***Taking your puppy home:***

When you take your puppy home they will need your care and attention to grow into a loving, well behaved companion. Your veterinarian can guide you in your pet’s health and medical needs, ask them if it seems like your puppy has a problem. You may also want to look into a pet training class. Here’s a quick guide:

1. Food: Your puppy is currently eating Fromm Family Puppy Gold Food available at Premier Pet Supply, Pet Supplies Plus, and many other retailers.  They are eating about 2 cups per day; some puppies will eat more or less based on their activity levels and growth. You will receive a 5 pound bag in your take-home care package.

2. Collar: Your puppy will have a collar to start; you will want to check and adjust it weekly as your puppy grows. You may want to get a name tag with your contact information on it for your puppy’s collar. Be careful with the collar when putting the puppy in a crate, it can entangle the puppy if it gets caught in the crate.

3. Crate/House: Your puppy will like a place to rest/relax that is somewhat enclosed.

4. Homesick: Your puppy will probably be homesick for a few days. You will receive a mom-scented cloth that may help remind your puppy of the litter. Other things that may help your puppy rest at night include a ticking clock or talk radio in the sleeping area. It may take a few days for your puppy to adjust to your new loving family, this stress may cause digestive and behavior concerns for those few days.

5. Veterinarian: You need to have your puppy examined within 5 days for your contract/health guarantee. Your puppy will need additional vaccinations when 9 and 12 weeks old.

***Additional things to have:***

**Water and Food Bowls.**  You should always have water available for your puppy. A heavy bowl is preferred to prevent the puppy from overturning it. A heavy bowl base with a stainless insert is easy to clean. You may want a smaller bowl set now and an adult size set when your puppy gets to be 30+ pounds. You probably want a food bowl that holds 1 to 2 cups of food now, and a bowl set that holds 4 to 6 cups when they're 6 months or older. Additionally, as an adult, you may want a bowl set that is elevated to the dog's height. Also, a hamster-type water dispenser should be used in the crate if your puppy will be confined for more than two hours at a time.

**Toys and Treats.** Your puppy will want to play and toys help your puppy learn. Additionally you can teach your puppy that toys are appropriate play things, and furniture is not. Be careful of your puppy obtaining children's toys that are not appropriate, i.e. legos and Barbie shoes that can cause internal damage to the puppy. Treats should be small bite size items intended for puppies/dogs. Human food may make it more difficult for housebreaking/potty training your new puppy as those may cause digestion issues.

**Collar and Leash.**  Your puppy will have a small collar to start. You may want to get a leash, but the puppy will need to learn to walk on a leash, you may not need to use one for a few more weeks. You may also need a larger collar in a few weeks.

**Crate/Travel Carrier/Dog House.** You can pick a carrier that also serves as a crate for at home. If you are using it for dual purposes, you probably don't want a large one to start, choose a travel carrier for a 25 – 40 pound dog to start, and then upgrade to a 55 – 75 pound crate when your dog is bigger. If you are going to use a separate crate and travel carrier, choose a crate for the full size of your dog, 55 – 75 pounds, but you may want to reduce the size of the housebreaking crate initially (many are adjustable). Your puppy will want an enclosed space to rest and retreat as needed.***Diet:***

**Feeding Schedule:** Your puppy is currently eating three times per day at 8:30 am, 1:30 pm, and 7:30 pm; however food is available to the litter for 1 to 2 hours at each feeding so they may start and stop a few times depending on activity. Check feeding guidelines, you may want to continue 3 feedings until the puppy is 8 months old, and then two feedings per day until the puppy is 1 year old. You can decide how to feed your puppy. Their feedings will correspond to their necessary potty breaks so please know that they will need housebreaking training that corresponds to their food intake.

As an adult dog, some dogs will eat when hungry and you may be able to leave food out constantly that they will eat as needed. Many Golden Retrievers however will overeat if food is always available and you will need to measure the food and provide the amount needed to maintain a healthy weight. Watching the weight of your dog will indicate feeding amount to prevent obesity or malnourishment.

**Switching Brands of Puppy Food:**

Your puppy is currently eating Fromm Family Puppy Gold food.  If you change their diet you should transition them over 7 to 10 days by mixing less of the old and more of the new.  Otherwise they'll have digestive problems with a sudden transition. Additionally, some dogs are more sensitive or may have skin or digestive issues based on the dog food ingredients. Fromm Family Puppy Gold is primarily chicken, if you have concerns with itching, fullness of fur, or bouts with loose stool, try changing to another food with a different protein base.

This is from [**http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=2+2108&aid=704**](http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=2+2108&aid=704)

*For the first few days you have your new puppy home, it is a good idea to continue feeding the same type and brand of puppy food and use the same feeding schedule the puppy was on before he came to you. Then you can slowly start using the food you have chosen based on information you received from the breeder and veterinarian. A pet needs to be switched to a new food slowly to prevent intestinal upset. By 'slowly' it means over the course of 7-10 days go from feeding 100% of the previous food to 100% of the new food. For example, make a mixture that contains 25% of the new food and 75% of the old food and feed that for several days. Then make it 50-50 for several days, then 75% new food to 25% old food for several days. Then you can start feeding 100% new food. If at any time your puppy starts vomiting, or has loose stools or appears constipated, slow the rate at which you are switching him over.*

**What Brand of Puppy Food:**

This is from [**http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=2+2108&aid=704**](http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=2+2108&aid=704)

