



A GIFT FOR READERS · NO SIGN-UP NEEDED

mohamedabukhadra.com

# The Puppy Starter Pack



*Everything the decision does not cover*



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AUTHOR OF BEFORE YOU SAY YES TO THE DOG AND AFTER YOU SAY YES TO THE DOG

SYSTEM FIRST. PUPPY SECOND. FAMILY ALWAYS.

## Who owns each job

Dad owns safety decisions, freedom levels, outdoor risk, reset decisions, vet and trainer decisions, Mum's SAFE, emergency response, and final responsibility. Dad does not need to do everything. But Dad cannot disappear.

The children can own routine jobs when approved.

| Job                    | Adult Check? |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Water check            | Yes          |
| Potty tracker          | Yes          |
| PLACE practice         | Yes          |
| Brushing help          | Yes          |
| Daily handoff          | Yes          |
| Short mental game      | Yes          |
| Calm play              | Yes          |
| Outdoor route watching | Yes          |
| Toy cleanup            | Sometimes    |

They do not own risky jobs. They help. They report. They stop early. They call Dad.

Every daily job has an owner and a backup. Fill this in and put it where the family can see it.

| Job                | Owner | Backup | Done? |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Potty and cleaning | ----- | -----  | ----- |
| Food and water     | ----- | -----  | ----- |
| Outdoor and leash  | ----- | -----  | ----- |
| Brainwork and play | ----- | -----  | ----- |
| Daily handoff      | ----- | -----  | ----- |

No system, no dog. If a job has no owner, it will not happen.

## First Week Responsibility Matrix

| Time / Event        | Task                               | Avg. Duration | Main Owner | Backup Owner |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Wake-up             | POTTY immediately                  | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| After potty         | Food                               | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| After food          | POTTY                              | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| Mid-morning         | Water check                        | 2 min         | ----       | ----         |
| Mid-morning         | Short play / calm game             | 10–15 min     | ----       | ----         |
| After play          | POTTY                              | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| Late morning        | Rest in BOX / PLACE                | 5 min setup   | ----       | ----         |
| Lunch / midday      | POTTY                              | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| Afternoon           | Food if puppy schedule requires    | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| After food          | POTTY                              | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| Afternoon           | Brushing touch / handling practice | 3–5 min       | ----       | ----         |
| Evening             | Controlled play                    | 15 min        | ----       | ----         |
| After play          | POTTY                              | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| Dinner              | Food                               | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| After dinner        | POTTY                              | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| Night               | Calm chew / settle                 | 10–20 min     | ----       | ----         |
| Before sleep        | Last POTTY                         | 10 min        | ----       | ----         |
| Accident happens    | Clean immediately                  | 10–15 min     | ----       | ----         |
| Visitors / delivery | Control puppy first                | 5–10 min      | ----       | ----         |
| Mum needs space     | SAFE / BOX NOW                     | 2–5 min       | ----       | ----         |

Total for this stage: \_\_\_\_\_ hrs/day

Divided by: \_\_\_\_\_ people

Per person: \_\_\_\_\_ per day

Is that time available in a normal week — not your best week?

YES / NO

If first-week coverage is unclear, the family is not ready for pickup.

# Choosing the right puppy

Choosing a dog is really three decisions, and most families collapse them into one excited moment. Taken in order, they protect you.

The third decision comes last: which individual puppy? Even within the right breed, puppies differ. A beautiful puppy can still be the wrong puppy. The wrong puppy does not become easy because the family loves him. Look for temperament that fits your home: a puppy who is curious but not frantic, who recovers after a small surprise, who can settle. Not the one with the most dramatic looks, and not the one the children cried over. Fit, not fantasy.

| Person           | Job                                                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dad              | Final decision. Records, fit, risk, vet check, and whether to walk away. |
| Kids             | Observe calmly. Do not choose by cuteness. Do not pressure Dad.          |
| Mum              | Gives comfort feedback. Her discomfort is a real decision input.         |
| Seller / breeder | Answers normal questions, shows records, allows normal observation.      |

## Puppy Fit Scorecard

Score each item from 1 to 5 (1 = concerning, 3 = acceptable, 5 = excellent). Dad makes the final decision.

