

# ALMA WESTIES

3960 North Union Road  
Alma, Michigan 48801  
989 763-1861

[info@almawesties.com](mailto:info@almawesties.com)

[www.almawesties.com](http://www.almawesties.com)



Thank you for selecting one of our puppies for your new family member. We have put together some information we hope you will find helpful as you bring your new puppy home. Please remember we are always here if you have questions after you get your puppy home. We also like to get updates as the puppies grow and like to include pictures on our WEB site, with your permission.

## **Things to bring with you when you come to pick up your puppy.**

- A towel for your lap for the puppy on the way home. The puppy will ride best in your lap and the towel will catch any “accidents” that may happen.
- Paper towels to clean up any messes in the car and a plastic shopping bag to put “used” paper towels in.
- An old towel we can rub on the puppy’s mother to pick up her scent. You can place this towel with the puppy in his/her sleeping area when you get home to help acclimate to their new home.
- The balance of your payment in cash. We apologize for this procedure but it works best for everyone.

## **Things you will take home with you.**

- First and most important you will be taking home your puppy!
- Litter registration paper from APRI in the event you wish to register your puppy. While this is not necessary, especially if you do not plan to breed, it adds a little “status” to your ownership.
- A small supply of the dog food we have been feeding your puppy. We feed all our dogs Nutromax (small bites puppy lamb and rice). They do very well on this brand. You are of course free to feed any dog food you wish, although if you plan on switching to another brand the new food should be mixed in with the food we send home so the puppy does not get an upset stomach.
- The puppy’s immunization record.

## **Feeding your puppy.**

- We strongly suggest feeding your puppy dry dog food with an accompanying dish of water by the food dish. We suggest keeping your puppy on “puppy” food as opposed to “adult” food for at least the first year. Westies have very small stomachs and will probably only need to be fed four or five times a day, dropping down to two times a day as the dog reaches a year of age.
- “Free feeding” means that there is always food in the dish and the dog may eat anytime it wishes to. We caution against this for several reasons. With “timed” feedings you will find it is much easier to potty train. The puppy should go outside immediately after eating. Timed feeding also lets you see how much the puppy is actually eating and serves as an alert there may be something wrong if eating habits change.
- Any time you change dog food it should be introduced gradually, mixed in with your current food. This avoids causing an upset stomach. Good quality dog food is not inexpensive, however it is the best way to keep your dog in good health and avoid expensive trips to the Vet. While a good quality food does not prevent all illnesses, it gives your dog a good solid foundation to fight off ailments.
- Feeding dry food helps to keep your puppy’s teeth clean and avoid costly dental cleanings. We also discourage feeding from the table and/or table scraps. These are not good for your puppy’s teeth or his digestive system in general.

## What to do when your puppy cries.

- Your puppy is going to cry when it is not with you, no way around it, it is going to happen. This is in no way a reflection on you as a pet owner. Your puppy has spent his/her entire life with litter mates and its mother. Going home with you is a whole new experience and it will take some time for the puppy to become acclimated to its new home. This is why we recommend a “rubbing towel” to take home with you. With some patience on your part the puppy will come to understand that it can’t be with you all the time and that even though you leave it alone, you always come back.
- Find a safe and secure place for your puppy to sleep and spend time when you can’t be with him/her. We highly recommend crate training your puppy. Crates are a safe/secure environment for your puppy to sleep in and to keep him/her out of mischief when you are not home or watching. A crate is not a punishment; your puppy will soon know this is the safe place to be. Our adult dogs will voluntarily take naps in their open crates even when we are home. They know this is their “home.”
- It is very tempting to pick up the puppy when it cries. During the day, ok, go for it! At night when you are trying to sleep? Don’t do it! Get some ear plugs or find a spot for the puppy to spend the night where you can’t hear the crying. Remember, this is a training stage and if you give in to night time crying you won’t be getting much sleep and you only prolong the time it takes for the puppy to realize it is ok at night. How long does it take before there is no night crying? That varies by puppy but it could be up to a week so be prepared. Remember, you are going to have this dog for 15 years or more so please spend a couple of weeks to train!

