking down in landfills.
- **Flea and tick prevention:** Flea and tick season can bring about many risks for you and your dog. Fleas carry tapeworm and ticks can carry Lyme disease. It's important to have the necessary supplies to prevent your dog from getting these parasites. Talk to your vet about which flea and tick product is best to use with your new dog. For more information on how to prevent fleas and ticks, please see our Flea and Tick Prevention article.

Provide regular exercise: A well-exercised dog is a happy dog. Exercise can include running, a long game of fetch, swimming, visiting a dog park, or agility classes. Sufficient exercise is a key part in keeping your Chicago Dog healthy, happy, and away from destructive habits such as chewing. In general, dogs need at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise each day. Along with that 30 minutes, your dog should also get at least 15 minutes of interactive play each day as well. For young dogs especially, daily walks (outside of potty breaks) are a necessity - one in the morning and one in the evening. To avoid your dog getting bored, try switching exercise routines up every once in a while. Along with walking, there are many other options to exercise your dog.

Next: Prepare for acclimation





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Prepare for acclimation: It can take your Chicago Dog anywhere from a few weeks to months to fully adjust to their new home and family. Here's what to expect when you first bring home a Chicago Dog:

At 3 days your Chicago Dog may be:

- Overwhelmed
- Experiencing little to no appetite
- Avoiding eye contact and/or touch
- Overstimulated or easily aroused
- Trembling
- Scared/unsure of new surroundings
- Hiding in a secluded, small space
- Feeling insecure; unable to show true personality

How you can help:

- Set a feeding and walking schedule to help with housetraining and building a routine
- Provide a quiet, private space, like a crate, where they can rest and nap
- Use positive reinforcement to reward desirable behaviors

At 3 weeks your Chicago Dog may be:

- Starting to feel more comfortable
- Building trust
- Starting to settle in
- Letting their guard down
- Displaying new behavior issues
- Realizing they're home
- Figuring out environment
- Establishing a routine
- Letting their true personality show

How you can help:

- Begin a training curriculum, either at home or in a class, to build trust and focus
- Slowly introduce them to new people, sights, and sounds
- Continue using positive reinforcement to reward their polite behavior
- It is important to continue to be patient and recognize your dog is still adjusting.

At 3 months your Chicago Dog may be:

- Fully bonded to you and your family
- Set in their routine
- Completely comfortable in the home
- Feeling secure with members of the family

How you can help:

- Add variety to their day with puzzles, stuffed Kongs, a rotating selection of toys, and scentwork activities
- Take your dog on a short drive to build their confidence in a car
- Take an agility class or help your dog work toward a Canine Good Citizen certification so they can share their love with the community





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Develop a relationship with a veterinarian: You'll want to establish a connection with a local veterinarian soon after making a dog part of your family. Provide the vet with the medical records you received upon adoption and alert them to any booster vaccinations that may be necessary. Your veterinarian will then work with you to schedule follow-up visits, annual wellness exams, and any treatments that may be needed to ensure your Chicago Dog's long-term health.

Get support when you need it: If you find that you need additional help for your Chicago Dog, reach out to their adoption center for support. Most adoption programs will offer post-adoption behavior help, medical advice, and more. For additional resources for Chicago Dogs and other pets, [click here](#).

Benefits of Muzzle Training: Let's face it – going to the doctor can be scary. That's true for us, and it's true for our pets. When pets are scared, they don't have the benefit of talking it out like we do. Sometimes, they choose to defend themselves, and sadly, someone may get hurt.

Muzzle training is responsible pet ownership.

Just like we buckle our seat belts, we like to keep ourselves safe in case something scary happens. Training your dog to wear a muzzle can prevent them causing an injury when they are scared or in pain. By using the muzzle in normal environments – at home, walking around the neighborhood, etc., we set our dogs up for success when they need to wear a muzzle. Check out these resources on muzzle training your dog and helping them stay safe.

- [Keep Calm and Muzzle On](#)
- [Muzzle Up Project](#)