| Area                                                        | Score     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Clean, safe environment                                     | _____ / 5 |
| Puppy looks healthy — clear eyes, clean coat, good movement | _____ / 5 |
| Curious but not frantic                                     | _____ / 5 |
| Recovers after a mild surprise                              | _____ / 5 |
| Accepts gentle handling                                     | _____ / 5 |
| Takes food / can engage                                     | _____ / 5 |
| Human interest — engages without frantic jumping            | _____ / 5 |
| Mouthiness — normal puppy biting, not intense pressure      | _____ / 5 |
| Playful but not uncontrollable                              | _____ / 5 |
| Not hiding constantly                                       | _____ / 5 |
| Not bullying littermates                                    | _____ / 5 |
| Parent temperament acceptable                               | _____ / 5 |
| Seller answers clearly                                      | _____ / 5 |
| Vaccination / deworming records available                   | _____ / 5 |
| Family suitability                                          | _____ / 5 |

**Total:** 60–75 strong candidate (still check red flags) · 45–59 possible, review concerns carefully  
· below 45 do not rush, likely not suitable.

## What to Ask the Breeder or Seller

Ask simple direct questions.

| Question                                | Why                 |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| How old is the puppy exactly?           | Age clarity         |
| What food is he eating?                 | Transition planning |
| Has he been vaccinated?                 | Health              |
| Has he been dewormed?                   | Health              |
| Can we see the mother or parent videos? | Temperament clues   |
| Which puppy is calmest?                 | Fit                 |
| Which puppy is most intense?            | Avoid mismatch      |
| Has he met children calmly?             | Family fit          |
| Can our vet check him?                  | Confidence          |
| What support do you offer after pickup? | Responsibility      |

A good seller should not fear normal questions.

## Visit Behaviour Check

During the visit, watch more than looks.

| What Happens                  | Good Sign            | Warning Sign             |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Puppy sees people             | Curious, not frantic | Panic or nonstop jumping |
| Puppy is touched gently       | Accepts briefly      | Hard biting or panic     |
| Puppy hears a small sound     | Notices, recovers    | Cannot recover           |
| Puppy interacts with siblings | Normal play          | Extreme bullying or fear |
| Puppy is separated briefly    | Curious or settles   | Full panic or shutdown   |
| Puppy takes food              | Can engage           | Too stressed or frantic  |

Do not test harshly. Do not scare the puppy. Just observe.

## Red Flags

Walk away or pause if you see:

| Red Flag                         | Why It Matters             |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Seller refuses records           | Trust issue                |
| Puppy looks sick, weak, or dirty | Health concern             |
| Seller pressures fast payment    | Bad decision pressure      |
| Aggression is main selling point | Wrong family fit           |
| Puppy is extremely fearful       | May need advanced handling |
| Puppy is extremely intense       | May overwhelm family       |
| Parents seem unstable            | Risk signal                |
| Age is unclear                   | Health / social concern    |
| Seller refuses vet check         | Serious warning            |
| Environment is unsafe or filthy  | Care concern               |

Do not let emotion override red flags. There will be another puppy.

# The house before he arrives

## The House Zone Map

The puppy needs a map before he needs freedom. Use clear zones from Day 0.

| Zone                   | Purpose                                      | Setup Standard                                                           |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BOX zone               | Sleep, rest, safe containment.               | Safe, quiet, clean, easy to access, away from teasing and heavy traffic. |
| POTTY zone             | Same toilet place and routine.               | One consistent corner. Easy to reach and clean. Not the main play zone.  |
| Food / water zone      | Eating and drinking.                         | Stable bowls, easy cleaning, no guest feeding, no kids teasing.          |
| PLACE zone             | Calm spot near family.                       | Mat, bed, towel, or raised bed near people but not in chaos.             |
| Supervised family area | Limited safe area for controlled time.       | Only when watched. Barriers ready. Unsafe items removed.                 |
| Puppy-free spaces      | Rooms or areas protected for Mum and family. | Doors, gates, or clear rules. No “quick visits.”                         |

Do not give the puppy the whole house. A young puppy with too much space will make his own rules.

