



What triggers a puppy's need to eliminate?

There are certain events that will stimulate a puppy to eliminate. Assume your puppy needs to “go”:

- 1) After he eats a meal, and sometimes even after he eats a treat
- 2) After he drinks water
- 3) Whenever he wakes up from sleeping
- 4) Every time you remove him from his kennel, safe-room, or playpen
- 5) First thing in the morning, whether he just woke up or not
- 6) After (and sometimes during) exercise or play
- 7) Any other time he acts like he needs to “go”

Puppies usually need to eliminate within 30 minutes of these activities, but you should start your routine by assuming that your puppy will need to go almost immediately, thereby avoiding potty training mistakes by not getting him to the right spot soon enough. Before long, you will recognize his individual tendencies and be able to time it pretty well.

Each time your puppy experiences one of the events that typically triggers his need to eliminate (eating, drinking, waking from sleep, play, removal from confinement), take him to the designated “spot”.

Use the same path to the “spot” every time, including going out the same door. If you have a dog door that you will expect him to use later on, save that step until after he is potty trained.

Lead him or carry him to the “spot”, then wait quietly. Choose a word or phrase that you will tell him the purpose of the walk, such as “go potty”, and softly repeat it while you wait. Once he begins eliminating, praise him softly, but not exuberantly so you do not distract him. When he is finished, praise him all you want and give him a treat.

If you take your puppy out to eliminate after each of the **triggering events**, and any other time when he displays any of the body language signals that tell you he is needing to go (dedicating sniffing, circling, arching the back and/or tail, squatting), soon he will begin to understand where the toilet area is. He will start walking toward the door on his own when he need to go, so be watching for this and take him out when he does. Add ‘walking to the door’ to your list of body language signals to watch for.

How often do I take him out?

If you are training a puppy, in addition to after he eats a meal, he will need to go outside after he wakes up from a nap, after an energetic play bout, first thing in the morning, and last thing at night.

Puppies, 6 to 10 weeks old, will need a break every hour or two.

Puppies, 10 weeks to 4 months, will need a break every 2 to 3 hours.

Puppies 4 months to adult hood, will need a break every four to five hours.

Because puppies are individuals, yours may require more frequent breaks or may be able to go longer. At night, until your puppy is 10 to 12 weeks old, you may have to get up with him once during the night. By 5 months of age, he should certainly be sleeping through the night.

Some adult dogs are able to last for an entire work day without a break but please don't count it. Even if your dog can last that long, he may become uncomfortable after 5 to 6 hours and would probably like a chance to relieve himself.