

WEANING:

At 3 to 4 weeks of age, a dish of water and dish of gruel should be introduced to the pups. Feed a high quality dry puppy food, softened with warm goat milk or water to make a gruel. This can be fed in a low heavy dish 4 times daily. "Flying saucer" dishes, pie plates, ashtrays or rabbit dishes work well for this. Gradually decrease the amount of time the pups spend with their mother at this point. This will make the transition from nursing to weaning smoother and will also lessen the puppies' demands on their mother. Beginning at 2 weeks of age, they should be wormed with Nemex^R for the first time, then weekly until 2 negative fecal samples results are obtained, unless the bitch was on the Panacur^R protocol during pregnancy. By 5 to 6 weeks of age, they should be weaned and eating only puppy food. After weaning, temporarily decrease the bitch's food and water to aid in drying her up.

From this point on, the pups will become more fun and a lot more work. It can become difficult to keep the pups confined and they can be messy and destructive. An exercise pen or playpen can be helpful.

The first 3 weeks with the puppies are relatively neat and clean. Mom will lick them frequently and ingest all of their urine and feces. However, upon starting on solid food, the mom will give up this quest and you will now have to deal with excrement. There are many ways to keep the pups clean. My favorite is to place a 2" deep plastic tray in the enclosure filled with pine shavings or shredded or pelleted newspaper. This, with some practice, will give the pups a place to eliminate thereby keeping their bedding clean.

In addition to providing bedding to allow for good footing, the shavings tray, and food and water dishes, the pups should have a bed to sleep in and acceptable chew toys. Stuffed Kongs, soft toys, and rawhides should be changed regularly to provide environmental variety and developmental stimulation.

By this time, they should have increased human social contact. At 8 weeks, your pups should be examined, vaccinated, checked for worms, and wormed. Up to 95% of pups may have worms by this age, unless the bitch was on the prenatal Panacur^R protocol. Boosters should be administered every 3 to 4 weeks until 16 weeks of age.

By 6 weeks of age, they can go outdoors with supervision for brief periods, if the weather is acceptable.

LEAVING THE NEST:

Eight to ten weeks is an ideal age socially to place pups in their new homes. The pups should have a great deal of human contact. A great challenge comes in selecting which, if any, pups are to be kept. It can be difficult to let them go out into the big world. Potential puppy buyers should be carefully screened to assure they are the right home for your pup. We recommend you sign a contract with puppy buyers.

If you have a Dog Seller's License from Wisconsin or are sending the puppy out of state, each puppy must be examined and the appropriate Certificate of Veterinary Inspection will be completed by one of our Doctors.

CONTRACT FOR PUPPY SALES:

We recommend all puppies sold be sold with a written agreement defining the details of the the sale. For example, the health guarantee and conditions of sale are topics that need to defined prior to the sale to avoid any misunderstandings. Sheila Kessler at Animal Legal Resources, LLC can be reached at 715-544-6448 for assistance.