

## **Puppy proof**

It's time to puppy proof! Before you bring the new puppy home you should remove all items that your puppy can chew on. You should take the same safety precautions with your new puppy as you would take with a new baby. Remove plants. Make sure electrical cords are out of reach. Pick up shoes and socks, and make sure there are no poisons or chemicals that your puppy can get his mouth on. Remove any object the puppy could put in his mouth. Closely watch your puppy. Puppies chew on whatever they can get their mouths on - for many reasons. Mainly, they are curious - and much like human babies, this is how they explore and learn about their world. They also chew because they are teething or because they are bored. Make sure you provide plenty of chew toys. Give him a variety of toys to choose from so that when he chews on a forbidden object you can say "NO!" with a firm matter-of-fact voice and give him a toy. When he chews on his toys, praise him. If he continues to chew on... say... your favorite pair of leather shoes, treat it with a bitter tasting product such as "Bitter Apple" (available at pet stores). Chewing is important for the health of your puppy's teeth and gums. Tempt him. After you have taught him what he can chew and what he can't chew, it is time to put him to the test. Place tempting no-no 's near his okay-to-chew toys. Pretend you are not watching him. When he begins to put a forbidden object in his mouth, tell him "no" in your firm voice. You then need to leave the room, but watch him from around the corner. If you see him put the forbidden object in his mouth again, quickly correct him. Offer him his toy and if he accepts it, praise him and tell him "go get your toy, good boy/girl." Later that will translate into another form of communication with your pet: Saying "go get your toy" when it is playtime will tell him to retrieve his toy and bring it to you, or at least into your vicinity.

Make certain your puppy gets plenty of exercise to burn off energy.