

# RAISING SPRINGER SPANIELS



A Guide to Taking  
Your Puppy Home

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Kennel Ailsabute

Not just for Show!

## The story of Ailsabute

Kennel Aislabute was named in memory of Robert Wood Robertson (1941-1997), who died tragically in a scuba diving incident in Port Elizabeth, December 7, 1997, aged 56.

Born 15 May 1941 in the seaside village of Rothesay on the island of Bute off the western coast of Scotland, he returned annually to the island until 1975 when he and his family emigrated to South Africa.

Rothesay Castle on The Isle of Bute is best known in Scottish history for being the main home of the Scottish royal family - the Stuarts. The Robertson clan were well-known loyalists to the Scottish Crown throughout the wars of independence. The nearby Isle of Skye was home to the other loyalist clans of Macdonald and Macleod. The Isle of Skye is pivotal in the boat song which recounts the bravery of Flora Macdonald in aiding the escape of Bonnie Prince Charlie from English forces, after the battle of Culloden, "over the sea to Skye". This was the final defeat of the Scots by the English.

Many hundreds of years earlier, at the first battle of independence at Stirling Bridge, the Scottish hero outlawed by the English, William Wallace, and his rebel force was accompanied by his English Springer Spaniel, Merlin Macdonald. This dog was no doubt acquired from the Macdonalds on the Isle of Skye during William's secret visits to these loyalist clansmen to garner support for the Scottish rebellion.



## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on acquiring your English Springer Spaniel. This is an exciting time, but it is also filled with lots of responsibility. Your puppy although it will grow quite quickly will remain a puppy for at least the first 18 months of its life. Which means it will constantly be learning what you require of it and, in the same way that children are more susceptible to illness, your puppy is can also easily fall sick during this time. Raising puppies is an adult responsibility and even if the puppy is a pet for a child, you cannot rely on the child to have any understanding of the right way to raise an animal, nor when it might need medical attention.

Even adults sometimes are not always sure of what the right thing to do is in particular circumstances, so I have compiled this "how to guide" to help you. I have taken my 20 years of raising various breeds of dogs, from cross-breeds, to Labradors, to Dobermans, to Springers - as well as the numerous lessons I learnt in the many times that I repeated puppy and obedience school, with each puppy! (Thankfully, none of my dogs ever had to repeat!)

In addition, I have accumulated research on breeding, raising puppies, nutrition and animal behaviour and, where applicable, I have given simple explanations for as many scenarios as I could think of to help you through the first few months. I hope that this puppy guide helps you to handle your pup with TLC. I have also included references to products and accessories that will make raising your puppy a lot easier and stress free.

## THE FIRST EIGHT WEEKS

On the day you collect your puppy from us, it will be between 8 and 10 weeks old. During that time they have already learnt a lot, both from the

## Homemade Puppy Toys

Puppy toys need not be expensive. Pot lids, old pans, a tennis ball tied into an old sock, plastic containers with screw on lids filled with macaroni or rice, an old dishcloth with three or four knots tied into it, baby's squeaky bath toys, cardboard boxes, and plastic garden pots.



mother and siblings, as well as from us. All of their needs have been met including a warm place to sleep, food, fresh water and lots of love and cuddles.

They have also learnt rudimentary manners. During our interactions with them, we have been teaching them “no biting” and “no growling”. We’ve also been teaching them to “go on the paper” since they were about four weeks old. They already understand what “come” means, and will willingly come to you when called.

They have had many socialising opportunities with our adult dogs as well as a myriad of human friends—men, women, children of various ages, teenagers, our housekeeper and our gardener. They have seen men with beards, ladies with glasses or hats, heard thunder and lightning and even planes and helicopters overhead.

They have played with pot lids and pans, and a variety of noisy and unpredictable toys. Many of these are typical things that would frighten a small puppy, but we aim to take the fear out of strange things by exposing them to many different situations before they come to you. That way your puppy comes to you with built in confidence. The rest is up to you.

## BRINGING YOUR PUPPY HOME

Before you bring your puppy home, you should prepare for the puppy with at least the basics.

This means:

- A warm and cosy bed.
- A blanket.
- Two bowls—one for water and one for food.
- Puppy food.

## BEDDING

Puppies tend to explore by chewing, so before you run out and buy the designer soft, padded donut bed with the lovely squishy foam filled cushion in cutesy doggie camouflage. Or even a lovely wicker basket and cushion. Let me offer some suggestions. These types of bed cost a fortune and will not last through puppyhood!

In our experience, the best bed to offer your puppy is a tyre bed. These are available from most pet shops. Alternatively get hold of Dog Tyred direct at <http://dogtyred.ipcweb.com>, or by email on [dogtyred@gmail.com](mailto:dogtyred@gmail.com). These beds are both warm and they last!

## Shopping List

- Dog Tyred—dog bed medium or large
- Baby Fleece Blankets—four of five to allow for frequent washing
- Synthetic Lambs-wool Dry Bed—two or three to allow for washing
- Stainless Steel Spaniel Bowls— at least two, one each for water and food
- Dry Puppy Pellets—Hills Science Puppy, Hills Prescription i/d, Earthborn Puppy Vantage
- Tinned Puppy Food—Hills Science Puppy Chicken, Pedigree Puppy Chicken and Rice



When it comes to blankets there are many options, a lot of the options are expensive and then there are cheap options. The cheap option is the coarse grey army-type blanket. Your puppy will chew a hole in this in one night and when you wash it the first time, it will fall apart in the washing machine, so this is not a good option. Fleece dog blankets are the best. Many pet shops supply them, some in cute doggie prints, some are backed with dog paw print cotton. Whatever you choose, make sure it is a durable fleece, or fleece/cotton combination, that can withstand lots of washing.

However, for much less you can purchase baby fleece blankets at most supermarket chains (Pick 'n Pay Hyper) for around R30-R40 each. These are just as durable and because they are cheap you can get four or five and wash and change them regularly. The polar fleece is also not too nice for chewing, so it tends to last much longer.

As a soft cushioned under bed, nothing beats the synthetic lambs-wool beds available at pet shops in various sizes. Called the Dry Bed, this is great for dogs of all ages. Whenever I see these on sale, I get a few more. I use them in the whelping box, at dog shows in the show crates as well as for lining the puppy beds. Besides being resistant to chewing and very durable, they are easily machine washable. The added bonus is that in the event of “accidents”, these draw the wetness down and away from the puppy.

## BOWLS

There are many varieties of dog bowls on the market. Like all things there is the cheaper option of plastic bowls. However, these are easily chewed, and become scratched making them difficult to clean properly, thereby harboring germs in the roughened surfaces.

Your main objectives when purchasing dog bowls are to find bowls that:

- Can't be easily stepped into or knocked over. Puppies are clumsy and they don't realise that dirty feet can contaminate water or food.





- Made of a durable material resistant to chewing and surface scratches which make it difficult to clean.
- Is deep enough with a narrow enough rim to allow the Spaniel ears to flop outside the bowl, thereby helping to keep them clean and free of matting, which would attract flies.

The most durable, easily cleaned and sterile material for dog bowls is stainless steel. It is easy to clean and resistant to chewing. There are many varieties to choose from. The most readily available which is suitable for spaniels is the non-tip Spaniel bowl (top left), which is deep and narrow, sometimes with a non-slip rubber base.

While these can't be accidentally spilled, leaving the puppy without water, they can still be stepped in.

If your puppy is particularly clumsy you may want to invest in the stainless steel pails or bowls which are often used in dog kennels or in dog crates at shows. These are usually clipped onto the metal grilles of the crate door. However, if you have a suitable fence to clip them onto, these are very practical as it also keeps the food and water off the ground and helps to prevent the ants invading the bowl.

Make sure these are of good quality and have no sharp edges and no way for the dog collar to become tangled or caught.

Whichever variety of bowl you choose in the end, definitely steer clear of the typical flat, wide and shallow bowls. As this is a long-eared breed, their ears can become smelly and matted from constantly hanging in the water and food. Dirty ears attract flies, so unless you have the time to wash puppy ears after every meal, we suggest at the very least, a small deep plastic bowl with a narrow rim.

## FOOD

Your puppy has been weaned on one or a combination of the following:

- Hills Science Healthy Development Puppy (dry dog food)
- Earthborn Holistic Puppy Vantage (dry dog food)
- Hills Prescription Diet i/d (dry dog food—suitable for sensitive stomachs or after gastric upset)
- Hills Science Savoury Chicken Puppy (tinned)
- Pedigree Puppy Chicken and Rice (tinned)



Earthborn is a holistic dog food with a wide variety of natural ingredients. It is available at reputable pet shops. Ask your local pet shop whether they would consider stocking this for you. It is new and not always readily available, but it is distributed in South Africa by Performance Pet Foods, which also supplies ProPac. Hills is available from your veterinarian.