*With dog food, you pretty much get what you pay for. Economy brands are cheap and are made of the cheapest ingredients available. As such, their energy values are lower, and most importantly they often use poorer-grade proteins with lower* *digestibility**, which means much of the food passes right through their system and is not absorbed. Premium brands, which include those classified as Super Premium and Performance, use higher quality ingredients from sources with higher biological values. Because better quality ingredients mean better digestibility, your puppy does not need to eat as much and less waste is produced (which means less to pick up in the yard). Regular brands, as you could guess, fall somewhere in between.*

**Don't Give Your Dog Dairy:**

This is from [**http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=2+2108&aid=704**](http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=2+2108&aid=704)

*Cow’s milk has the sugar lactose. Dogs do not have the enzyme lactose that is necessary to digest it. That is why they often develop diarrhea or softer stools when fed milk. Most humans produce this digestive enzyme. Those that do not are said to suffer from milk intolerances. Dogs do not need fresh milk.*

***Housebreaking:***

Golden Retrievers are very smart dogs. Some puppies will do well at learning housebreaking as early as 10 weeks (puppies will have accidents and mature at different rates). But, how easily/quickly the puppy is housebroken is more about consistency and attention to the puppy. Diet, schedule, consistent training, and patience with the puppy play the biggest part of housebreaking. Also, puppies tend to have excitement peeing which is not under their control. When they are overly excited (such as seeing you at the door), they can't hold their bladder.

Generally when starting housebreaking, try taking a younger puppy outside where he should potty about 5 to 10 minutes after eating. Don't play with them, just keep the puppy around the area they should potty.  If the puppy is excited about being in a new place and is playing with you, they may not think about pooping.  Just give the puppy 10 or 20 minutes or more to get around to pooping in the right spot.  As soon as the puppy has pooped (within 5 to 10 seconds), praise the puppy, and take them back inside right away.  When you do that a few times, the puppy will realize it’s not play time until they’re done.

Your young puppy will likely poop after every meal.  If they’re going much more than that, there may be a digestive issue.  This can be due to a change in food, a change in environment causing stress, a change in people making them scared, and medications like wormers.  Also, if you are using food treats, maybe it’s too many. A puppy may especially have problems if eating table scraps.

**Crate Training/Housebreaking:**

Crate training is the most popular method of housebreaking. It is effective and works well when done correctly. Please see this warning from dogbreedinfo.com:

*"Before you crate train, please be aware: a dog that is left in a crate all day long, gets let out in the evening after work for a few hours and put back in the crate for the night can become neurotic, destructive, unhappy and noisy. If you work all day, it is recommended that you find someone who can take your dog out for a long walk in the afternoon. If this is not possible only use the crate at night.  If you must leave your dog all day long, every day and you have nobody to let the dog out during the day, you should find a room without a rug, put down**Housebreaking Pads, food, water and toys. You should set up the room so that the bed and food are at one end and the pee pads at the other. Spread the toys in the center of the room. Dogs are not fish. They need to find something to occupy their mind, so give your dog plenty of toys. It is said that dogs are den animals and like the crate, but even a den animal would go crazy if it was locked up all day long."*

This is from http://www.inch.com/~dogs/cratetraining.html

*Providing your puppy or dog with an indoor kennel crate can satisfy many dogs' need for a den-like enclosure. Besides being an effective housebreaking tool (because it takes advantage of the dog's natural reluctance to soil its sleeping place), it can also help to reduce separation anxiety, to prevent destructive behavior (such as chewing furniture), to keep a puppy away from potentially dangerous household items (i.e., poisons, electrical wires, etc.), and to serve as a mobile indoor dog house which can be moved from room to room whenever necessary.
  A kennel crate also serves as a travel cabin for your dog when traveling by car or plane. Additionally, most hotels which accept dogs on their premises require them to be crated while in the room to prevent damage to hotel furniture and rugs.
  Most dogs which have been introduced to the kennel crate while still young grow up to prefer their crate to rest in or "hang-out" in. Therefore a crate (or any other area of confinement) should NEVER be used for the purpose of punishment.
 We recommend that you provide a kennel crate throughout your dog's lifetime. Some crates allow for the removal of the door once it is no longer necessary for the purpose of training. The crate can be placed under a table, or a table top can be put on top of it to make it both unobtrusive and useful.*

***Furnishing Your Puppy's Crate:***

This is from <http://www.inch.com/~dogs/cratetraining.html>

*Toys and Treats: Place your puppy's favorite toys and dog treats at the far end opposite the door opening. These toys may include the "Tuffy", "Billy", "Kong", "Nylabone", or a ball. Toys and balls should always be inedible and large enough to prevent their being swallowed. Any fragmented toys should be removed to prevent choking and internal obstruction. You may also place a sterilized marrow bone filled with cheese or dog treats in the crate.*

*Water: A small hamster-type water dispenser with ice water should be attached to the crate if your puppy is to be confined for more than two hours in the crate.*

*Bedding: Place a towel or blanket inside the crate to create a soft, comfortable bed for the puppy. If the puppy chews the towel, remove it to prevent the pup from swallowing or choking on the pieces. Although most puppies prefer lying on soft bedding, some may prefer to rest on a hard, flat surface, and may push the towel to one end of the crate to avoid it. If the puppy urinates on the towel, remove bedding until the pup no longer eliminates in the crate.*

Here's some good links for more information:

<http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/housebreaking.html>

[www.peteducation.com](http://www.peteducation.com/)