## Supplies Before Day 0

Buy tools that help control, calmness, cleaning, and safety. Not random toys.

| Item                                                | Ready? | Purpose                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------|
| BOX / crate / pen / safe sleep space                | -----  | Rest, containment, SAFE, night.        |
| Washable liner / bedding                            | -----  | Clean rest area.                       |
| Harness + leash                                     | -----  | Controlled movement from Day 0.        |
| Bowls                                               | -----  | Food and water routine.                |
| Small training treats + pouch                       | -----  | Fast GOOD BOY rewards.                 |
| Safe chews — 3 to rotate                            | -----  | Save hands, furniture, and sanity.     |
| Enzyme cleaner                                      | -----  | Accident cleanup without smell memory. |
| Poop bags / wipes                                   | -----  | POTTY routine and cleaning.            |
| PLACE mat / towel / cot                             | -----  | Calm spot near family.                 |
| Towels                                              | -----  | Paws, rain, bath, emergency.           |
| Simple brush                                        | -----  | Early handling and hygiene.            |
| Toy basket with approved toys only                  | -----  | No random kids' toys.                  |
| Puppy food + measuring cup                          | -----  | Food / water                           |
| Collar                                              | -----  | Walking / control                      |
| Carrier                                             | -----  | Sleep / containment                    |
| Gloves                                              | -----  | Potty / cleaning                       |
| Dog-safe shampoo later                              | -----  | Grooming                               |
| Paw wipe towel                                      | -----  | Grooming                               |
| Folder for vet, vaccine, deworming, breeder records | -----  | Records                                |

## Hazard Removal Checklist

If the puppy chewed it, he had access to it. Fix the setup before blaming behaviour.

| Remove / Block                               | Done  |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| Shoes, socks, laundry, towels on floor       | ----- |
| Children toys, balls, small plastic pieces   | ----- |
| Wires, chargers, plugs, loose cables         | ----- |
| Plants, soil, garden tools, fertilizers      | ----- |
| Food wrappers, trash bags, table leftovers   | ----- |
| Cleaning products, chemicals, medicine       | ----- |
| Sharp objects, nails, screws, tools          | ----- |
| Unsafe furniture corners or chewing access   | ----- |
| Slippery sprinting surfaces blocked for play | ----- |
| Fence gaps, gate gaps, escape points checked | ----- |

Prevention beats training when the puppy has not learned the house yet.

## Day 0 Readiness Gate

Do not collect or receive the puppy until this page is true enough.

- ☐ BOX is built, clean, and placed.
- ☐ PLACE is ready and visible.
- ☐ POTTY corner is chosen and reachable.
- ☐ Food / water area is ready.
- ☐ Mum's path and puppy-free spaces are protected.
- ☐ Gates and doors have clear rules.
- ☐ Unsafe items are removed from puppy areas.
- ☐ Supplies are bought and accessible.
- ☐ Kids know their setup jobs and limits.
- ☐ Mum SAFE and BOX NOW are understood.
- ☐ Emergency phone tree is filled.
- ☐ Dad has the first 48 hours plan ready.

If three or more boxes are not ready, delay the puppy or delay collection.

# The first forty-eight hours

## Arrival Order

The puppy should not walk into the house first. The first stop is the POTTY area.

| Step | Action                                                  |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Harness/leash on. Calm voice only.                      |
| 2    | Go straight to the POTTY corner. Stand still.           |
| 3    | Say POTTY calmly once. Give 2-3 quiet minutes.          |
| 4    | If puppy toilets: GOOD BOY + calm reward.               |
| 5    | Offer water.                                            |
| 6    | Enter only the prepared puppy area. No full house tour. |
| 7    | Use BOX or PLACE before chaos begins.                   |
| 8    | No visitors. No showing off. No free roaming.           |

## The First 48-Hour Loop

POTTY → PLACE → BOX → repeat.