## Potty Training

- Here is one that can be a real challenge! Again, remember you are spending a relatively short period of time training compared to the years you will have your dog. We have trained our adult dogs to ring a bell when they need to go outside. Of course if they see something outside they want to investigate they ring the bell. Simply tie a bell next to the door you will normally use to let the puppy out of. Yes, your puppy can go outside even in the winter. They won’t be spending an extended amount of time outside, just long enough to get the job done. Each time you take the puppy out, swat the bell with its front paw. It won’t take long before the puppy relates the bell to going out.
- From the start tell yourself “there will be accidents.” This is a learning situation. Your puppy was started on paper training at three weeks of age. Not to say they don’t occasionally go on their blanket, but 90% of the time they use the paper. Dogs tend to not mess where they sleep, another point for crate training.
- Take your puppy outside the first thing in the morning and after each feeding, then before bedtime. During the day, when you are home, the puppy should go out about every 45 minutes. This is not always possible, especially if no one is home during the day.
- When the puppy does his/her business outside, praise him. Giving a small puppy treat is a good way to reinforce that going outside is the thing to do. Tone of voice has a big influence on your puppy, they are very smart and pickup on your tone more than you might realize. When he/she “goes” praise him.
- How to handle accidents in the house? We again recommend patience. Experts claim that rubbing the puppy’s nose in the mess does not work. At first, when there is an accident, point it out to the puppy and verbally scold. We really don’t see much sense in taking a puppy outside when you discover an accident although some people recommend doing that. You may spend weeks during this training process and wonder if you are ever going to “win” this one; you will. The secret is getting them outside on a regular basis and praising when they do their “business” outside.
- When putting the puppy outside NEVER NEVER NEVER leave the puppy alone. Even a grown Westie needs to be watched constantly when outside unless you have a fenced yard you KNOW the dog can’t escape from. Westies love to chase things, real or imagined, and it only takes seconds for them to disappear from site (been there, done that, trust us).
- While your puppy is very young it is a good idea to have an old towel under the puppy when it is sitting on your lap. If you are watching t.v. the puppy will more than likely fall asleep in your lap, for example, and the towel can save your furniture and clothing from cleaning.
- On occasion you may find that your puppy rolls in something dead and/or feces. This is a behavior with many explanations but is an unwanted habit. The best way to prevent it is to keep a sharp eye on your puppy when outside and keep your yard as clean as possible. It is not unusual for a dog to rub or roll in the grass, just be sure they are not rolling in something other than grass!

- Occasionally a puppy will eat feces, even its own. Again the best way to put a stop to this is to be in attendance when your dog is out for a potty break. The second the dog attempts to eat feces say the command “no” in a loud voice, even moving toward the dog if necessary.

### **Crate Training**

- As mentioned already, we highly recommend crate training your puppy. When you come to pick up your puppy you will see our operation and the crates we use. Plan on purchasing a crate that will fit your Westie when full grown. These sizes are available at most pet stores and will indicate if they are for small, medium or large dogs. Westies are usually the “medium” size.
- Be sure to get a crate that has a moveable partition. This way you can make the crate small and expand it as the puppy grows. Dogs will generally not go to the bathroom in the same area they sleep in. To further that we make the sleeping area in the crate just large enough to accommodate the dog when it is lying down. This is why a partition comes in handy. Most crates have a plastic tray on the bottom. Place an old blanket or rug on the floor of the crate, over the tray, to give your dog a comfortable surface to sleep on. The blanket/rug can then be periodically washed as needed and the tray catches any “accidents.”
- When the puppy is very small you could enlarge the crate area to accommodate some newspaper for the puppy to use (they were started litter-paper training with us at three weeks) although try to stay away from this as we want the puppy to understand it does not go “potty” where it sleeps.
- To initially train your puppy to go into the crate on command say “in your crate” and gently guide the puppy into the crate. Once the puppy is in the crate give a small puppy treat. Repeat this until the puppy voluntarily goes into the crate by your verbal command only. Continue to reward with a treat for several weeks, and then cut back to every other time, then slowly stop giving the treats. By this time the puppy will have learned what you’re “in your crate” command means and verbal praise will be enough.

### **Bathing and Grooming**

- A Westie is prone to dry skin and for this reason we recommend a full bath only once per month with regular brushing in between. We use a generic brand of baby shampoo on our Westies with great results. They smell good; the soap does not irritate their eyes or their skin. Although not always possible you should dry to dry the puppy with a hair dry with a setting that is comfortable to your hand. This helps prepare them for being groomed.
- It is important to put cotton balls in their ears at bath time as water in the ear canal can lead to infection of the inner ear and an expensive visit to the VET (been there, done that: about \$80). Gently push the cotton ball into each ear, just firm enough to make it stay.
- It is entirely up to you how you have your Westie groomed. The first grooming usually takes place around 4-5 months of age. You can either learn to do it yourself or have a professional groomer do it for you. Below are photos of both a groomed and ungroomed Westie. The Westies hair can range from rather course to very soft. We groom our dogs short, easier to keep them clean. Westies are classed a “non-shedding” breed and this is for the most part very true. We allow our dogs on the furniture and rarely see a trace of hair anywhere.