Hills Prescription i/d is a gentle food suitable for when your puppy develops an upset tummy. It is good to keep some on hand for emergencies.

## FEEDING

During weaning (wk 4-6) your puppy was fed on a 7am, 11am, 3pm, 7pm schedule with Hills Science Puppy dry food blended into a gruel with water and puppy milk/plain yoghurt. They had free access to their mother until week four after which time we allow her to leave and return to them whenever she feels the need. Between meals Earthborn Puppy Vantage was available dry. At 8 weeks of age we already cut out the milk/yoghurt, as after this age, dogs can no longer digest dairy products. We also reduced this to three meals a day and begin encouraging them to eat the food dry. They have been eating dry dog food, a combination of Earthborn and/or Hills for the last two weeks of their time with us.

## QUANTITIES

Hills Science Healthy Development Puppy/Earthborn Puppy Vantage (moistened with warm water only if necessary).

- Quantity: one quarter to half a cup (three times per day).

This quantity will change as the puppy grows, read the pack for guidelines on daily allowance, but use this as a guideline only. Some puppies are more active and have bigger appetites, requiring more food.

## MEALTIMES

The actual meal times may be varied to suit your lifestyle e.g. If the pup is alone during the day you may need to feed breakfast, dinner and a late supper. Please do not reduce to two meals a day as you will negatively affect your puppy's normal growth.

Remember that giving late feeds, means that the puppy may need to go out late for a toilet break while it is sleeping in the house. If

you are early to bed, this may mean needing to respond to the puppy's whines to be let out. Please do not punish the puppy if you neglect to take it out frequently enough.

If there is someone at home during the day, I recommend a feeding schedule of three meals between 6am and 6pm or 7am and 7pm. Later than that and the puppy may mess in the house, earlier than that and they may not sleep through as a result of hunger.

A puppy will usually eliminate on command after every meal, and this is a good routine to get into from the beginning. As soon as the puppy has finished eating, take him for a walk in the garden, until he does his business. Praise him for doing this.

At 12 to 14 weeks of age, depending on its weight gain, feeding can be reduced to two meals per day. You will be able to see if the puppy is able to tolerate this, if he begins to leave food in the bowl and maintains its weight well. Quantities per meal time, however, will be increased as you split the daily allowance over two meals.

Quantities per meal will continue to increase as the puppy grows. During the first 12 months your puppy will eat much more than an adult dog. Use the weight and quantity guide on the pack as a guideline only. As this is an active breed, some individuals are more active than others, so use your puppy's appearance to guide you on the amount to feed.

If your puppy seems hungry or is visibly losing weight, it is possible that they are either growing or their level of activity has increased. In this case, offer an additional meal or an increased quantity at each meal time.

If the puppy seems to have food fatigue, and is becoming bored with the same food, you can add a half a tin of wet food to one or two meals to spark the appetite. Please use only tinned food of the following varieties:

- Pedigree Puppy Ground Chicken and Beef, Ground Lamb and Rice, Ground Chopped Beef
- Hills Healthy Development Chicken.

These foods score highest on nutrition and quality. Remember if it doesn't look tasty to you, it's probably not good for them. Husky Grillhouse for puppies is a good alternative if you can't get either of the above.

## WATER AND TREATS

Fresh water should be available at all times. Stagnant water, pool or pond water is not a suitable source of water for a dog as it



contains toxins that over time can accumulate and cause disease or gastric upsets. Consider purchasing an automatic water dispenser, particularly as puppies can easily tip over a bowl of water and be left with nothing to drink while you are out. Adult dogs are quite resourceful in this instance and will usually go and drink from the toilet or the swimming pool, but obviously this is not ideal!

Most people do not recommend table scraps at all, however, these may be introduced gradually as treats, but should be limited. Any left over meat, vegetables, rice or potatoes is fine. Please check the list of human foods that are toxic to dogs and avoid feeding leftovers which contain these ingredients, as it has not been proven in all cases at what level these foods become toxic (see next section). However, as our food is usually high in fat and salt, prepared dog food should provide the bulk of the diet in order to ensure a nutritionally balanced diet.

If nutritionally balanced prepared dog food provides the bulk of your puppies diet, then additives and vitamins are not necessary. However, if supermarket brands are used, these are often deficient in key minerals and elements and your puppy may develop allergic type skin or digestive disorders which require supplementation of vitamins to correct the condition. Occasionally, the damage can be long-term and permanent to bones or organs and may require supplementation for life.

However, if you were showing your dog, and you wanted to grow a full show coat, I would recommend the addition of a coat conditioner to the food, in addition to a topical coat conditioner, such as Bio-Groom, as this is what we do with our dogs during show season.

It could either be a powdered kelp, which is easily sprinkled over the food and which we also used with the horses and Dobermans, to ensure good coat shine and condition; or Omega 3&6 capsules; or a dog-specific oil based supplement available from pet shops.

Bones will provide entertainment for the puppy as well as being good for their teeth. Lamb shin, pork knuckle, leg bone of lamb or any large solid bone. Avoid small, sharp or thin bones, such as chicken bones and although we do feed spare rib bones or T-Bones on occasion, be very alert when feeding these as they can splinter and cause choking. These are probably more suited to adult dogs.

Bear in mind, unsupervised play or eating of bones when there is more than one dog in the home can lead to territorial dog fights. In





this instance, it may be appropriate to separate the dogs, especially whilst the puppy is very young, or if one breed is much larger or more aggressive than the Springer. Springers tend to be non-confrontational, however, a young puppy does not yet understand territorial protection, as his mother and siblings shared everything and nothing was his alone.

As an alternative to bones, especially when the puppy is young, rawhide treats make a super treat. We provide these once every few weeks for dental health and the good thing about these are that they come in various sizes appropriate to the size and age of the dog and can mostly be finished in one session, avoiding later disagreements about a bone found in the garden!

## WHY BE SELECTIVE ON FOOD?

Much debate has been raging since the dog food recalls in 2007 as a result of melamine contamination of a batch of corn meal from China. A lot of focus was given to the poor quality of animal by-products and the amount of maize in foods, as well as potential toxins in the food, particularly cheaper foods, where dead or diseased animals were used to provide protein content. In some cases, euthanized animals had been used in cheap dog foods, meaning that the compound used to euthanize the animals was carried forward into the food as it does not break down in processing, meaning pets were ingesting this fatal substance.

Animal activists have developed a list of the 9 best foods in the USA to feed your dogs. Before you go and look for this list, I will tell you that Hills and Earthborn are not on this list. None of the foods appearing in the list are available here in South Africa. So after many hours of research and comparing ingredients and nutritional value, we found some of the closest alternative premium foods.

I have continued to keep my dogs on Hills Science Diet – Healthy Development formula for the puppies and Advanced Fitness for the adult dogs (over 12 months), and have recently incorporated Earthborn Holistic Puppy Vantage and Earthborn Adult Vantage and Earthborn Holistic Primitive for adult dogs.

Both have sufficiently high protein content and although the primary ingredient is maize in Hills, I have seen good bone growth and my puppies keep their weight consistently healthy. They never go through skinny gangly stages, nor lose condition. I do, however, find that I need to supplement for coat growth during the show season.

Not all premium brands are the same. With some of the premium animal-protein rich foods, you may see rapid skeletal growth, often at the expense of weight, particularly with an active breed like this, as these are usually low in carbohydrate energy. On the contrary, Earthborn offers the addition of healthy carbohydrates such as sweet potatoes, rice, oats and barley.

On a low carbohydrate food, your puppy will begin to resemble teenagers with long gangly legs and skinny bodies at between 4-6 months. If you see this happening, increase food quantity and quality and ensure your Springer has sufficient carbohydrates in the diet. It may mean switching brands to one with more carbohydrate in the mix.

A Springer is meant to be a dog of substance, meant for long hours of hunting with his master for birds for the pot. He should develop with sturdy bone and later as he or she matures into 2-3 years of age, become filled out and muscular, particularly the thighs (inner and outer) as this is their engine which gives them speed and spring, and over the shoulder which gives them maneuverability when running down a pheasant. Our aim, as yours should be too, is to keep our puppies well-fed and in proportion, encouraging slow and dense bone growth and sufficient body fat through the first year to provide energy for muscle development as their level of activity increases. A skinny puppy at 18 months, will find it difficult to fill out into a decent muscular dog, as it has insufficient resources to do so.