The loop is simple on purpose. The family should not invent a new plan every hour.

| Loop Part | Do This                                                              | Why                                         |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| POTTY     | Same place. Same word. 2-3 minutes.                                  | Build location and timing.                  |
| PLACE     | Short calm settle with reward.                                       | Teaches calm near family.                   |
| BOX       | Nap, rest, night, safe containment.                                  | Prevents overtired chaos and free mistakes. |
| Repeat    | Return to POTTY after waking, meals, water, play, sniffing/circling. | Timing teaches faster than punishment.      |

## First Night Plan

Night 1 may include protest. The mission is to teach that whining does not open entertainment.

| If This Happens                       | Response                                                        |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brief whining                         | Wait 30–60 seconds. Do not rush in.                             |
| Still whining and likely POTTY timing | Silent POTTY trip. 2–3 minutes max.                             |
| Puppy toilets                         | GOOD BOY calmly. Back to BOX.                                   |
| No POTTY                              | Back to BOX. No play. No talking.                               |
| Kids wake up                          | No talking, no petting, no lights-on party. Call Dad if unsure. |
| Wants attention                       | Keep night boring. Calm earns freedom later.                    |

Night rule: POTTY only. No play. No party.

## Printable First 48 Hours Checklist

Print this page. Use it during Day 0 and Day 1.

- ☐ Prepared puppy area only - no full house freedom
- ☐ POTTY area used first before entering house
- ☐ GOOD BOY used after correct POTTY
- ☐ Water offered calmly
- ☐ BOX introduced calmly
- ☐ PLACE used for short calm breaks
- ☐ No visitors / no showing off
- ☐ Kids stayed quiet and did not chase
- ☐ First meal kept simple
- ☐ First nap protected
- ☐ Night plan ready: POTTY only, no play
- ☐ POTTY triggers watched: wake, eat, drink, play, sniff/circle
- ☐ Accidents tracked without punishment
- ☐ Biting handled with freeze → toy → pause
- ☐ No fence patrol allowed
- ☐ SAFE used before Mum moved close
- ☐ Daily note given to Dad

# What to do when something goes wrong

Some days will be bad. A busy day, a sick child, work pressure, travel, exams, family stress. On those days, do not aim for perfect. Do the minimum: food and fresh water; toilet trips on time; a little safe movement; accidents cleaned calmly, with no blame; protected, genuine rest in the resting place and the calm place; one small useful activity, no more; Mum's space protected, with no forced contact; and the truth told to Dad, so tomorrow starts clean.

A small useful activity can be a treat scatter, the name game, a PLACE reward, a calm chew, short sniffing, or two minutes of quiet attention.

Bad day is allowed. Bad week is not. If the family has a bad week, reset the system.

## What Broke → What to Reset

| What Broke              | What to Reset                                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Potty slipping          | Smaller area, tighter timing, restart the tracker.         |
| Biting sharper          | More rest, shorter play, end before chaos.                 |
| Chewing up              | Remove access, more legal chews and brainwork.             |
| Fence or outdoor chaos  | Less freedom outside, more control, shorter sessions.      |
| Over-arousal everywhere | Quieter house, more PLACE and BOX, fewer triggers at once. |

## Emergency Phone Tree

Fill this before the puppy arrives. Do not search for numbers during an emergency.

| Contact                      | Name  | Phone |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Dad                          | ----- | ----- |
| Mum                          | ----- | ----- |
| Vet clinic                   | ----- | ----- |
| 24h clinic                   | ----- | ----- |
| Trainer                      | ----- | ----- |
| Backup adult                 | ----- | ----- |
| Compound / building security | ----- | ----- |

Emergency rule for kids: if anything feels unsafe, secure the dog if safe to do so, move away, and call Dad.

## When Not to Wait

Some situations need fast help, not family debate, and it is worth knowing them in advance:

- trouble breathing, or choking;
- blue, pale, or abnormal gums or tongue;
- collapse, or being unable to stand;
- a seizure;
- suspected poisoning, or a swallowed unknown or dangerous item;
- repeated vomiting, or retching with little or nothing coming out;
- diarrhoea that repeats or has blood;
- being unable to pee or poop;
- vomiting or diarrhoea in a very young puppy, or in a puppy who is weak, confused, or refusing water;
- heavy bleeding, a deep wound, or a bite;
- an eye injury;
- severe pain or screaming;
- signs of heat stress;
- a severe limp or sudden inability to move normally;

- a swollen or hard belly;
- a sudden major change in behaviour;
- and any serious bite risk.

