



Tarahill Cairn Terriers

Puppy Check List: Before You Get Your Puppy

Before picking up your puppy, here are some things to have ready. Start working through this checklist at least 3-4 weeks before you get your puppy so you have time to get everything in place.

- ❑ **Potty area:** Start by checking with your breeder on what substrate pups are used to in their potty area. If your puppy is not fully trained to go outside, you will want to provide an indoor potty area that replicates what the pup is used to.
 - **Litter box** – a cut down an old large Rubbermaid container works well - sides should be ~8 inches high with a lower opening (5 inches) at the front for the puppy to get in and out. You can also buy a cat litter box but some are a bit small for a growing puppy.
 - **Recycled newsprint cat litter** is my preferred litter. I have tried many different brands and always come back to Yesterday's news as my preferred choice as it does not break down and scatter as much as some and does not have a musty odour. I find that pine versions create a lot of dust and track everywhere.
 - **Puppy pads** – cloth or paper and a pad holder
 - **Fake grass patch**
- ❑ **Enzymatic cleaner:** Nature's Miracle or EZ clean are two good options. I like Nature's Miracle in the white bottle. The red bottle version is more strongly scented. Lots of people like EZ Clean but this contains live bacterial culture so you have to be more careful with storage conditions (don't freeze or keep in high heat area). I have had no issues with either product on a variety of floor surfaces but always check in an unobtrusive area.
- ❑ A safe place to confine your puppy (**X pen, courtyard kennel**) where they cannot access electrical cords, baseboards, curtains, shoes and other things to chew on. I strongly recommend Courtyard kennels. They are much sturdier, harder to climb out of and nicer to have in your house (though more expensive than X pens). Here is a link on amazon: <https://www.amazon.ca/Precision-38-Inch-Courtyard-Kennel-Crackle/dp/B00176II1Y> It is also useful to have something like **baby gates** (or a home made variety) to create barriers – such as across a doorway or to prevent the puppy from dashing out the front door or tumbling down a stair way. (Puppies should not be doing more than 3-4 stairs at this age so it is recommended that you prevent access to stairs and carry them up and down)
- ❑ **Food bowl and heavy water bowl.** I recommend avoiding bowls made in China. If using ceramic bowls make sure that any glazes are food safe.
- ❑ For general **cleaning products** (floors, toys etc.) – I recommend Hydrogen Peroxide based cleaners as these are very safe. Clorox (Healthcare) and Lysol make an H2O2 based cleaner but they are often a little harder to find than other agents, so you may have to hunt a bit or ask staff. Household cleaning vinegar is fine for light soil. You can also use Citric acid (Lysol brand – pink bottle). Be sure to keep your puppy off cleaned surfaces for 10 minutes.
- ❑ **A crate** – You want something just big enough for your puppy to stand, turn around and lie down in. Getting a crate that is larger than needed will allow some pups to use one part of the crate as a potty area and another as a sleeping area. Puppies are much less likely to soil in crates if the crate is just big enough for them. It is better to 'trade up' as needed - you can often find fairly inexpensive versions from online marketplaces and thrift stores. Be sure to give anything that is previously used a thorough scrubbing with soap and water and a wipe down with disinfectant. Eventually your puppy will need a larger crate but you do not need to purchase the 'final version' yet. If you are flying, you will need a Sherpa bag or other in-cabin pet carrier.

- ❑ **Crate pad** – Fleece or bumper pad that fits into the crate. An expensive pad is not required. You can use old towels or blankets. If your puppy adopts the habit of chewing on bedding, you may have to forgo it altogether.
- ❑ **A leash** – at this age, you want a really light-weight leash. I like cat leashes for small breeds at least until pups get a bit bigger. I find that it is easier for pups to learn to walk nicely on a light-weight leash that does not drag on their neck. (A harness is optional and you will need to wait till you bring the puppy home so you can get a proper fit. Keep in mind that they will likely outgrow any harness that fits well at 8-12 weeks. Many harnesses affect shoulder movement adversely so it is better to work hard on polite leash walking while pup is young. If your pup is choking himself on a flat collar, you can switch to a hound collars - wide, limited slip collars that distribute pressure over a much broader area than a conventional collar. They are a good alternative to a harness and are less prone to encouraging pulling than a harness (some harnesses actually encourage pulling). This is a hound collar: <https://www.amazon.com/rc-pet-products-collar-16-inch/dp/b007t4l28e/?tag=arepad-20>)
- ❑ Set up **Veterinary appointment** – you should plan a veterinary assessment for as soon as possible after you arrive home with your puppy. Most breeders will require that you have your puppy assessed within a specified period after you take possession of the puppy. This is to protect you, your puppy and the breeder in the event that a health issue becomes apparent after you get your puppy home. It is also a critical experience for your puppy that will set him up for success (if done correctly) with future vet visits. If you do not already have a trusted vet, seek out a Fear Free certified veterinary practice if possible. Make sure you plan ahead for an appointment within the required time frame.
- ❑ Start investigating **puppy classes** in your area. You want to find a positive reinforcement, fear free trainer. Once your puppy has had his first vaccines, he will be ready for classes one week later. Don't wait until you get him home to start identifying a good training class as there may be a waiting list to get started.
- ❑ **Omega-3 fatty acid supplement** (from pet food stores). This is a daily supplement added to one of the meals. You can also use the human variety of Omega 3 capsules but make sure it is just Omega 3 without other additives.
- ❑ **Kongs and safe chew items:** A kong (or other stuffable food toy) is a very useful puppy pacifier and it is a great idea to have several so that you can fill them and freeze to have ready. Be sure to use a Kong that is appropriate to your puppy's chewing prowess! Putting a kong into the crate with your puppy at night will help him settle. Bully sticks are good puppy chews. I recommend avoiding
 - Large soft chews (often sold as dental chews) as some of these products have had issues with bowel obstructions from chunks chewed off and swallowed
 - Rawhide - due to choking issues
 - Pig's ears - due to repeated instances of Salmonella contamination.

Dried knuckle-bones, bully sticks and raw Elk rib bones are great chews for puppies at this age. A 'bully buddy' is a great tool to help your pup use a bully stick safely. The size depends on the size of your dog and the size of the bully stick you use. <https://bowwowlabs.com/> With the current exchange rate these are a bit pricey now but they do help reduce the risk of your pup choking on the small end of a bully stick. If you do not use something like this you will need to watch carefully and discard the bully stick when it gets down to about 3 inches. You can use the code WISH10 to get 10% off if you order directly from BowWow labs (exchange rate right now has bumped up the cost unfortunately).
- ❑ Make sure you have done your safety walk through of your house and outdoor areas where the puppy will be to look for things that might be appealing to small puppies – be sure to get down to their level when making your assessment! If you have electrical cords running through the puppies confinement area, I recommend running them through a length of pvc pipe.