We ourselves spend a lot of time on our own diets. When we are training, protein rich-low carbohydrate diets are beneficial to encourage fat metabolism, while the high levels of protein are used to build muscle weight when weight lifting. Long distance runners and rugby players, on the other hand, carbo-load before a big event. Why? Because they have such low body fat percentages, and protein cannot be metabolized quickly into ready energy for high levels/durations of activity, only carbohydrates can do this. Too much protein and too little carbohydrates means your puppy will need to metabolize his remaining body fat and then muscle mass to release energy. Under nourishment to this degree, can also lead to bone deficiencies. Of course, too much carbohydrates and too little activity spells weight gain.

In my opinion, the maize content of Hills and the carbohydrates this provides, ensures ready energy for the pups and their bursts of high energy activity, while building up fat resources, which ensures the protein goes where it is needed for bone, tissue, organ and brain development instead of being digested as an inefficient means of providing energy. Instead of maize, Earthborn has a

selection of alternative carbohydrate rich ingredients such as potatoes, sweet potatoes and brown rice. Once your puppy moves into the 12-18 month age group, much of the body fat will be quickly converted to muscle.

For this reason, we recommend you keep your puppy on a quality puppy food for at least the first 12 months. If you want to change to a cheaper food, please try to do this only at 12 to 14 months of age. This is to ensure normal bone growth and development. Feeding an unbalanced diet can contribute to poor bone and joint development leading to bone and joint disease at an early age. In addition, cheap and potentially toxic dog foods can also cause skin conditions, and long-term use can contribute to cancerous tumours and kidney or liver disease.

Before I became a breeder and show exhibitor, I fed our pet Labrador cross Epol, Pedigree, Bobtail, Alpo or whatever was available, as I did not know any better. As a puppy she developed a skin and bone inflammation from Epol (the vet called it Epolitis).

Shortly after this, I acquired my first Doberman, as I had grown up with Dobermans. A beautiful young pedigreed dog with great potential, he required premium food as I was showing him and he would be bred when we acquired a suitable bitch. However, despite the fact that in her adult years, our Labrador was now being fed the same premium food, I believe the damage had been done. At age 8 she developed a blood disorder. The vet's opinion was that this was a symptom of a probable cancerous tumour somewhere in her body, which surgery may or may not find. Within three weeks we were unable to stabilise her and had to euthanize. For an otherwise healthy and fit dog, this was a shock to us, and I believe it shows that even small amounts of poor quality food can shorten the life-span of your dog.

At the end of the day, this choice is a personal one for you. If what I have summarised here is not clear for you, Google search "why commercial dog foods kill our dogs". I believe you, like me, will be convinced that buying the best possible premium food for your four-legged friend is the best thing you can do.

## CHANGING FOOD AFTER A YEAR

Once your puppy reaches 12-14 months of age, it no longer needs to remain on puppy food as it is fully grown and bone development is complete.

Anything that has happened now in terms of bone development cannot be changed. Long-term use of puppy food on an adult dog,

except an expecting or lactating bitch, can cause kidney damage. So at this point, you need to change to an adult variety of your choice, if you do not want to change to Earthborn Holistic Adult Vantage or Hills Advanced Fitness.

Dry foods similar in nutritional value and quality that we recommend based on research that we have done:

Propac – in the following varieties:

- Lamb meal and Rice for Adults
- Lamb meal and Rice for Puppies
- Chicken meal and Rice for Adults

These are available at specialist pet stores. Whenever you change to a new food, introduce it over a period of seven days in increasing quantities mixed with the previous puppy food.

At 12 to 14 months of age your puppy may also be reduced to one meal per day, provided you feed the full daily complement of food. Otherwise continue to split the daily requirement equally over two meals. We continue to feed two meals a day, as our dogs just seem happier and more settled with this.

## FOODS TO AVOID

The kitchen can be a virtual playground for your dog's nose and taste buds. Most dogs love food and especially yearn for "people food".

Dog experts have discouraged the regular feeding of table scraps to dogs for years because of the potentials for toxicity, obesity and general poor health. While healthy, well-balanced diets can be prepared for dogs using human food, it is essential to feed the right foods. Know what foods to avoid so you can prevent poisoning and keep your dog healthy. If you suspect your dog has ingested a toxic food, seek veterinary attention immediately.

### GRAPES AND RAISINS

- Grapes and Raisins can cause irreversible damage to the kidneys, possible resulting in death.
- Ingesting as few as 4-5 grapes or raisins can be poisonous to a 20 pound dog, though the exact toxic dose is not established.
- Signs of toxicity include vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhea,



abdominal pain, decreased urine production (possibly leading to lack of urine production), weakness and drunken gait.

- Onset of signs typically occurs within 24 hours (though they can start just a few hours after consumption).
- Your vet may start by inducing vomiting, or the stomach might be pumped (gastric lavage). Treatment involves aggressive supportive care - particularly fluid therapy and medications.

#### ONIONS

- Onions can cause a form of hemolytic anaemia called Heinz body anaemia, a condition that causes the destruction of red blood cells. Kidney damage may follow.
- Toxicity may occur from similar foods such as garlic and chives.
- It is not clear what quantity of onions is poisonous, but the effects can be cumulative. Poisoning can result from raw, cooked and dehydrated forms. Avoid feeding table scraps and any foods cooked with onions (including some baby foods). Check your ingredients!
- Signs are secondary to anaemia, such as pale gums, rapid heart rate, weakness and lethargy. Other signs include vomiting, diarrhea, and bloody urine.
- Treatment: blood transfusions and/or oxygen administration may be necessary, followed by specific fluid therapy.





## CHOCOLATE

- Chocolate and cocoa contain a chemical called theobromide that can adversely affect the heart, lungs, kidney and central nervous system.
- Pure baking chocolate is most toxic, while milk chocolate requires a higher quantity to cause harm. A 20 pound dog can be poisoned after consuming about 2 ounces of baking chocolate, but it would take nearly 20 ounces of milk chocolate to cause harm. Ingestion of cacao bean mulch can also be toxic.
- Signs include excitement, tremors, seizures, vomiting, diarrhea, abnormal heart rate/rhythm, drunken gait, hyperthermia and coma.
- Your vet may induce vomiting or perform gastric lavage. Treatment includes administration of activated charcoal and aggressive supportive care with fluid therapy and medications.

## CAFFINATED FOODS

- Caffeine is quite similar to the toxic chemical in chocolate. It can damage the heart, lungs, kidney and central nervous system.
- Common sources of toxicity include caffeine pills, coffee beans and coffee, large amounts of tea, and chocolate.
- Signs typically begin with restlessness, hyperactivity and vomiting. These can be followed by panting, weakness, drunken gait increased heart rate, muscle tremors and convulsions.
- Your vet may induce vomiting or perform gastric lavage. Treatment includes administration of activated charcoal and supportive care with fluid therapy and medications.

## MACADAMIA NUTS

- Macadamia nuts, while generally not considered fatal, can cause your dog to experience severe illness.
- The actual toxin is not known, nor is the mechanism of toxicity.
- Ingestion of just a handful of nuts can cause adverse effects in any dog.



- Signs include vomiting, weakness, depression, drunken gait, joint/muscle pain, and joint swelling.
- Onset of signs typically occurs within 6-24 hours.
- Dogs are typically treated symptomatically and recover within 24-48 hours. In-hospital supportive care may be recommended for dogs that become very sick.

#### XYLITOL

- Xylitol is a sugar-free sweetener most often found in chewing gum and candy. In dogs, it stimulates the pancreas to secrete insulin, resulting in hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Xylitol ingestion can also cause severe liver damage.
- As few as two pieces of gum can be hypoglycemic to a 20 pound dog. A pack of gum can cause liver damage.
- Signs of toxicity can occur within 30-60 minutes and include weakness, drunken gait, collapse and seizures.
- Your vet may induce vomiting or perform gastric lavage. The affected dog will likely need to be treated intravenously with dextrose (sugar) and monitored closely for 1-2 days. Many dogs improve with supportive care if treated early enough, though liver damage can be permanent.

#### ALCOHOL AND YEAST DOUGH

- Alcoholic beverages contain ethanol - a seriously toxic chemical compound that causes central nervous system and respiratory depression.
- Uncooked yeast dough also produces ethanol.
- Even small amounts of ethanol can cause toxic effects.
- Signs include sedation, depression, lethargy, weakness, drunken gait and hypothermia (low body temperature).
- Ethanol is rapidly absorbed into the system, so it is important to seek medical attention quickly. It is not usually helpful to induce vomiting. Treatment includes aggressive supportive care with fluid therapy and medications.
- Under controlled circumstances, alcohol is used by veterinarians as an antidote for antifreeze (ethylene glycol) poisoning.





