

**Houston  
Pets  
Alive!**

**Dog Foster  
Caregiver  
Orientation**





Houston Pets Alive! was founded in 2014 by veterinarian Andrea Birkelbach. We are comprised of animal-loving volunteers and staff who never stop working to save the next life.



Our mission is to save the lives of at-risk companion cats and dogs and find them loving homes.

# HOUSTON PETS ALIVE!

## Helping animals that are at risk of entering the shelter, or not leaving the shelter with a positive outcome

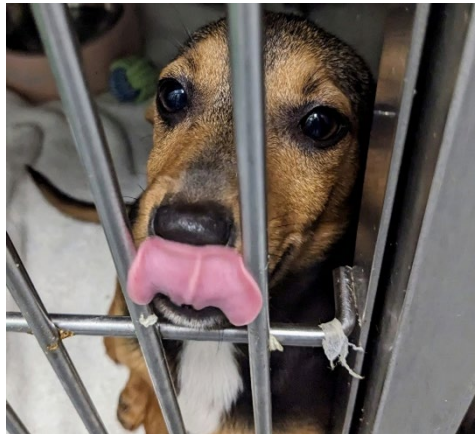
- young puppies not yet ready for adoption
- young puppies who are susceptible to catching disease in the shelter or need socialization
- juvenile and adult dogs who need help finding a home
- juvenile and adult dogs recovering from illness





# Where Our puppies and dogs Come From

- Municipal Shelters — Euthanasia Lists
- Positive Alternative to Shelter Surrender (PASS)





# What does HPA! provide for fosters?



Medical care



Food



Foster Support



Crate or Exercise pen for puppies



Toys

**HOUSTON PETS ALIVE!**

# What does a foster caregiver provide?



Transportation (vet, events, meet/greets)



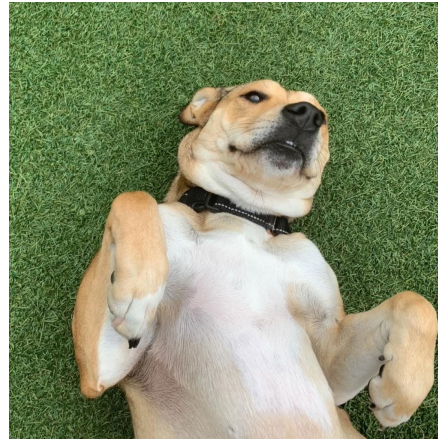
Recheck appointments every 2-3 weeks



Medical care



TLC



Socialization and Training



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# Are You Ready to Foster?

Agreement within the household

Prepare & “pet-proof” your home

- Isolation room
- remove hazards
- block hiding spots

Attachment

- Be prepared to get attached. You may want to adopt your foster pet but the goal is to say **goodbye**.



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# Are Your Pet and Human Household Residents Ready?

Can you separate/confine your foster pet?

- Resident pets should be in good health and up-to-date on vaccinations.
- Consult your veterinarian if in doubt.

Is anyone living in the home immune compromised, pregnant, very young or elderly?

- Consult a physician if in doubt.

Please note: HPA! does not  
provide medical care for resident pets  
or their owners



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# Shelter Pick-up

It is common to pick up puppies from a Shelter, such as BARC, Harris County Pets, and Fort Bend Animal Shelter

Screening and care for common conditions:

Upper respiratory infections (URI), Intestinal Parasites, Heartworms, etc

Shelter will give initial vaccines, dewormer and flea treatment if puppies are old enough

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Even with thorough veterinary screening, some contagious conditions, such as ringworm and certain parasites, may not be detected prior to the start of a foster period. HPA! cannot guarantee the health of any foster animals.

***Many conditions may benefit from Foster Care!***

***Make sure your own pets are up to date on vaccines and preventatives!***











# Bringing your new foster dog home

1. Slow introductions are always recommended if you have another pet at home. We suggest crating or putting your resident animals in a separate room while you give your foster a chance to check out their temporary home.
2. Give them a chance to settle in before taking them places!
3. Remember to supervise them in the yard! Your new foster dog is still getting to know you and may escape if they're stressed out
4. Leave a drag leash on your foster inside the house. This will allow you to manage them with problematic behaviors (jumping, running away, safer introductions with your resident animals)
5. Stay away from dog parks! Even if you know your foster is friendly, it's hard to predict the behavior of other people's dogs!



# DOG DEVELOPMENT STAGES

STAGE	DEVELOPMENT		
 Birth To 2 Weeks	<b>Dependent Stage:</b> Puppies have touch and taste only, and they are completely dependent on their mothers.	 8-12 Weeks	<b>The Fear Period:</b> Pups begin to react negatively to new things. Their newfound curiosity is matched with an increase in apprehension towards strange items.
 2-4 Weeks	<b>Hello World Stage:</b> Puppies begin to open their eyes, develop hearing, and start teething. They become aware of their environment and siblings.	 3-6 Months	<b>Energy And Chewing Stage:</b> Dogs begin to come out of their fear period, replacing it with relentless curiosity and energy. Adult teeth begin to develop, causing pain, resulting in an innate desire to chew everything.
 4-6 Weeks	<b>Learning Life Skills:</b> Puppies begin walking, going to the bathroom on their own, and develop more independence. They begin to learn social skills from one another.	 6-18 Months	<b>Testing Boundaries Stage:</b> Pups are now more likely to give into instinctual urges and become much more independent. Sudden disobedience and authority challenging begin.
 6-8 Weeks	<b>Socialization And Training:</b> Pups begin learning bite inhibition and establishing a place in social structures. Training "sit", "come" and basic commands are now possible.	 18 Months +	<b>Adulthood:</b> Personality will have solidified to some degree, and their energy levels will begin to drop. Having developed self-control, they can take on highly advanced training.