One serious red flag is enough. Do not wait for all the signs. This is not a treatment list, and this book does not try to tell anyone how to treat these things. It is a readiness signal — a way of knowing the moment to stop guessing and call for help. Recognizing that moment early is the single most valuable thing this chapter can give a family.

# Why this exists

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I am not a dog trainer. I am not a vet, not a breeder, not a professional from the dog industry.

That may be exactly why this helps. None of it was written from theory or from a training room. It came out of real family failure and real household pressure.

I raised dogs before I had a family. I loved them, and I believed I knew what I was doing. Then, a few months after I married, my dog died, and I grieved him more than anyone who has never loved a dog would understand.

Years later I brought a dog into my family, and it failed. My wife had a real fear of dogs. My children loved the puppy and kept breaking the rules without meaning to. He learned one thing from me, another from the children, and something else again from the house. I rehomed him.

A few years later I thought the problem had been timing. The children were older. We were ready. We were not. Same failure — taller children, a different name, the same pattern.

A few years after that, it happened again.

Three dogs. Koudy, Milo and Snoopy. All three went on to families who could give them what mine could not. My children still see them.

Love was there. Experience was there. It failed anyway.

So I stopped asking why the dog had failed and started asking better questions. What repeated across all three? Where did it break? Who carried the risk, and who carried the daily routine? Who was being pushed into discomfort? What did the puppy learn from us without our noticing?

The answer was simple and uncomfortable. Love was present. A system was not.

## **Sometimes the dog was trained, but the house was not.**

So I built one — on paper, for my own children, before the fourth dog arrived.

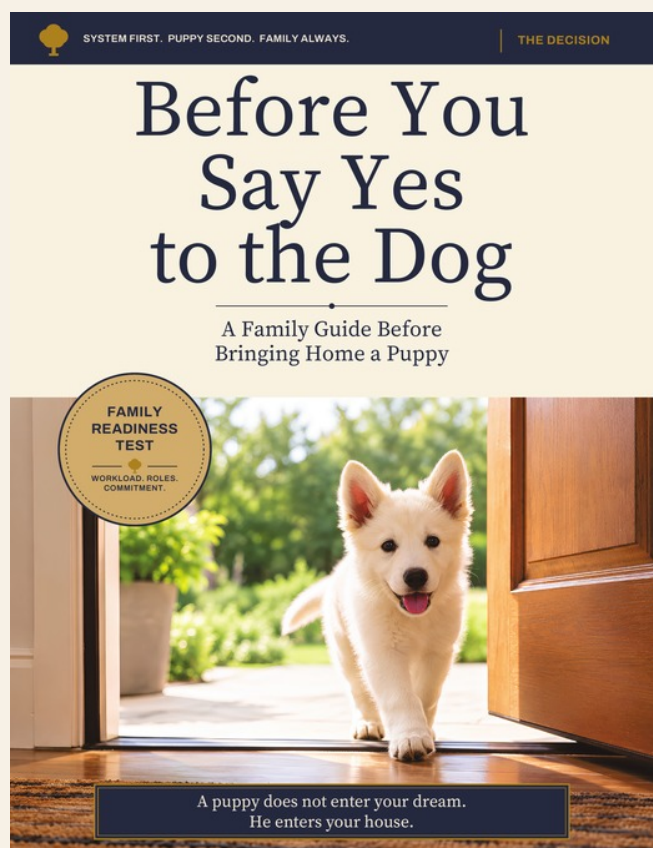
He stayed. His name is Oden.

These pages are part of that system. I am doing the thing I wished someone had done for me.

*Somebody gave you this. If it was useful, it is free to pass on — and everything else is at [mohamedabukhadra.com](http://mohamedabukhadra.com).*

I wrote this for my family. Then I shared it with the people I thought might get something from it. Use it, ignore it, or write back and tell me how to make it better. Up to you.