### FRUIT PIPS AND SEEDS

- Apple seeds, cherry pits, peach pits, and plum pits contain the toxin cyanide.
- Signs of cyanide poisoning include vomiting, heavy breathing, apnea, tachycardia, cardiac arrhythmias, coma, skin irritation.
- In some cases, antidotes are available. Other treatments include oxygen therapy, fluids and supportive care.
- Also take note that the leaves, fruit, seeds and bark of avocados contain Persin, which can cause vomiting and diarrhea in dogs. I have heard that avocado itself is good for shiny coats, but I feel the fat content is not healthy for dogs.

### ROTTEN AND MOULDY FOODS

- Mouldy or rotten foods can cause many problems for your dog, some more serious than others. Any food that seems "past its prime" should be kept out reach. Be especially careful to keep your dog away from trash cans.
- Botulism, often from garbage, can cause paralysis, slow heart rate, constipation, and urine retention. An antitoxin is effective only if poisoning is caught early enough.
- Rotten fruit produces ethanol, causing the same effects associated with alcohol or dough ingestion. Remember to rake up fallen fruit in the backyard!
- Mouldy foods contain toxins that may cause muscle tremors, convulsions and drunkenness.
- Therapy depends on the toxin. Your vet may induce vomiting. Sometimes, treatment includes activated charcoal. Supportive care with fluids and medications is often necessary.

### OTHER FOODS TO AVOID

- Certain foods, while not considered toxic, can still be unhealthy for your dog. Avoid any foods that are high in fat, sugar or sodium. These foods can contribute to indigestion, obesity, dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and more. Dairy products may be difficult for dogs to digest. Corn cobs and bones can cause GI obstruction. Cooked bones may splinter and break easily, risking GI damage.

- Like people, too much junk food can cause poor condition and decreased energy. Remember that your dog is much smaller than you and may be sensitive. A full grown Springer is around the weight of a two-year old child. What seems like "just a bite" of human food for you is more like a small meal for your dog.
- If you want to feed homemade food, and avoid dog food altogether, please seek advice from a specialist animal nutritionist. Unfortunately, vets are not all that well-versed in animal nutrition, dealing rather with sick and ailing pets.

## DEALING WITH DIARRHEA

On a few occasions in your dog's life you are going to be faced with diarrhea. For a young puppy, as with an infant, uncontrolled diarrhea can be fatal and death from dehydration can come quicker than you think. How will you know?

Well in the early months of your puppy's life, you will become fascinated by bowel movements (BM), because, during the house training process you will be "going potty" with your puppy and you should be inspecting every bowel movement for good health.

A regular and healthy bowel movement is light to medium brown. It should be solid in shape, but crumbly when collected fresh. If collected the next day, it will be dryer and slightly more solid (unless it was rained on, in which case, it might look like diarrhea!).

It should not be hard and dense, this signals constipation. Nor should it be so loose that it loses shape, nor ever liquid or mucous. The first time you see very liquid or mucous bowel movements you know you have quite serious trouble, requiring drastic immediate reaction. In conjunction with this, your Springer's face will look more than usually depressed and a little sunken.

At the first sign of diarrhea, before you get to liquid, mucous or bloody mucous movements, you need to act quickly.

The key to dealing with this is hydration first and bland diet second.

### FIRST STEPS TO DEALING WITH GASTRIC UPSET

Assume firstly that the puppy or dog has eaten something from the dustbin or garden which has caused an upset tummy. These are hunting dogs, they will seek out things, could even be a dead birds, rotten bird eggs, frogs, garden plants or something interesting from the compost heap!

## First Aid Kit for Dogs

- Digital baby thermometer
- Vaseline/ KY Jelly
- ProbiFlora Paed (unflavoured/milk-flavoured)—they don't like orange flavoured Rehydrate, no matter how much you think they might!
- Glucose Powder BP
- Paediatric liquid Imodium/Imodium tablets
- Buscopan/Colic Water
- Syringes 5, 10 or 15ml (sterile)
- Hills Prescription i/d
- Milton's (to sterilise all toys, bowls, syringes. You don't know yet if it is a virus or just an upset.)



The first suggestion we offer is to be prepared. Dogs don't plan to have diarrhea during vet hours, Usually, they wake you up at between 11 and 3am in the morning and go outside for an unscheduled stop only to discover the BM is diarrhea! Of course, it could happen during the day and you might rush off to the vet for an expensive vet visit when you can do a few things at home first.

Being prepared at home with a few basic first aid items can mean a quick response to help your pet. See our suggested list (left).

Your grocery cupboard should have:

- Glad wrap
- Brown or white rice
- Household bleach

You may have noticed that a little earlier in the day your best friend was a bit off his food. You may have even offered leftovers to tempt an appetite. They usually won't say no to tasty leftovers, so you thought "ah he's just being fussy". Maybe not? He might have been already feeling sick. A dog will never starve itself except when it is feeling ill. It may even eat grass. This is a signal that your puppy is not feeling well.

1. The first most important thing to do, is remove all left over food. You definitely don't want to irritate the gastric system any further, and the food could be off.
2. Then take the dog's temperature rectally with the digital thermometer. Vaseline or KY Jelly helps with this. The good thing is a digital thermometer does not need to go in too far, Keep it level, not pointing up or down, ease it in slowly. When you take it out, smear the fecal matter on a piece of glad wrap and seal it in case you need it for the vet later. This can save time in an emergency. Normal temperature in a dog is between 38.3 and 38.8C. Higher than this and you are probably dealing with either a bacterial or viral infection. Go to the 24-hour vet if necessary. In the event the temperature is within the normal range, you can proceed as follows.
3. Mix the ProbiFlora Paed into the drinking water. One sachet is enough for a small bowl, two for a medium bowl. Put this water very accessible, within reach, to the dog's bed. He is not going to get up and walk to his bowl. Encourage him to drink.
4. Syringe an infant quantity of liquid Imodium or crush a half a tablet and mix with a little water and syringe it. Administer

this by inserting the syringe into the corner of his closed mouth inside the back teeth. Don't try an open mouth, it will go all over you, because their tongues seem to have the ability to spit all by themselves.

5. Similarly, if you noticed cramping, straining or groaning during the BM, get an infant quantity of Buscopan or 5ml of Colic Water (alcohol free) into him, in the same way as above.
6. If by the time you notice he is ill, he is also very lethargic, with dull eyes and won't even drink water, add two to three teaspoons of Glucose powder to the drinking water with the ProbiFlora. This will usually tempt him to drink. It should also have an almost immediate brightening effect.
7. If this works he will settle down for a sleep. If it doesn't work, or he does drink everything you have given him, but then later (at any point, whether minutes or hours) he vomits. It is a quite a bit more serious, you can start to worry.
8. Try the above again from step 2. If the temperature is above 38.8C, go to the vet, if not continue. If you get to the vomiting stage again, take the temperature again, if elevated now, which it most probably will be, go to the vet. The only thing that will work now is to by-pass the gastric system through the use of subcutaneous fluid or an IV. Sub-cut is helpful for young puppies, the vet will draw up an amount of IV fluid and inject this under the skin on the neck or back which creates a large bubble. Depending on the level of dehydration, this can take minutes to hours to reabsorb. The quicker it is absorbed the worse your dog is.
9. Assuming he settles down and sleeps after step 8, keep replenishing the ProbiFlora water through the night, with or without the glucose depending on his energy levels. Serious lethargy means glucose is needed. On the next BM you should start to see an improvement. He may even wake up and be hungry.
10. If he is hungry do not offer regular food—offer Hills Prescription i/d. Don't overwhelm the dog with a huge amount. Offer a little and see if he eats. If not, cook up a small pot of plain rice, with half a chicken stock cube added for flavour and electrolytes (salts and sugars). He may still not eat, but don't force him, remember fluid and settling the gastric irritation is more important.
11. If he eats even a little, check the health of the BM. If it is improving, then the initial interventions are working. Check

hydration and BMs frequently. If it was something he ate, you will see a huge improvement over the next few hours and an almost total recovery in 24 hours. However, keep him on ProbiFlora water and Hills i/d for a few days, before changing back to the original food. Plain active yoghurt (about two dessert spoons) can be added to the food to make it more palatable. Diarrhea that does not improve immediately (within hours, not days) with these interventions, is something more serious.

