

NJ BERNEDOODLES



The Complete Puppy Starter Guide

Everything you need to know for your puppy's transition home

A FREE GUIDE FOR OUR NJ BERNEDOODLE FAMILIES

WELCOME HOME

A Note From Our Family to Yours



Jeffrey, Vanessa & our girls — the family behind NJ Bernedoodles

Congratulations on your new Bernedoodle! We built this guide from everything we've learned raising and placing puppies over the past 7+ years — the supplies that actually get used, the training timeline that works, and the small things that make the first few weeks so much easier.

We treat every dog in our program like family, and we want the same for your pup once they come home with you. Keep this guide handy through the first few months — print the checklists, tape the vet schedule to the fridge, and reach out any time you have a question. We're just a text away.

NOTE FROM JEFFREY & VANESSA

"The best thing you can do in the first two weeks is keep things calm and predictable. A crate, a routine, and a lot of patience will take you further than any gadget on this list."

How to Use This Guide

Start with the Supplies Checklist so you're ready before pickup day. Then work through the First 48 Hours, House-Training, and Socialization sections in your pup's early weeks. Keep the Training & Vet Schedule visible — it's the one page you'll reference most.

BEFORE PICKUP DAY

Complete Supplies Checklist

Everything organized by category — check items off as you shop.

1. Food & Feeding

- ☐ High-quality puppy food (slows growth for healthier joints)
- ☐ Training treats (small, soft, and easy to chew)
- ☐ Freeze-dried treats for high-value rewards (recall, new skills)
- ☐ Food and water bowls (stainless steel or ceramic — avoid plastic, which can trap bacteria)
- ☐ Slow-feeder bowl (optional, helps eager eaters)

2. Crate & Bedding

- ☐ Crate sized for current AND adult size (use a divider panel to adjust as they grow)
- ☐ Crate pad or blanket (washable and comfortable)
- ☐ Playpen or exercise pen (great for safe confinement when you can't watch them)
- ☐ A second cozy dog bed for the living room / your bedroom

3. Collar, Harness & Leash

- ☐ Adjustable collar with ID tag (include your phone number)
- ☐ Harness (especially helpful for leash training)
- ☐ Leash
- ☐ Long training leash (15–30 ft) for recall practice in open areas

4. Puppy-Proofing the Home

- ☐ Baby gates (to limit access to stairs or certain rooms)
- ☐ Outlet covers and cord protectors
- ☐ Cabinet and trash-can locks (or a lidded trash can)
- ☐ Toxic plants removed or relocated out of reach

5. Toys & Enrichment

- ☐ Chew toys, teething-safe (KONG or Nylabone are great choices)
- ☐ Interactive / puzzle toys (treat-dispensing keeps that smart brain busy)
- ☐ Soft toys for comfort (supervise closely to prevent tearing and swallowing)

6. Grooming Supplies

- ☐ Slicker brush (essential — the wavy/curly Bernedoodle coat mats quickly)
- ☐ Metal comb for de-matting and finishing
- ☐ Dog shampoo, gentle and puppy-specific (we personally use baby shampoo)
- ☐ Ear cleaner (floppy ears trap moisture — clean weekly)
- ☐ Nail clippers or grinder
- ☐ Finger toothbrush and dog-safe toothpaste

7. Health & Safety

- ☐ Flea/tick and heartworm prevention (ask your vet what's right for your area)
- ☐ A folder or app to keep vet records organized — vaccines, weight, appointments
- ☐ Pet first-aid kit (gauze, styptic powder, tweezers, vet's number on hand)
- ☐ Enzymatic cleaner for potty accidents (regular cleaners don't fully remove the scent)
- ☐ Puppy pads (handy for crate training and rainy days)
- ☐ Pet insurance quote — easiest and cheapest to enroll before any issue comes up

8. Training Tools

- ☐ Clicker, if you plan to use clicker training
- ☐ Treat pouch that clips to your belt or waistband

9. Travel

- ☐ Car seatbelt harness or travel crate (though most pups just ride happily on your lap at first!)
- ☐ Portable water bottle/bowl for walks and car rides
- ☐ Poop bags and a clip-on holder

THE FIRST FEW DAYS

First 48 Hours at Home

Keep it low-key. A calm arrival sets the tone for everything after.

- ☐ Take them straight to a designated potty spot before entering the house
- ☐ Show them the crate right away — toss in a treat so it feels like a good place
- ☐ Keep the household calm — limit visitors and loud excitement for the first day or two
- ☐ Keep them on the same food they're used to at first (no sudden diet changes)
- ☐ Supervise closely around kids and other pets; let interactions happen at the puppy's pace
- ☐ Expect a few nighttime wake-ups for potty breaks — this is completely normal
- ☐ Start using one consistent name and one consistent potty cue word from day one
- ☐ Schedule your first vet visit within the first few days (see Training & Vet Schedule)

How We Feed

NOTE FROM JEFFREY & VANESSA

Our puppies grow up with free-choice grazing — we simply keep the bowl filled with high-quality puppy food and let them nibble throughout the day, so that's the easiest way to continue what they're already used to. If you'd rather move to set mealtimes, a general guideline is 3–4 small meals a day under 6 months, tapering to 1–2 meals as they mature. Whichever way you go, keep fresh water available at all times, and keep grapes, raisins, chocolate, onions, and xylitol (found in sugar-free gum/peanut butter) completely out of reach.

