



## Why Wait until 8-10 Weeks to bring your puppy home!

I know it is hard to wait for your puppy once you've made your decision. However, I have seen the momma do so much with her puppies in the last week. I do not let them go to their new family until they are 8-10 weeks old. I watched my Shasta actually train her puppies those last couple weeks! The longer they have momma, the better dog they are! Although she naturally weans them about 4-5 weeks, I make sure they can eat soft puppy-chow and drink from a bowl (not just play in it!!) She'll actually stop nursing them completely by 6-7 weeks.

### How the Nursery develops:

- Sense of smell is very strong in a puppy from the moment they are born.
- They snuggle into momma's belly to keep warm and to suckle; make sure every puppy finds a nipple!
- Their eyes open around ten (12-14) days; but like any baby, they see foggy images.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> week of life they start to move around a little; but still only see shapes and are moving to sounds. They start to be awake more often. Still, momma's fur is their safety net.
- By the 3<sup>rd</sup> week they are less wobbly on their legs; they start to see more clearly.
- By their 4<sup>th</sup> week/1 mos. old, they start to explore – but run to momma when she lays down. Actually still wobbly on their legs! Momma is still cleaning up their pen; but watch to keep the nest or whelping pen clean.
- I watch momma closely. I make sure she's not getting annoyed mentally from lack of sleep or sore nipples. The babies "knead" the milk sack as they suckle. Their little claws can cut momma's tender skin. Be sure to put some ointment on her sack where you find scratches – but not the nipple (we don't want the baby to suck it). Coconut oil and olive oil are good, safe, alternatives to the old-fashioned lanolin creams (found to sometimes have harmful chemicals). Use sparingly, but bring momma relief after every feeding.
- By Week 5-6, they are exploring their whelping pen! I keep clean papers in the pen. Start leaving just a small wet corner (pee) so they can find that smell and leave it in the corner away from their sleeping area.
- When momma has naturally weaned her pups, I introduce wet/soft puppy chow and clean water. No more need for milk! Your puppy should be able to eat from a bowl before you take it home!
- By weeks 5-6 they are starting to socialize with each other and learning the ways of the pack. Let them fuss and play as they will. Let them settle their own differences. Watch personality traits start to emerge!
- Puppy Vaccination Schedule: Check with your Veterinarian for commonly practiced shots in your area. The breeder should have given the puppies their "first puppy shots" at around 6-7 weeks (another reason not to take your puppy home too early). You should receive a record of this and verification of a "healthy check" from the Vet at that time. You should be taking your puppy to your Vet within in the first 24-48 hours to also have a "well puppy exam".
- Spaying/Neutering your puppy should be discussed with your Veterinarian. The current acceptable practice is around one year old. Traditionally, puppies were spayed/neutered at around three months; there is some discussion that spay/neutering too early can lead to hip dysplasia, mental problems and more.