**Groomed**



**Ungroomed**

- When your puppy gets dirty in between bathing you can use a washcloth and some soap and shampoo to do some spot cleaning. Products such as “Pet Cleanse Waterless Foam Shampoo” by Paul Mitchell is great for quick spot cleanups.

- When you get home from picking up your puppy he/she could use a good bath. We don't bath them because we would be bathing them every day and that is not good for their skin. We do "spot clean" them as needed, and their mother cleans them, however they have been walking in urine and will smell like a "stinky little puppy" when you pick them up. Once home with you they will stay clean longer (not in a whelping box with other puppies) and since they have never had a regular bath this will be their first!
- You should get in the habit of brushing the puppy's teeth. They make "doggy toothpaste" for such a purpose. As with anything you do with your puppy, starting this practice early and at least once a week will help avoid a Vet dental cleaning that runs around \$100!

## **Discipline**

- Discipline is a normal part of raising and caring for a puppy. There is much information on obedience training. Please remember, NEVER NEVER NEVER hit or strike your puppy on the head or in the face. This is a sure way to raise a dog that cowers any time your hand approaches it.
- Start with verbal commands reinforced with a light swat on the rear. It is much easier to train a dog with positive reinforcement than with physical force. There are times when a good swat on the rear end is called for though.
- Biting: your puppy is going to want to bite and chew on your hand/fingers. Well, they will chew on anything and everything for a while so keep a close eye on them! Hand biting has to be stopped immediately or it will get worse. Your puppy is used to biting its litter mates; this is natural play for them. They need to realize it is not ok to play this way with you.

## **Before You Bring Your Puppy Home**

Let's briefly go over a few things you should consider BEFORE you bring your Westie home. It is very exciting to get a new puppy and to be able to bring him or her home. But all too often .....people are not aware of how challenging this process can be! It is important to plan for the arrival of your new Westie to avoid frustration, damaged items and to provide the safest possible environment for your puppy and family.

Spending a few hours to puppy-proof your house and to insure the proper introduction of the puppy to the home will set the tone for your relationship with the puppy. While there are several things that you need to consider, one of the first aspects of bringing a puppy home is to have the correct supplies. In addition to the supplies, you'll need the right attitude to work with the puppy, a space that is designed for the puppy to stay in, as well as a schedule for feeding and exercise.

You should also have a basic idea of the training methods you are going to use with the puppy, as well as a good grasp of how you were going to start this process.

Here are some basic supplies you should seriously consider getting.

1) A good book on Westie puppy health, care and training methods. If the puppy has begun a training method, make sure that it continues as much as possible with the already established commands. Any book will be very helpful to you. It doesn't matter where you get it from, it needs to cover the basics of deciding if a Westie is suitable to you and your family, tips on safely choosing a healthy Westie with a good temperament, sections on general care of the Westie, sections on training and behavior modification, diet and nutrition, health issues and care in the twilight years.

2) Good quality bedding material for inside the crate that cannot be easily chewed or destroyed. It is important that this material be washable, as there will be times when it will need to be cleaned.

3) A special puppy collar that is of a soft fabric or woven material. The collar should have a buckle fastener and should not be too tight for the puppy's neck. You should be able to easily insert two fingers between the puppy's neck and the collar. If you cannot, the collar is too small and a larger size will need to be purchased. A good lead will also be needed when walking the puppy. Many people use a retractable lead to make walking the dog much easier.

4) Purchase an identification tag that can be put on the collar. While this is an excellent way to identify the dog, it is also important to have an easy to read tag in the event that the puppy wanders away or becomes lost. Make sure your phone number and name is on the tag.

5) You will also require any grooming supplies that the dog may need. A shorthaired dog will require a simple brush, comb, or soft cloth, but a long-haired dog will require more grooming, and you may wish to purchase clippers to be able to trim the coat.

6) To keep your Westie puppy busy and entertained when you're not able to play with them, it is important to get some puppy toys. They should be hard plastic and without any parts that can be chewed and swallowed by the dog. Remember, if the puppy has toys to play with they will be less likely to chew on household items. It is generally not a good idea to give the puppy old shoes, socks or similar items; they don't know the difference between your good shoes and their "play" shoe.

We hope you find this information useful. Please remember these are suggestions from our experience raising West Highland Terriers. This is *your dog* and you need to care for and raise him/her as you see fit.



*When hosting the Westminster Dog Show, the late great Roger Caras would say, "When a West Highland White Terrier occupies the same room as you, he will constantly let you know of your good fortune." This is the kindest way to put it. Westies are sure that the universe revolves around them and sometimes, they may be right.*