BUILDING GOOD HABITS

House-Training 101

A general rule of thumb: puppies can typically hold their bladder about one hour for every month of age. Consistency is what gets you there fastest.

Take Them Out...

- ☐ First thing in the morning, and last thing before bed
- ☐ Within 5–10 minutes of waking from any nap
- ☐ Within 15 minutes of eating or drinking
- ☐ After every play session
- ☐ Every 1–2 hours in between, especially in the first weeks

Watch For These Signs

- ☐ Sniffing the floor in circles
- ☐ Sudden stillness or whining
- ☐ Scratching or standing at the door
- ☐ Circling or squatting

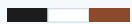
TRAINING TIP

Reward the second all four paws hit the ground outside — not after you walk back in. Timing is everything. And if there's an accident, clean it with an enzymatic cleaner and move on: no scolding. Punishment only teaches a pup to hide from you, not to hold it.

THE CRITICAL WINDOW

Socialization Checklist

The socialization window (roughly 3–16 weeks) is the single best window you'll have to shape a confident, easygoing adult dog. Go at your pup's pace and keep every experience positive.



- ☐ Meet 10+ new, friendly people of different ages and appearances
- ☐ Play with vaccinated, friendly dogs in a safe setting
- ☐ Walk on different surfaces — grass, tile, gravel, stairs, grates
- ☐ Take short, low-key car rides
- ☐ Visit the vet office once just for treats and pets (no shots)
- ☐ Practice being handled: paws, ears, mouth, tail (mimics grooming and vet exams)
- ☐ Introduce everyday sounds — vacuum, doorbell, thunder recording, traffic
- ☐ Practice short stretches of alone time in the crate, building up gradually
- ☐ Get comfortable wearing a collar, harness, and leash around the house
- ☐ Introduce bath time with warm water and gentle praise

If your pup seems unsure about something, don't force it — back up, lower the intensity, and let them approach at their own pace. Every positive rep builds lifelong confidence.

PLAN AHEAD

Training & Vet Visit Schedule

The one page worth taping to your fridge.

Professional Training Timeline

We recommend starting professional training around 10–12 weeks of age, once your pup has had some early vaccines. A typical structure is one session per week for 4–6 weeks to start, then adjusting the cadence based on progress and your goals.

Vet Visit & Vaccine Guide

Visit	Timing	Notes
Initial check-up	ASAP after pickup	Baseline exam, confirm health records
Vaccines	8, 10–12 & 16 weeks	Follows breeder's initial protocol — confirm exact schedule with your vet
Spay/neuter	~7–9 months (varies)	Timing depends on size and growth — your vet gives the best guidance
Annual exams	After year one	Yearly check-ups plus booster vaccines going forward

REMINDER

Bring your puppy's health records (we send these home with every pup) to your first vet visit so your vet can pick up exactly where we left off.

COAT CARE

Bernedoodle Grooming Essentials

Bernedoodle coats range from wavy to curly depending on generation, and nearly all of them mat quickly if brushed only once in a while. A little consistency goes a long way.

- ☐ Brush 3–4x per week minimum with a slicker brush, more often during the “puppy uglies” coat change around 5–9 months
- ☐ Comb through with a metal comb after brushing to catch hidden mats near the ears, armpits, and collar line
- ☐ Bathe monthly (or as needed) with a gentle, puppy-safe shampoo
- ☐ Book a professional groom every 6–8 weeks once the adult coat comes in
- ☐ Clean ears weekly — floppy ears trap moisture and are prone to infection
- ☐ Trim nails every 2–3 weeks while they're young to keep the habit easy

Common First-Time Mistakes to Avoid

- 1 Waiting too long to socialize**
The critical window closes around 16 weeks — start as soon as it's safe to.
- 2 Skipping the crate**
Crates aren't punishment — they speed up house-training and prevent separation anxiety later.
- 3 Under-brushing the coat**
A few minutes, several times a week beats an expensive de-matting shave-down later.
- 4 Overfeeding and over-treating**
Extra weight adds real stress to joints in a breed already prone to hip and elbow issues.
- 5 Punishing accidents**
It teaches a pup to hide from you, not to hold it — redirect calmly and reward the win instead.
- 6 Waiting on pet insurance**
It's cheapest and easiest to enroll before anything shows up on a vet record.

OUR PROMISE

You're Never on Your Own With This



Every NJ Bernedoodles puppy goes home vet-checked, dewormed, up to date on their first round of shots, and backed by our one-year genetic health guarantee. But our support doesn't end at pickup — call or text any time with questions, big or small.

NOTE FROM JEFFREY & VANESSA

Thank you for trusting us with your new best friend. Watching our puppies grow up in loving homes is still our favorite part of this whole thing — send pictures anytime, we mean it.

Coming Soon From NJ Bernedoodles

We're building a small shop of things we actually use and recommend — starting with a Puppy Training Starter Box, curated so it's ready to go the day you bring your pup home. Follow along on Instagram for the launch.

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