YOUR NEW WEIMARANER Puppy

HOW TO SURVIVE THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

ANNE TAGUCHI & MEREDITH WADSWORTH
Your New Weimaraner Puppy: How to Survive the First Six Months

by

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and
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About This Ebook

This is not a book about the Weimaraner breed, although it is specific to Weimaraners, Weimaraner puppies to be exact. You can find information about the history and background of the breed as well as general puppy rearing books in many places. This book is a reference for people who are new to Weimaraners or who have owned the breed before, and maybe made mistakes the first time around, and want to “do it right” this time.

With over 25 years in the breed and a dozen Weimaraners between us as well as having raised countless Weimaraner puppies, we have made plenty of mistakes and learned even more tricks. We hope by sharing our knowledge we can help you avoid some of the common pitfalls of puppy-raising and help you turn your pup into the Weimaraner you’ve always dreamed of owning.

A Note About Gender:
We will switch back and forth from “she” to “he” throughout this ebook. We don’t want to leave anyone out!
Acknowledgments:
We would like to thank our mentors (you know who you are!) and everyone who has been instrumental in helping us learn about this incredible breed. We couldn’t have done it without you!

The cover photo is by Tara Weller, who won a JW photo contest to earn her puppy the cover spot! All photos are by the authors unless otherwise noted and used with permission.

Special thanks to SaraRenee Photos & Design and Kim at Trailing Friday for photos, and Midori Thomas for editing.

Specific Questions?
The purchase price of this ebook includes an opportunity to ask us questions. If you have specific questions or something in this ebook is unclear to you, please email us at mailto:weimpuppy@justweimaraners.com. We also encourage any feedback! We update this ebook on a regular basis so please let us know how we can improve.

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Thank you for respecting our hard work!
Goals

Even if you are reading this ebook before you have acquired your puppy, it’s not too soon to begin thinking about your goals for your puppy. When you think of your puppy as an adult dog, what do you picture? Few people think of an overweight dog, bowling over guests, chasing after the mailman, resource guarding inappropriate objects, stealing food and dragging them down the street on their walks. All of these behaviors are normal canine behaviors and your puppy WILL turn into that dog unless you take steps to prevent it.

Don’t want a fat dog? You must limit the type and amount of food you feed your dog as well as making sure that he gets enough exercise.

Hate dogs that jump? You need to stop jumping from day one and only show your puppy attention when he is displaying appropriate behaviors.

Don’t want a dog to guard his toys? Instill confidence in him and be a fair and consistent leader from the beginning.

Want your pup to respect your food instead of stealing it? Teach him how to behave at the table by giving him a “place” command or by crate training.

Don’t like being dragged for a walk? Teach your pup how he should walk on a leash. Make sure that you discuss your goals with your family and anyone who will be around your puppy. Even one family member undermining your teaching can set training back.

Sound like a lot of work? Well, ALL puppies are a lot of work, but Weimaraner puppies are generally even MORE work. They are known to be very mischievous, energetic puppies that you will have to remain one step ahead of. Stories of Weim puppies ruling the roost, destroying the house, earning their owners eviction notices, the horror stories abound. But it doesn’t have to be this way!

Our goal in this ebook is to help you establish patterns and habits of good behavior while your Weim puppy is young, and to share answers to the most common Weim puppy issues -- so that you can survive these challenging first six months!
Weims: Working Dogs with a Working Heritage

There is a good reason Weim puppies are such a handful! They are medium-to-large sized dogs bred to hunt all day. And as far as their athletic prowess, they are not sprinters, they are endurance athletes! Sorry, but try as you might, you cannot wear a Weim out! They were bred to be persistent enough to stay glued to a track for hours or to spend the same amount of time painstakingly “working” in your garden when they don’t have an outlet for their creative minds.

Unlike the hunting dogs at the time, Weims were developed in their home country of Germany to be a family companion, and this created some problems. Their temperament can run the gamut from aloof (but not with “their” people!) to downright clingy. They are often known as the “velcro” dog, and if you’ve owned one, you know what we mean! We’ve found that the males tend to be a bit clingier than the females, but it definitely depends on bloodlines and how they were raised.

The most important thing to understand about your Weim is that she needs to have an outlet for all her hunting-dog senses: her nose, her eyes, and most of all, her brain!

JW link: "What do you mean, Weims are Weird?"
Before You Get Your Puppy

If you’ve owned a Weimaraner before, you know that they have some uncanny abilities: They are mind readers, escape artists, pick-pockets, thieves, high-jumpers, master manipulators, and could break into any safe as long as there was a morsel of food hiding there. They learn by watching and are eerily smart. They aren’t nicknamed “the dog with the human brain” for nothing!

It’s best to be prepared well in advance for bringing such a mischievous breed into your household, but if your Weim came to you on a whim, you’ll still survive; you just need to get a few things in place ASAP.

Rules for Everyone

Decide now what your pup will be allowed to do as an adult, and remain consistent in the messages you send to your puppy. This means all family members must know what the rules are and apply them consistently so that the puppy does not get confused in her training. It far easier to relax rules as your puppy gets older and earns privileges than to spoil the puppy now and then try to change the rules on her later as she gets bigger and some of the “cute” puppy antics become annoying. This is unfair to her and a recipe for disaster and frustration for you.

