

Dog Shopping Guide – Essentials for Your New Pup

Welcoming a new dog or puppy into your home is exciting — but preparation is key to a smooth transition. This guide will help you choose the right supplies while highlighting what's necessary, optional, and what to avoid based on expert advice and experience.  

Crate (aka Cage or Kennel)

- I'll let you know if it's absolutely necessary for your situation — but if I say you need one, **trust me**, you don't want to go without it. 
- **Proper fit is crucial:** It should be big enough for your dog to stand, turn around, and lie down — but not too big (especially during potty training).
- Many crates come with **dividers**, so they can “grow” with your pup without needing to buy multiple.
- **Why it's useful:**
 - Speeds up potty training 
 - Helps your dog understand routine 
 - Provides a safe and calm space 

Dry Dog/Puppy Food & Bowls

- **Quality matters here!** Never feed food rated below **4/5 stars**.
- Use dogfoodadvisor.com to check brand ratings. 
- Lower-quality foods often require your dog to eat **twice as much**, meaning you actually don't save money. 
- You'll receive a **transition bag** to help ease your dog into new food slowly (essential for avoiding upset tummies).
- **Puppy vs. Adult Food:** Transition age depends on breed/size:
 - Small & Medium breeds: ~12 months
 - Large breeds: ~18 months
- **Meal frequency:** 4x a day until 4 months, 3x a day until 6 months, then 2x a day. **FREE FEED** if you aren't home enough to feed at the correct frequency before 6 months, so you don't risk developmental issues.
-  **Food & Water Setup**
 - Option 1: Two bowls — one for food, one for water
 - Option 2: One food bowl + a **water fountain** to encourage hydration 
 - Consider a **slow feeder bowl** if:
 - Your dog eats too fast  or has digestive issues
 - You want to add some enrichment to mealtimes 

Leash, Collar & Harness

- **Leash** for daily walks
- **Collar** for ID tags 
- **Harness** (especially for puppies or dogs who pull) to reduce strain on the neck or dogs prone to tracheal collapse (such as yorkies, poms, chihuahuas, poodles, and so on).

Poop Bags & Holder

- A must-have for walks or travel!
- Tip: Get **compostable or scented** bags for less mess and less smell. 🌱

🧸 Toys

- **Safety test:** If you can't press your fingernail into it (even a little), it's likely too hard and could **crack your dog's teeth** 🦷 Tennis balls can also wear down teeth over time.
- **Monitor new toys** closely to ensure your dog doesn't chew off or swallow parts that aren't meant to be eaten
- Rotate toys to keep things exciting!

🍌 Treats

- **Avoid completely:**
 - ❌ Rawhide
 - ❌ Cooked bones
- **Toxic to dogs (even in small amounts for many):**
 - Chocolate 🍫
 - Grapes & raisins 🍇
 - Onions, garlic, chives 🧄
 - Avocado 🥑
 - Coffee/caffeine ☕
 - Macadamia nuts, most other nuts 🌰
 - Dairy (90% of dogs are lactose intolerant)
 - Yeast dough
 - Xylitol (artificial sweetener) aka wood sugar, birch sugar, or birch bark extract
- If you're feeding human food, always double-check ingredients. Many "safe-seeming" dishes can be dangerous! ⚠️

💡 Nice-to-Haves (But Very Useful!)

- 🛏 **Dog bed** – comfort & structure for naps
- 🏷 **ID Tag** – order online (Amazon = cheap, FidoPet = free option) instead of overpriced pet stores
- 🦷 **Toothbrush & dog toothpaste OR VOHC-approved dental treats**



- 🛁 **Shampoo, conditioner, dry shampoo, pet wipes, ear cleaner** – keep them clean & fresh
- 🧽 **Brush** – essential for long-haired breeds
- 🧴 **Enzyme spray + carpet cleaner** – for accidents or messes during potty training

? Need Personalized Advice?

Want help picking a brand, product, or tool? I'm happy to say YES or NO based on personal experience, research, and what's best for your pup! 🐕