# The two books



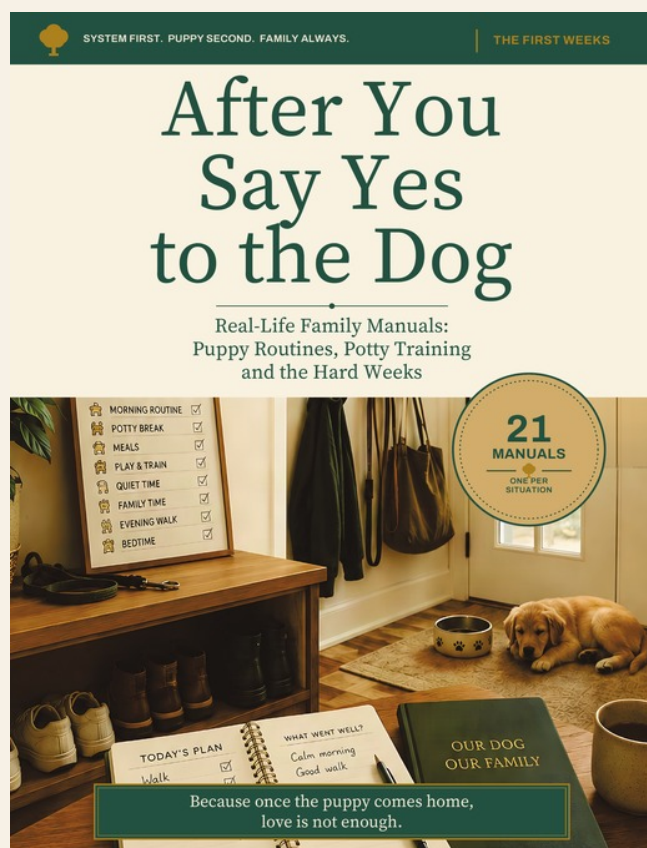
Mohamed Abu Khadra

## Before You Say Yes to the Dog

*A Family Guide Before Bringing Home a Puppy*

The decision before the decision. The real workload before it lands on one person. Who actually does what, including the children. A real say for whoever feels least ready. It ends at a test with three answers — Let's get the puppy, Maybe later, Not for us — and each one, given honestly, is a good answer.

**21 chapters. One readiness test.**



Mohamed Abu Khadra

## After You Say Yes to the Dog

*Real-Life Family Manuals: Puppy Routines, Potty Training and the Hard Weeks*

One manual per pressure moment: the first forty-eight hours, potty, socialisation, night barking, visitors, outdoor freedom, grooming, emergencies, and the reset. Printable routines you use on the day, not read about.

**21 manuals. One per situation.**

## Read to know. Use to do.

Paperback and Kindle. [mohamedabukhadra.com](http://mohamedabukhadra.com)

**THIS PACK** [mohamedabukhadra.com/before](http://mohamedabukhadra.com/before)

## For professionals

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I also built software for the people who do this for a living. It is called Oden, after the dog.

**Oden Pet Operating System** — one system with specialised tracks by profession. Canine behaviourists and dog trainers today. Shelters and rescues next, with other professions following.

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# Disclaimer

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This document is a practical family operating and educational guide. It is designed to help families think clearly, prepare responsibly, assign roles, reduce chaos, and make better decisions before and after bringing a puppy home. It is not a substitute for professional veterinary care, medical advice, certified dog training, behaviour consultation, legal advice, or emergency judgment. It is not an obedience or training programme.

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**Assumption of risk.** Any decision to apply this material, in whole or in part, is made solely at the reader's own risk and discretion. The reader is responsible for their own safety and for the safety of all persons and animals in their household.

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**Animal risk.** Living with a dog carries inherent risks. Any dog may bite or cause injury regardless of breed, size, temperament, or training. Where a dog displays aggression, fear, guarding, or any behaviour that gives cause for concern, a certified trainer, qualified behaviourist, or veterinarian must be consulted regarding that specific animal before any action is taken. Children must never be left unsupervised with a dog.

Large-breed dogs can grow into strong, powerful animals. Adult supervision, safe handling, suitable training, and professional support are the responsibility of the family. Children should never be responsible for dangerous decisions, emergency handling, strong leash control, unknown objects, medical situations, unsafe behaviour, or bite-risk scenarios.

For health concerns, vaccination, feeding, medication, injury, illness, poisoning, breathing difficulty, collapse, bloat signs, severe fear, aggression, dangerous behaviour, bite risk, or any situation where the dog or family may be at risk, contact the appropriate qualified professional immediately.

**When safety is unclear: Separate. Call. Go.**

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