

DOG STAGES AND WHAT TO EXPECT

STAGE

AGE

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES



NEONATE

0-2
WEEKS

WHAT TO EXPECT

Puppy is totally **dependent on mom**.



TRANSITION

2-3
WEEKS

WHAT TO EXPECT

Puppy is able to **walk** and **wag**.

Eyes and Ears open.
Puppy teeth will start coming in.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Sensitive Period (3-8 Weeks) with Mom & Littermates

Puppy is ready to learn **bite inhibition**, **canid communication skills**, and **self confidence**.

Whenever possible, it's best for dogs to stay with littermates until 8 weeks to learn appropriate dog social skills and avoid a potential predisposition to issues such as separation anxiety.



SOCIALIZATION

3-12
WEEKS

Sensitive Period (5-12 Weeks) with Humans & Outside World

Puppy is ready to learn that new **people**, **animals**, and **environments are not scary**.

The most impactful time to teach your dog about new people, places, and pets. Vaccines have not been completed, so choose play groups carefully. Housetraining is also best learned during this time.

Weaning Period (5-10 weeks)



JUVENILE

3-6+
MONTHS

WHAT TO EXPECT

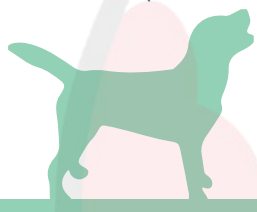
Adult Teething (17-24 weeks)
Bladder Control (20 weeks)

► You might see increased energy, interest in the environment, dog-dog reactivity, and decreased interest in known behaviors & humans. While not well studied, experts agree that a secondary sensitive/fear impact period (see below) is likely to occur at the end of this stage. Take a deep breath and stick with training & positive reinforcement (you may need to go back to basics!) Sexual maturity marks the end of the juvenile period, which typically occurs around 6 months or later.

Sexual Maturity (6-16 months) Unlike the previous periods in puppy development, the onset of sexual maturity is **greatly variable and depends on the sex and breed** of the puppy. It generally occurs by 16 months, but can occur later, especially in larger breeds.

Secondary Sensitive/Fear Impact Period* This is a **normal phase** when dogs may become **suddenly fearful of some objects/people**. It is likely to occur **one or more times** during **adolescence/early adulthood** and **lasts up to 2 weeks** on average.

* This period is not well studied, and therefore the onset and duration are not well known.



6-16
MONTHS

WHAT TO EXPECT

During early adulthood (1.5-2.5 years) dogs are sexually mature but not emotionally mature. Resource guarding and other reactive or aggressive behaviors may appear. Adult personality may start to solidify.

Females Sexually Mature (6-16 Months)
Males Sexually Mature (10-16 Months)



ADULTHOOD

12+
MONTHS



= VACCINE ROUND

Vaccine timeline is based on AAHA guidelines. Discuss with your veterinarian.

REFERENCES

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