12. If, however, the diarrhea/vomiting continues to worsen in the first 3-4 hours, no matter whether you have succeeded in these interventions or not, go to the vet. Continued vomiting and diarrhea in the absence of a temperature could signal some kind of poisoning. (Ensure you are familiar with signs and symptoms of malicious poisoning, which includes, foaming, excessive vomiting, tremors, paralysis etc, depending on the poison. This is not the same as gastric upset!)
13. When you get to the vet, give him the original fecal matter from the thermometer, which you wrapped in glad wrap, and tell him exactly what you administered, at what time and in what quantities. Give him the temperature reports.
14. It is important to tell the vet what you have done, as if you have not had any immediate response to any of the above, then he needs to consider (and test for) gastro-intestinal irritation that could be caused by a number of other things such as a chronic parasitic (worm) infestation, or a serious bacterial or viral infection. In event of serious infection, usually the best option is hospitalization, IV drip with antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medicine.

This is the worst possible scenario and not one you want to come across frequently. Like I said at the outset, you will become obsessed with bowel movements (BMs) to ensure you don't get to this point!

Now you are asking what the household bleach is for?

Because, if your puppy or dog is at the vet on a drip with a serious viral or bacterial infection, you will go home and mop up the whole house with undiluted household bleach and pour it on the grass where the diarrhea was, because this is the only thing that will kill the germs and the last thing you want to do is infect your other dogs or bring a recovered puppy home, only to get sick again.

Okay, so that is probably the worse thing that can go wrong, Now for the fun stuff.

## TRAINING AND GENERAL HEALTH

You may not ever experience a situation quite as bad as I have described above, but the seriousness of it is not to be underestimated and you need to be prepared. So now it is time to focus on all the regular fun puppy stuff.

### DEALING WITH FOOD AGGRESSION

We have never had a case of food aggression in our home and all the dogs eat together at the same time, swapping bowls without any difficulty. Even when friend's dogs come around, mealtimes are really easy.

How we achieve this, is to stand by when the puppies first eat with the adult dogs. If there is any growling over the bowl, we immediately use the dog's name and say "No growling" in a firm tone. Also as they are eating, we will touch them gently on their backs, initially this will interrupt them and they may stop eating. If there is no growling, we tell them "good dog, eat up!" If they growl, we say "No growling".

Persist with this training and repeat this often at every mealtime, until you are sure that you can walk up the eating dog and touch it, without it leaving its food or growling. This is particularly important if you have children or babies in the home. I cannot stress for you how important it is until you experience for yourself how a baby crawls up to the bowl to put their hand into the bowl. A well trained dog, will either leave the bowl for the baby to play with and look at you for an answer on what to do, or continue happily eating. An untrained dog is an absolute danger.

### DENTAL CARE

It is a reality that your dog may develop bad breath or tartar build up on its teeth. To ensure healthy teeth and gums, we recommend Wampum Anti-bacterial mouth spray. Follow the instructions. The product available from [www.wampum.co.za](http://www.wampum.co.za) or find out from them where to find your closest stockist.

Other people use a baby toothbrush and pet specific toothpaste, which is enzymatic and flouride free. Please never use human toothpaste on your dog, flouride is toxic to dogs.

We also suggest, raw hide bones given regularly will assist in controlling tartar build up and gum health. But there are many



products available now for dogs, such as pet mints, greenies and the like, ask your Vet.

In addition, avoid feeding sweets and sugary foods to your dogs! It seems obvious, but you would be surprised how many people do this! Besides the possibility of Xylitol poisoning (see earlier chapter), dog's teeth can rot and get cavities just like humans, except for them it is a trip to the vet, anesthetic and extraction! And for you... an unnecessary expense.

## BATHING

Delay the first bath for as long as you possibly can, as this is very stressful for puppies, besides if they are clean and still smell like puppies why would you want to wash that off?

If the puppy does get dirty and is very young, you can use a self rinse shampoo for spot washing, or wet-wipes for general small clean ups. If he really gets dirty and you have to bath him. Follow these instructions.

1. You can bathe him in the kitchen sink, or if he is a bit too large for that, a baby bath or tub is suitable. Place a clean wet wash cloth on the bottom of the sink so the pup won't slip, or a rubber bath mat.
2. Buy a proper dog shampoo, as human shampoo is not acceptable or desirable for bathing puppies or dogs because the Ph (acid/alkaline balance) of dog skin is different from the human Ph level. We use Wampum Whitening and Brightening and Wampum Conditioner for bathing the dogs.
3. For in between baths, Wampum Self Rinse Shampoo is great for keeping the coat fresh. You spray this onto the coat, rub it in and allow it to dry before brushing it out. Both are available from [www.wampum.co.za](http://www.wampum.co.za).
4. Dogs feel heat more strongly than we do, so make the bath water as you would for a small baby testing it with your wrist or elbow. If it feels quite warm to you, it's too hot for the puppy/dog!
5. Have two buckets of clean warm water standing by to rinse the dog and a jug of warm water for when you do the head.
6. Dilute and mix the Wampum and the conditioner before you start, Tupperware shakers or similar are ideal for this job as it is easy to pour from and has measurements.





7. Gently immerse the puppy into the water, keeping his head above the water, but getting his body wet all over. You can wet his body with a jug or cup if this is easier. You will wash his head last.
8. Pour the shampoo into the pup's wet coat and work it in with your fingers and palms. Don't forget to wash the tail! Keep some shampoo for washing the head later.
9. When you have got the body all soaped up and worked into the coat, drain out the soapy water from the sink or empty the basin. Use the first bucket of water to rinse away the soap. Drain the tub again and use the second bucket to rinse one more time. It is very important that all the soap is removed from the coat. It is usually easier to do this when there are two of you!
10. Remove the pup from the tub and wrap him well in a towel, leaving the head exposed. Gently pour warm water from the jug over his head, from behind the skull, tipping his nose down so that the water runs down and away from his nose and eyes. (It sounds strange, but it works.) Put a small amount of shampoo onto his skull and work it around his ears (outside, taking care not to get soap or excessive water inside the ears) and neck and under his chin, keeping the soap out of his eyes and mouth.
11. Rinse his head twice with warm water from the jug, again pouring from back to front, as before. Now with another small towel dry his head and face. The reason we wash the head last is because water on the head results in an instinctive automatic shaking of the whole body. Since the pup is secured in a towel while you wash the head, you will avoid having water sprayed all over the house when the head gets wet!
12. You can dry the puppy with your hand-held hair dryer set on low, never medium or hot, in an area away from the sink and wet floor. Keep the air flow about 20cms away from the puppy, remembering his sensitivity to heat. It is very easy to burn a puppy with a hair dryer so be careful.

Don't bathe the puppy unless he is dirty or very smelly, because too much bathing strips the protective oils from the coat and actually means he gets dirtier quicker! Don't be surprised if you see 'dandruff' while you dry and brush. Dandruff is a normal reaction to a stressful situation and means nothing, so don't panic!

Now you've done your first Puppy Bath, and you're only a little bit wet and hardly stressed at all!

## WORMING

Despite the best efforts of breeders, most puppies are born with worm infestations passed on in the womb. We are particularly careful and begin with a de-worming of the bitch and all other dogs in the house about two to three weeks before the due date, and we have been fortunate to have clean and healthy puppies. However, you never know and so your puppy has been dewormed a couple of times before he comes to you. Your puppy is scheduled to be dewormed again at 10 and 12 weeks.

Thereafter your dog should be dewormed at three monthly intervals with a broad spectrum worm tablet which may be purchased from your Veterinarian. Drontal or Milbemax are the current recommended brands. Please don't feel that you have to visit the vet and pay for a consultation in order to collect de-worming medication. Develop a relationship with your vet and weigh the pup before you go. Most vets will provide de-worming over the counter without the consultation. Worm infestations affect the normal growth and development of your puppy and will make it difficult for you to maintain good health and condition in your puppy, and it is therefore not worth saving the R50 odd you would spend every three months otherwise.

## BEHAVIOUR

Your English Springer Spaniel is an active, fun loving dog who loves nothing better than human company. Locking your puppy out and neglecting him will definitely create behaviour problems, such as digging, barking, destructive behaviour and so forth. Please do not neglect your puppy.

It is particularly important that your puppy spends considerable time with your family, in a variety of situations, especially in the early months. It is also important that your puppy learns to spend some time alone, but remember this is initially difficult for a Springer and requires training, since it is so bonded to its people. During these training times provide "toys" for entertainment e.g. bones, old plastic pots, shoes, a ball tied into an old sock etc. Gradually increase the time that you leave the puppy alone. Showing him that you come home and praise him for being good.

Time spent with your puppy in the early stages is well-rewarded when you have raised a socially well-adjusted and well-behaved companion.

