



HOW TO SOCIALIZE PUPPY WHEN HE'S SICK

If your puppy is ill, with something contagious to other puppies, his socialization window is still closing and he needs to continue having positive, new experiences. If your puppy is feeling too poorly to enjoy interactions, keep him at home and let him rest. If he is sick but still acting spunky, look for or create opportunities that allow for socialization within his energy level while still staying safe. Be sure to consult with your veterinarian.

Here are some ideas:

Have a puppy party at home. Invite people over—preferably some kids, too—and have them give your puppy treats, pet, and play with him.

Have a puppy party on the town. Visit friends that don't have dogs of their own.

Work on sound therapy. Get your puppy used to thunderstorms, waves, fireworks, crowds, crying babies, construction noise, and other strange auditory experiences by using the Pup School app.

Play with the grown-ups. Does your puppy have an illness not communicable to adult dogs? Invite some over.

Play I Spy. Live in an area with lots of foot traffic nearby? Sit on your porch and reward your dog for looking at cars, passersby, unfamiliar dogs, etc.

Do some homework. Practice creating positive associations with the most common socialization challenges that don't involve travel or other dogs: strangers, kids, loud noises, vet exam handling, and loud, moving things.

Get outside. Does your puppy have all his vaccinations? Take him for a walk—just tell other dog owners he is sick so they keep their dogs away.

Construct an obstacle course. Have your puppy explore some safe obstacles and surfaces. Inside your home: Have him walk over a heating vent and up and down stairs. In your backyard: Put out some wobbly surfaces, tunnels, planks, Hula-Hoops, etc.

Explore your home turf. Play with your puppy in parts of your home where you don't regularly spend time. A guest room, the basement, the attic, etc. First impressions count. If your puppy's first encounter with something new doesn't go well, it takes a lot of work to change his mind. Always try to make first experiences particularly rewarding.