# Moms with puppies

## Basic Care Guidelines

- Mom should do all the work
  - Bottle feeding experience may be required in case supplemental feedings are needed
- Mom should always have access to lots of wet/dry food and water, you can even feed mama dog puppy food for extra calories!
- Monitor mom
  - Behavior: is she taking care of babies?
    - Babies shouldn't cry for too long
    - Mom should groom them
  - Eating/drinking habits
  - Irritated mammary glands





# Crate Training

- Crate training gives dogs their own space and can teach them how to be calm
- Create positive associations with the crate through the use of treats and games.
- Feed your dog in the crate
- Crate your dog even when you don't need them to be crated
- Move the crate around the house so your dog learns how to generalise!
- Be patient! Crating goes hand-in-hand with potty training.



# Potty Training

- Create a routine for your pup by taking it outside regularly. If you are just starting, this should be done every 2-3 hours. Your dog should be taken outside every time it comes out of the crate.
- Give them 10-15 minutes to try pottying outside, and if they don't potty, take them back inside and crate them again. Try taking them out of the crate again in a few minutes to reset the routine.
- By feeding them on a schedule, you'll be able to better predict their potty times.





# Socialization

- Socialize your dog to different people, places, sights, and sounds and build their confidence.
- Socialization also includes your personal dynamic with the dog and how you interact with him/her when you go out.
- Keep it FUN!
- Find what motivates your dog the most and use that to engage them. The dog will begin to learn that cool things happen when it gets taken to new locations.



# Follow-Up Veterinary Appointments

- **Dewormer** - can start as early as 2 weeks and should repeat every 2 weeks until fully vaccinated.
- **DHPP** - starts at 6 weeks, repeat every 2 to 3 weeks until 4 months
- **Rabies** - done at 3 months of age
- **Spay/Neuter** - done at 2 months of age, or once reasonably healthy
- **Heartworm Test** - for dogs 6 months and older
- **Microchip** - should be completed asap, usually before going home with you or by their first vaccine

## HPA! Clinic:

2800 Antoine Drive, Suite 2854  
Houston TX 77902





# Puppy Protocol

## When can I bring my new foster puppy out for walks?

- Puppies have very limited immunity when you bring them home, especially if they haven't had all of their vaccines yet!
- We recommend keeping your puppy confined to your backyard or home until they've had 2 DHPP boosters

## Tips!

- Try to stay away from areas that other dogs frequent. Front yards and apartment complexes can be tricky since you don't know if your neighbors have sick or unvaccinated pets.
- If you live in an apartment, carry your pup to a secluded area of the complex to go potty to limit exposure
- 5 days after the 2nd DHPP booster, it's safe to go for walks!





## When do I call?

Medical Emergencies: Call 832-439-0190	
• Bleeding profusely	• Unresponsive
• Severe Lethargy	• Ingested a dangerous item
• Having trouble breathing	• Unable to stand or walk
• Seizure/disorientated/drunk walking/ataxia	• Hit by car or otherwise seriously injured
Other Emergencies: Call 832-439-0190	
• Bite with broken skin	• Lost foster pet

## When do I text?

Text 832-439-0190 Please allow up to 24 hours for a response	
• Incident of aggression	• Cut or puncture wound
• New limping	• Colored nasal discharge
• Vomiting more than once/twice a day	• Low appetite/not eating

## When do I email [foster@houstonpetsalive.org](mailto:foster@houstonpetsalive.org)?

Please allow up to 24-48 hours for a response	
• Sneezing	• Hot spot/skin irritation
• Watery/goopy eyes	• Visible worm in poop
• Dirty/stinky eyes	• Low appetite/not eating
• Itchy Skin	• Straining to urinate/blood in urine
• One episode of vomiting/diarrhea	• Coughing
• Diarrhea for more than 24 hours	• Chewed/removed staples or sutures

# Adoptions

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- Many of our dogs and puppies are adopted through our partner pet stores or events where they have higher visibility than on our website alone.
- Three Petsmarts and One Petco
  - Petsmart Copperfield
  - Petsmart Bunker Hill
  - Petsmart Dunvale
  - Petco Westside



# Adoption Ambassadors:

Finding a home for your fosters within your network of friends, family and acquaintances

Get Creative with finding your fosters homes...Let's talk about ideas!

- Facebook and other 3rd party pages
  - Nextdoor, Craigslist, Various rescue Facebook pages
- Share with your friends, family, and personal network
- Take them out with “adopt me” gear on!
- Instagram—create an instagram account to share your fostering journey
- Lots and lots of photos and videos for their online profiles!

>>[Marketing your Foster Dog](#)<<

*This will be the most rewarding part of your fostering journey!*





**Gail Cain**  
**Rescue Coordinator**  
**832-439-0190**

[foster@houstonpetsalive.org](mailto:foster@houstonpetsalive.org)

[adopt@houstonpetsalive.org](mailto:adopt@houstonpetsalive.org)

[intake@houstonpetsalive.org](mailto:intake@houstonpetsalive.org)

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# Next Steps!

- Be sure to mark [foster@houstonpetsalive.org](mailto:foster@houstonpetsalive.org) and [adopt@houstonpetsalive.org](mailto:adopt@houstonpetsalive.org) as “safe senders” so that you don’t miss any important communications from our team.
- Read through our Foster Care Guide thoroughly

Expect a call, text or email when we have puppies/dogs for you!

- Join our private HPA! Dog Foster Facebook group to connect with other dog fosters. Share pictures, stories and receive advice on caring for your puppies

>>[HPA! Dog Foster Network](#)<<





# THANK YOU!

