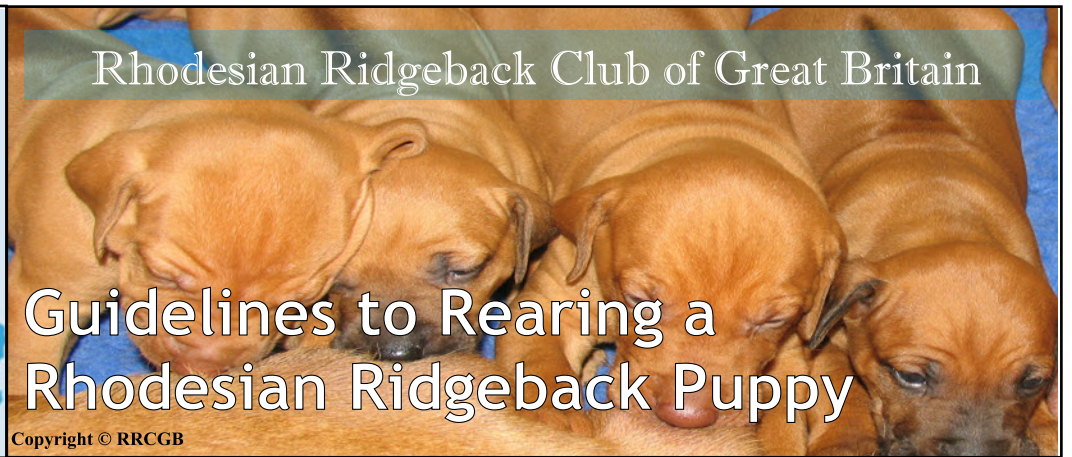




Guidelines to Rearing a Rhodesian Ridgeback Puppy

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Nutrition

When your puppy is ready to leave for its new home, it will have been weaned onto a specific diet decided on by the breeder, and you may well be supplied with a “puppy pack” containing a few days supply of food. If not, your breeder should provide you with a diet sheet so you can get everything you need for when your puppy comes home. Your puppy will be on 4-5 small meals a day, and as with all dogs fresh water must be available at all times. By 3-4 months old you should be able to reduce to 3 meals evenly



spaced throughout the day. Food must be gradually increased as your puppy grows but do not overfeed. It can cause tummy upsets and will certainly make your puppy fat, which may lead to other problems later on. If there is food left after every meal, you are probably feeding too much, but do not leave food

down to be picked at during the day as this can lead to bad habits. By 6-9 months old, the food can be changed to twice a day and then continued this way. Two meals a day are better than one large one, especially if feeding a complete diet. When feeding, it is wise to feed at least one hour before



exercise, or one hour after exercise.

When your puppy reaches adulthood, remember that a grown dog requires less food than a growing puppy, so food amounts need to be adjusted accordingly to prevent your ridgeback becoming overweight.

If at any stage you decide to change the diet, it needs to be done gradually, by adding a small amount of the new diet to the old one. Gradually increase the amount of the new diet while decreasing the amount of the old one over the space of a few days, until only feeding the new diet.

This should help avoid tummy troubles.

Your breeder can tell you when your puppy was last wormed and when it is due to be wormed again. Wormers are readily available at your pet shop or vet and regular worming is recommended, following the manufacturers instructions.

Exercise

Although your ridgeback puppy will seem very small when it first arrives, it will grow very rapidly and care must be taken with exercising during the growth stage. Only short walks on the lead are needed at the early stage, because he will also be playing, exploring his new home and garden, and experiencing lots of new things. Because of this he will also be doing a lot of sleeping.

When you purchase your puppy, it is likely that he will have had his first vaccination. Remember that he will require a second vaccination (your breeder can give you the dates and/or vaccination card), and your vet will tell you when it is safe for

your puppy to interact with other dogs outside the home after his second vaccination.



Socialisation is very important at this stage of development, but this can be done easily and safely on the lead. Lead walking can be increased gradually as your puppy grows but it is not good to do too much at a young age, and there are a number of things to consider before introducing walking off the lead.

- ❖ muscles and bones are not fully grown and over-exercising at an early stage

can cause irreparable long term damage .

- ❖ puppies love other dogs, and want to play with them all, but not all other dogs like puppies and may not be very welcoming.
- ❖ when young, your puppy will not be fully trained and may well not come back to you when called.
- ❖ a ridgeback is a hound and will chase things that run away, having no regard for traffic or any other hazards which may be around.

Playtime

After the first six months, off lead exercise can be gradually introduced with care. Remember that playing with other dogs is healthy but must be closely monitored to ensure it does not become too boisterous for either party and other owners are happy for your dogs to run free together.

The adolescent ridgeback may well become 'deaf' to your calls and seemingly do what he wants, but with perseverance and patience, he will grow out of it. Once your ridgeback has reached adulthood, you will be able to spend many hours walking far and wide.