English Springers love to carry things in their mouths and will make a toy of most things! Therefore, make sure that you provide things for them to carry and play with, otherwise the puppy will choose his own from anywhere in your home, even out of cupboards! Yes, they are that clever!

In the early stages do not leave the puppy alone with anything that you do not want chewed or carried! Especially be careful with leaving garden or cleaning chemicals in reach of your puppy! Likewise, treat buckets of water as a danger too! It really is like having a small inquisitive toddler child in the home.

It is easier to prevent bad habits forming than to break those already formed. As your puppy grows and spends time with you he will gradually learn what their human pack feels is acceptable behaviour. Puppies with limited social interaction with the family will never learn what you think is acceptable behaviour and you will end up with an adult dog that cannot be in the home.

## DISCIPLINE

From the moment your puppy arrives home let him know what is “off limits” by using a firm “Ah!” Reward desired behaviour with pats, verbal praise and or food. Dogs are naturally hierarchical animals and are happiest when they know where they come in the family hierarchy i.e. below every other member of the family. It is important that firm messages are given regarding this position.

The following are examples of showing the pup that all family members are superior in dominance:

- biting people should never be tolerated, even though puppies naturally do this in play. When this occurs, gently push the puppy's head to the ground or sit the puppy down and hold it, whilst saying “Ah!/NO” in a strong, firm, ‘growling’ tone, as if you were the mother dog. Alternatively, roll puppy on to its back, hold it steady and say “Ah!” Obviously, don't encourage biting games, even if it seems funny at the time. Tug of war with a regular dog rope is fine, but if it turns to biting, immediately discipline.
- jumping on people is also unacceptable. Once again, push the puppy to the ground or raise your knee and push the puppy back whilst saying “Off!”. Never use the word “Down”

as you will learn when you go to obedience class, that the down-command is a very different command

- barking or whining when left outside or waiting for a meal should not be permitted. A firm NO should be sufficient but if not, squirting water with a household spray bottle may assist in preventing this becoming chronic
- if the puppy will not release something which it is not supposed to have and growls at you, this is also unacceptable. This is what is called resource protection. It needs to learn that you are the boss of all resources in the house, not him. Immediately open the puppy's mouth by pushing your finger into the corner of the mouth and use the word "Leave". Do this consistently and you will teach your puppy to drop anything in its mouth the moment you give a firm "Leave". Don't wait till the puppy is a dog big enough to bite you before you teach this. This leave command can be of great use in the future if the puppy approaches something poisonous, such as a snake, or if you see it threatening a smaller puppy or even a child.
- pushing through an open door ahead of a person. Here the important thing is to teach the commands "sit" and "wait". Before opening the door encourage the puppy to sit, by giving the command and pushing gently down on the rear. Once sitting, give the command "wait" and show the palm of your hand to the dog. If necessary have the puppy on a lead and someone holding this to prevent him breaking from the wait. Open the door, step outside and then encourage the pup to follow. Praise him when he gets it right. You should eventually be able to get it right with one person and a lead and then later without even the lead. The "Wait" command is an important one for future safety and control and well worth teaching from the beginning. "Wait" is different to "Stay", stay implies you are not coming with me and I want you stay exactly where you are until I come back, while wait, is a temporary hold, either to allow you to go out somewhere else and the pup to relax until you return, or he must wait until you give the next command. Stay is equally important in dangerous situations where you want the dog to stay and not move into the path of danger, whilst you can't be there to take control.

Once again, time spent in the early stages, preventing patterns of undesirable behaviour from forming, will be well-rewarded. If this is your first dog or you have not owned a dog for many years, consider joining an Obedience Club where you will receive ongoing

assistance and advice. In any case, we strongly recommend that all puppies must attend at least a puppy class. We are sure that both you and your puppy will come to enjoy these outings.

There are many more commands that you can learn which will benefit both you and your puppy, such as the difference between stay and wait, down, stand, fetch, seek and so on. Learning to communicate correctly with your dog, will help you in the long run to have a positive, constructive and loving relationship with your pet, where leashes and punishment are the absolute exception and not the rule. A well-trained dog is a pleasure to own.

## MAKING AN OUTDOOR PUPPY ENCLOSURE

Some people find that a smaller puppy enclosure prevents unwanted destructive behaviour in their absence.

Make this out of metal stakes and plastic garden fencing, available at most garden centres, with the stakes woven through the mesh and then driven into the ground. There are commercial varieties available which breeders and dog show people use, but these are costly and for one puppy for a short period of time, you may feel it is too expensive.

However, contact Kingpin Products or Flourishing Fairies, if you feel you'd rather have the professional version. If you make your own, please make the pen as big as possible, and ensure that besides, water, there is both shade and shelter for the puppy while you leave him alone!

Be very diligent about not leaving your puppy alone unsupervised near swimming pools, garden supplies or equipment. These can all pose severe hazards to your puppy.

Our first Springer puppy elected to sleep outside with the Labrador from a relatively early age, if you do this make sure the kennel is adequately warm, insulated and in a puppy enclosure. The night is a long time to be unsupervised and puppies can get themselves into all kinds of scrapes. If it is possible, have the kennel near your room, so that you can both hear and speak to the puppy at night if necessary.

## EXERCISE

Your English Springer Spaniel has two great loves, besides human company - food and exercise. Whilst the puppy is small though, he should not be over exercised. Puppy bones and joints are soft and overstrain in the formative months can result in long-term damage to bones and joints.

However, both getting used to walking on a lead as well as running free in a park and returning when called are important early lessons. Once grown, walking on the lead is for safety and control in areas where this is necessary (dogs shows, traffic, the vet, shopping centres), but for your Springer going for walks off the lead is the really fun part and really what they were bred to do, to sniff out and search for birds for their owner.

Time spent on teaching your puppy to come when called, will pay off in the long run, when you are able to exert voice control over your dog during off lead walks. You've seen those people at the park or on the beach whose dog runs in the opposite direction and is out of control? You don't want this!

Remember it is natural for a Springer to keep an eye on the owner and return for further commands on where to search next, so take advantage of these instincts and teach your puppy well from the beginning. If the puppy is coming back to you of his own accord, call his name and reward him when he gets to you. But don't overdo exercise sessions. If the puppy is panting or lethargic, you should immediately stop and let the puppy rest and have water in the shade.

Later, if your grown dog gets over excited on a walk and does not come when called, using the wait command is useful. We call firmly "wait" and the dog sits and allows you to approach to put on the lead. We use the lead as punishment in this case and for the next bit of the walk, they have to walk on lead. That is punishment enough for them and they realise that running away results in the leash.

Never punish, smack or shout at a dog who does finally return to you, doesn't matter how long he has been gone. Be quietly pleased to see him and just put him on the lead and keep him on the lead for the rest of the walk. You don't want your puppy to learn that returning to you, means a smack or punishment, that's no incentive at all to come back!

Let your puppy off the lead to socialise with other dogs whenever possible. Puppy schools are also great for socialisation. Most Vets have information about those in your area.

Only call the puppy's name when you actually want him to return to you. Reward the puppy with a tidbit when he responds to your call. It will take very few lessons before he is consistently responding to your call. English Springers tend to naturally "keep an eye" on their owners when exercising off lead. They are not natural wanderers.





As your puppy matures exercise periods, frequency and duration may be increased.

Long-term through your pet's life, daily exercise is recommended for fitness as well as mental stimulation. Even if you can't go for a walk outside the yard everyday, at least set aside time on arriving home from work to have a ball or fetch game for about 15 -30 minutes each day. This should be before meal-time, or more than an hour after meals. A game a day will make for a very happy and contented Springer.

A word of caution, exercising on a full tummy can lead to intestinal torsion in some breeds, which is a painful and often fatal condition. I have not experienced it in Springers, but its better safe than sorry.

## GROOMING

Being a well-coated dog, the English Springer requires regular grooming.

Recommended pieces of equipment are:

- fine metal toothed comb – for removing tangles
- broader metal toothed comb
- two pairs of scissors, one straight edge blunt-nosed scissors, for trimming hair between and underneath the pads of the feet, and one pair of good quality thinning scissors for the coat
- pair of rubber gloves
- stripping brush/rake – to remove and thin out excess coat around the neck and lower back by the tail



- pin brush (looks like a regular hair brush) – great for gently brushing out the ears and blowdrying the coat
- slicker (brush with fine needle like teeth) - great for brushing out the feathering on the legs and the thicker coat of the back
- nail clippers, for regular clipping of the nails, allowing the nails to grow too long means a trip to the vet for nail clipping, as the quick (vein) will grow down into the nail to nourish it, making it difficult to trim
- electric clippers (optional for showing or hunting).

The rubber gloves, when rubbed firmly over the back or used in a plucking motion, are more effective at removing dead hair (indicated by fluffy dry hair that stands out from the coat) than is a brush. Removing hair in this method will reduce shedding on your clothes and furniture over the summer months. A horse's rubber curry comb, also works for this!

As your dog develops a full coat in maturity, he will need to be kept tangle free. The combs and stripping brush/rake are more effective at achieving this than a normal brush. Look in the armpits and groin, ears and on the leg feathering at the back for matting.

Your puppy should become accustomed to being groomed from the earliest age. A thorough weekly grooming is sufficient. Particular care should be taken to remove tangles from the ears to prevent matting. Begin with the broad tooth comb and move to the finer toothed variety. One great way to keep tangles to a minimum is to use a detangling spray. Johnson and Johnson make one for babies, which will be fine for use on your dog. Alternatively rub a little olive oil into the knots to make them easier to comb out. The ends of the hair on the ear can be trimmed to a length and inch or two beyond the end of the nose when the ear is brought forward alongside the cheek. On show dogs, the ears are maintained much longer, but this is not necessary for a pet, and helps to avoid food and water matting the ears.

Hair should be trimmed around the feet, between the toes and under the pads. If your dog spends a lot of time inside, this prevents excess dust and dirt from being brought in on feet. You may also wish to trim some length off leg, tail or ear feathering to enhance a neat appearance.

If your dog is only ever exercised on soft surfaces, it may also be necessary to trim nails more frequently, since there is no regular abrasion on tar or cement surfaces. Nails should be checked once

a week and kept short as long nails can not only cause the feet to become splayed, but will be uncomfortable.

You may prefer to use a grooming parlour but this can be an expensive alternative, particularly as grooming times are occasions that your dog comes to enjoy with you. It can become a rather enjoyable bonding session with your dog as, in nature, animals naturally express familial affection through mutual grooming sessions. Often when I groom the dogs they may lick me in return.

You should always check for fleas (at base of tail and on stomach) during grooming sessions and treat promptly if necessary. Various effective products are available. Choose one that is indicated as suitable for puppies! Fleas are more likely in areas with sandy soil. They are also the cause of other difficulties you may encounter eg. skin irritation, eczema, and hair loss.

## HOUSE TRAINING

Potty training is accomplished in two separate steps. The first step is training your puppy to go on newspaper, which is already done for you by the time you pick up your puppy. They are already accustomed to soiling on newspaper from the first time they leave the whelping box at around three weeks old.

In addition, we have already begun house-training your puppy. We have been taking them out hourly and after meals to do their business. For the last few weeks with us, they have free access into and out of the house and have become accustomed to going outside. A puppy who is crying and walking in circles is usually holding onto a bowel movement as he wants to go outside. So, your puppy is already aware of going outside at the necessary times and naturally wants to keep his living quarters clean. However, in a new environment he will need to learn a new procedure, where to go, how to ask etc. The key to this is timing, love and patience!

### During the day:

Always take your puppy outside to the chosen spot at the following times, through the same door and with the same instructions, such as "lets go potty/wee wees", when they begin sniffing on the grass, use an instruction such as "hurry up": Do this:

- when he/she wakes from a sleep



- immediately following a meal
- hourly for the first few days in the new home
- **REMEMBER!** a successful toilet exercise should always elicit praise and a bit of excitement from you, so that puppy learns that weeing on the grass is a good thing

Accidents do happen! It is pointless to chastise a puppy if it is not actually caught in the act of soiling inside. And always bear in mind that perhaps you did not “see” it asking to go out! Therefore, for the first few weeks you should keep newspaper around the house in case of accidents.

**NOTE** Urine on the printed newspaper can sometimes cause a red colored appearance that is often mistaken for blood in the urine. Do not be alarmed if you see a reddish tint to the urine if you are using **PRINTED** newspaper, it is just a chemical reaction to the newspaper.

A rule of thumb is that most puppies can physically hold their bladders about one hour longer than the number of months they are old. For example, a three-month old puppy can go for maximum of four hours, and a couple hours longer at night. If you keep track of when last they went potty, you can normally anticipate when next they will need to go.

#### During the night:

Some puppies will wake you to take them outside at night, but for this you need to be close by and willing to get up the moment he/she starts getting restless or whining. The older the puppy gets, the more fluid the bladder can hold. Like children though, they will wait till the last minute to warn you!

However, to prevent unwanted soiling of the house at night, you might want to set up a child's playpen on a linoleum or tile floor with some newspaper (alternatively a laundry room or corner of the kitchen with a baby gate) to confine them to a smaller area. Do not shut the puppy away in a room that they are not able to see out! These dogs do not like isolation and this will be a punishment.

If you are worried about the grout in your tiled floor you can buy a cheap roll of linoleum from Builder's Warehouse that can be cut to size and placed in the playpen. Make it larger than the pen itself, as a loose edge within reach is an invitation to shred the linoleum! Put his bed, food and water in the playpen too. Place the newspaper furthest away from his bed and food.

In the USA there are many indoor or patio dog potty products available (see previous page for fire hydrant version). If this type of arrangement appeals to you more than newspaper training for use at night with your indoor dog, then this is quite easy to make.

### Making an Indoor Dog Potty:

- Purchase a large plastic dog bed.
- Make sure that the sides are high enough not only for privacy, but for male dogs who will later cock a leg and you will want to contain the urine.
- Using cat litter fill the base of the bed with approximately 3cms of litter
- Cover the cat litter with astroturf cut to fit or with a sod of regular grass. (If you use regular grass, you will need to replace this regularly as the grass dies off.)
- Position the dog potty somewhere quiet but accessible for your dog in the middle of night. Usually the bathroom is a good idea.
- Urine will soak through the astroturf and be caught in the cat litter underneath. Faeces will need to be picked up with toilet paper and flushed.
- Hose down the astroturf outside if it becomes heavily soiled.

If you decide to continue with newspaper training, the first time he wee-wee's it probably won't be on the newspaper, so take a paper towel (without any cleaner) and blot it up, now take the same paper towel and blot it onto the newspaper, now he will pick up the scent on the newspaper instead of the floor. (Keep one soiled and dry piece of newspaper each time, to keep the scent in the same place.) Now use floor cleaner and go over where he went on the

floor. The next time he goes it should be on the newspaper, where the scent is. **DO NOT SCOLD THE PUPPY!** Just keep repeating the steps above when he goes on the floor until he gets it right himself.

The playpen is useful, since it is a good idea to wait until your puppy is at least 7-8 months old before giving him the run of the house through the night, not only for soiling, but also to keep them from sleeping on the furniture. Also, when you are away from home, or are not able to watch the puppy properly while you are at home, the puppy can be temporarily confined to the playpen with his bed and toys. During the day, the playpen can be moved outside with his bed, food and water and he can relieve himself on the grass, if you do not have a safe outdoor play area for him.

Step two of potty training involves taking the puppy outside to relieve himself. Leave newspaper in the playpen during this process. Your puppy will make the switch on his own, without scolding or correcting. All you need to do is begin taking him for short walks on a leash, or if you have a fenced backyard, you can allow him to go outside on his own. If you let him into your backyard, you will need to walk with him outside until he feels comfortable exiting the home on his own.

Never allow your puppy outside in an unsecured area (without a puppy proof fence).

Once you begin this step, you will need to be absolutely consistent from this point forward in the times you take him outside. For example, always take the puppy out first thing when you wake up...before coffee, before breakfast, etc. You want to try and catch him before he wakes up. Then take him out about every 2 hours. He will continue to use his newspaper in the playpen, but that is okay, remember...he will make the change on his own.

## SWIMMING POOLS, GARDENS AND OTHER PETS

### SWIMMING POOLS

Swimming pools are deadly for puppies, they cannot be left alone in a yard with a pool until the puppy is about a year old and can swim and exit the pool without help. Puppies do not naturally understand the dangers of pools! You would never leave a small child unattended and therefore you must never leave a puppy



unattended. Even full grown dogs can drown if they fall in a pool at night, or panic and lose their landmark for the direction of the steps.

So for days around the pool with your dog, you need to drown-proof the puppy. If it is summer and the weather is warm, swimming lessons can begin around six months, if not wait until his first birthday.

To do this, swim with them and show them the direction of the steps and how to get out. Do this in the same way you would for a child – slowly, with a hand for support and lots of encouragement. Start a short distance from the steps for the first few lessons, and over time gradually increase this until you are starting in the deep end. Praise is in order when they are successful!

Try to make it fun (which they might feel is far from the truth) and do it once a week in summer (once in a blue moon won't help) until you are sure they know the direction of the steps. In each swimming lesson, repeating the exercise up to three times is sufficient. They will usually get excited and run around shaking and rolling when the swimming is over, lots of praise and "clever dog" makes the whole experience seem like a lot more fun!

For safety sake, a solid net, fence or as a minimum a skamper ramp and safety turtle are good things to invest in.

### SKAMPER RAMP

A skamper ramp is designed to be visible at night and lays partially submerged in the water, enabling the puppy to swim toward it and get traction to pull himself out.

### SAFETY TURTLE

The Safety Turtle is an effective "last line of defence" to protect your child or pet from drowning or serious injury in swimming pool accidents. Simply attach the Turtle to your pet's collar, or the wristband around your child's wrist. If he or she enters / falls into



water, the Turtle sends a radio signal to the Base Station in the home and instantly activates a powerful alarm.

A Safety Turtle Set consists of:

- A Base Station.
- An AC adaptor to the power supply.
- One Turtle Wristband .
- An instruction booklet.
- A compact, portable bag (all packed, weight is only 700g) .  
The Base Station should be placed inside the house, preferably on the side of the house facing the pool or water hazard. The range is between 45 and 60 metres.

Any number of same colour Turtle Wristbands can be used with one Base Station.

Never ever throw a dog in the pool, all you will accomplish by this is giving them a psychological fear of water and then they will never swim and fetch a stick or ball when you take them for walks. All our dogs swim in the dam and the sea and retrieve from water. We accomplished this with patience and allowing them to build their confidence. Also never ever give swimming lessons in the late afternoon, always allow time for the coat to dry completely before the sun goes down.

## GARDEN HAZARDS

Please make sure that toxic plants in your garden are identified and either removed or fenced off to prevent any accidental ingestion of poisonous leaves or fruit. Puppies chew indiscriminately, whereas older dogs are wiser.

Pool chemicals, weed sprays and fertilizers and such are deadly hazards which if ingested can cause severe and fatal poisoning. Ensure that these are securely stored in a garden shed or garage.

## OTHER PETS

With regards to other pets, handle the introduction of the new arrival sensitively, remember that your current pets are in their territory and will see the new arrival as an intruder. Introductions are best handled outside the home (which is viewed as the den), where there is more space for sniffing and circling. Some growls (dogs) or hissing (cats) are to be expected. Reassure and encourage all pets that it is okay to be friendly, including the puppy during this process.



Never leave the puppy unattended with other pets until you are sure that all are acclimatized to one another. Handle jealousy by gently disciplining the existing pets and encouraging friendliness, not by removing the new addition, this will just create hidden hierarchies and further jealousies that will make adjustment more difficult.

If there is more than one dog, handle the introductions one by one, as coming into a new pack can be difficult for a new puppy. If they have not adjusted in a couple of days, seek the advice of an animal behaviourist to assist with the introduction process.

## VACCINATIONS

Your puppy has received a temporary vaccination. Please refer to his Vaccination Certificate to determine when the next vaccination is due. It is important that an annual booster is given against tick- and air-borne diseases. Rabies is on the rise in certain areas of South Africa recently and if your vet recommends this, it is wise to do the vaccinations. While MediPet insurance does not cover routine vaccinations, for only R125pm, from the age of 8 weeks, you can ensure that your dog has medical cover for accidents, serious illness, hospitalization and surgery.

## ADVICE

As breeders we are always happy to assist with advice at any stage during your dog's life. Please keep our contact details handy and call or email with problems. Also, we love to hear good news about the pups we raised and what they are doing, so don't always wait to call us when they are sick, or you or them are not coping with something!

## RE-HOMING

If you ever need to re-home your animal for whatever reason, before giving your dog away or abandoning it at the SPCA, we ask that you contact us first, as we will be able to assist with placement through our adoption programme. As breeders, we often get requests for older dogs, this is usually retired people who don't want the complication of house-training and often cannot afford the price of a pup.

The dog will never be resold, we will re-home it under an adoption contract to a suitable home with the proviso that the new owner must return the dog to us should their circumstances change later.

This gives you the guarantee that your beloved ESS will never find itself in a pound or a neglectful home, and will always find its way back to us!

I know there is a lot to assimilate and a lot that seems that can go wrong, but I encourage you to love your puppy and have confidence in your ability to make good decisions on his behalf.

Never think that these rules don't apply to your dog because your dog is different. And never expect them to understand complicated human emotions, such as guilt, or respond to manipulation such as bribery. It is plain and simple with a dog - no means no, and a job well done is praise and a treat, never confuse the two or you will end up with a very confused dog, who finds it difficult to please you. And really that is what they want to do most!

We have done a lot of work with the puppy before it comes to you, to build its confidence and ensure that it is not afraid of the world and that it can trust and love people. They grow up in our home, with all the normal home noises and other dogs and cats and kids, visitors, braais, music, cleaning equipment, lawnmowers and so on.

They usually have experienced thunder and lightning, as well as a trip to the vet, the park and a shop, and a ride in the car. So there is not much in terms of strange experiences that they could be afraid of. They have also experienced gentle and sensitive loving handling on a daily basis, with lots of praise for jobs well done. Please continue with the same and we are sure that your pet will reward you with good behaviour and be a loving and loyal companion to you and your family.

We believe in delivering to you puppies we can be proud of and we believe that you want them to grow into dogs that you can be proud of in every circumstance.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations on acquiring your English Springer!

We are sure without a doubt that your new addition will quickly work its way into a corner of your heart in such a definite way that you will probably never want any other breed of dog for the rest of your life.

And so your love affair begins, just like ours did, with the soft ears, puppy smell and the constant demonstrations of the loving and loyal nature of these wonderful companions.

With lots of love and tail wags,

**Johan and Lorraine van Schalkwyk**

083 626 3762 (Lorraine Cell)



## INTERESTING LINKS

Dog Tyred—tyre dog bed manufacturer, more information available at <http://dogtyred.ipcoweb.com>

Smartpet Online Pet Store—[www.smartpet.co.za](http://www.smartpet.co.za)

Earthborn Holistic - [www.earthbornholisticpetfood.com](http://www.earthbornholisticpetfood.com)— US dog food company, local distributor head office 011 708-2755 speak to Richard who will refer you to the closest pet shop stockist

Hills Science and Prescription Diet—for more information visit [www.hillspet.com](http://www.hillspet.com)

Wampum—Grooming products, shampoos and conditioners, for more information visit [www.wampum.co.za](http://www.wampum.co.za)

Kingpin Products—Midrand supplier of folding wire dog crates and play pens, [www.kingpin.co.za](http://www.kingpin.co.za)

Skamper Ramp and Safety Turtle—these are available from Furball Products, more information available at [www.furball.co.za](http://www.furball.co.za)

Medipet—excellent pet insurance for only R125pm, the earlier you insure your pet in his life, the more affordable this insurance is. It covers all forms of emergency treatment, for more information visit [www.medipet.co.za](http://www.medipet.co.za)



PLEASE NOTE:

Whilst advice has been given to deal with medical emergencies with your puppy or dog, it should never replace veterinary advice.

We are not veterinary surgeons, we are just loving animal owners and breeders who want the best for our animals and love and care for them in the best way we know possible. What we have shared here is based on our experience of what has helped us.

Please remember that in any emergency situation the first aid provided by those closest to the animal at the time, can make or break the result, before you even get to the vet. It pays to be well-informed and respond appropriately.

## AILSABUTE ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIELS

### NOT JUST FOR SHOW!

This puppy guide has been written for new owners of puppies bred by Ailsabute. Johan and Lorraine are dog-lovers whose love affair began with Springers with their beloved foundation bitch Angharad (right) who is Johan's wing-shooting companion.

Angharad is an amazing dog and required very little training, performing naturally and instinctively during walk-up shoots in the Free State. This exceptional dog was destined for greatness and realising this; Lorraine and Johan sought advice to breed her. Much preparation and research went into that first litter, and yet again, Angharad showed her quality by being an exceptional mother; her solid temperament, abundant patience and intelligence is beyond compare. Not only that, she delivered three Showing Champions in her first litter, whom Lorraine successfully campaigned as a novice handler at dog shows around the country. Both daughters, achieved their final qualifying CCs within one and two weeks respectively of their 18 month birthday. Her son attained his final CC at two years. Angi continues to amaze and has proved to be a patient and loving grandmother to her daughters' puppies.



Not just for show....

## AILSABUTE SPRINGERS

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[www.ailsabute.yolasite.com](http://www.ailsabute.yolasite.com)