General good behavior and the disposition that you reward from now on will help cement the canine good citizen she is to be. With realistic expectations for her age, mold her into that dog. Think of it more as conditioning and establishing good habits rather than training per se. Habits established early stick, and the foundation you lay now is what you must rely on to get through upcoming training humps.

If you have children in your household, make sure they understand before the puppy comes home that she must not be tormented or teased. Children must respect the puppy which includes respecting her crate, her food bowl and her toys. Children should never run and scream around puppies. This over stimulates puppies into hyper, biting machines. Always supervise puppies/dogs and children!
“Weim-Proofing” Versus “Puppy-Proofing” Your Home

Take a look around and think about anything that may be considered a tasty snack for your Weim. The TV remote, any books or CDs, and throw pillows should probably be removed from sight. Paper products such as toilet paper and magazines seem to be favorites to shred. Car keys, purses, wallets, shoes, socks, and heck even rocks all make terrific chew toys.

And if you think putting something on top of a countertop or table makes them “safe,” then think again! True story, when remodeling her kitchen, one of our Weim-savvy friends made her custom counters extra deep so she could place food far out of Weim reach. Put any item you don’t want gnawed on behind a locked door—a closet is a good idea. Cabinets need child locks. The kind that latch at the top and open from the inside are the best because they are safe from sharp puppy teeth.

Don’t hang your dishtowels in the handle of the refrigerator or oven—smart Weims will use it as a handle and they’ll clean you out. There is no such thing as a “Weim-proof” trashcan. Put it in under the counter (don’t forget the child proof locks mentioned above!) or get a trash compactor. Go ahead and buy another microwave because the one you have now will be used to store and protect food (you’d be shocked how fast a Weim can suck down a loaf of bread!).

[This trashcan was advertised as "dog proof," obviously not "Weim proof"!]

Get the idea? Normal Weimaraner puppies are inquisitive little heathens that will get into EVERYTHING. You have been warned.
[This puppy de-stuffed an entire sofa in a matter of minutes when her owner wasn’t watching her. 
Oops!]

Backyard Perils for Pup

_Fencing_

As with many other traits, Weims run the gamut when it comes to testing limits—physical and otherwise. Some of them are homebodies, some prefer to be world travelers, but most are somewhere in-between.

Supervise your pup in the backyard. Any digging under the fence, or patrolling the border for “holes” should be discouraged. Respecting boundaries begins with making sure that you enforce things like not allowing your pup to climb out of baby gates or over ex-pens. (Use these things as tools while you are supervising your dog only!)

As an adult, he will be physically capable of climbing a six foot fence without much difficulty. We’ve heard of Weims climbing trees and performing other superhero feats when they put their minds to it. Don’t allow your puppy to jump out of car windows or force the gate open—if he never “knows” that these things are possible, he won’t try them.

One of us spent many years in a house with three Weims that were happily kept in that yard where a whole section was 18” tall garden fencing covered only by some shrubbery. The dogs could have easily leapt over the fence if they had any idea that they could do it. But they were well-exercised and the backyard was simply a place for them to go potty—they never spent a lot of idle time out there. If we had bored Weims with energy to burn, we can guarantee that the situation would have been different!
These adult Weimaraners never tested this five foot fence and therefore don't know they are capable of scaling it.

If you have dogs in adjacent yards, you may come upon another problem with your fencing. Weims are easily dragged into “fence-fighting” or other “fence games” where they can be pulled into confrontations with the dog on the other side, especially if that dog spends a lot of time just hanging out on the other side of the fence and is highly stimulated by your dog.

Try to avoid this issue by putting up privacy fencing to at least eliminate the visual stimulus. Also make sure to go out with your puppy and keep the interactions low-key from the beginning. If you’re on good terms with your neighbor, see if they can bring their dog inside.
[Fencing that allows for visual access can encourage excessive barking and "fence fighting" if there is another dog on the other side.]

Electric fencing is another option, especially for those with large yards where a physical fence becomes cost prohibitive. They may be suitable for a Weimaraner, but there are few things to keep in mind before going this route. While electric fencing can generally keep your Weim in your yard, it will not keep other things out. As hunting dogs, your Weim may be tempted to chase critters out your yard. A highly stimulated dog may run through the shock of the collar and break the barrier to chase. Be sure to train your Weimaraner per the manufacturer's instructions.

So regardless of what kind of fencing you choose, how you train your dog to deal with fencing is the more important point, in addition to limiting the time your Weim spends in the yard alone left to his own devices. A bored Weim is your worst enemy here!

**Landscaping**

Any conscientious dog owner knows (or should know!) that owning dogs presents some landscaping challenges. Puppies put everything in their mouths and Weim puppies in particular have some peculiar dietary preferences (see Pica section). You should understand that you Weim will likely wipe out all the vegetation surrounding the perimeter of your yard—they like to patrol their yard. Go ahead and get rid of anything fancy that you have planted there before you get your new puppy!

Your Weim pup will come preprogrammed to love eating mulch, rocks, and sticks. Some of them seem almost fanatical about this, begging to go outside. Keep a tight leash on this habit and make
sure that they know “leave it” very well. We think that this command is one of the most important commands that your new puppy can learn! This habit seems to be very self-rewarding, so nipping it in the bud before they get really into it seems to be the best plan. Make sure your pup is actually eating rocks or sticks, not just carrying them around before you get too worried, though. Lots of Weims just love to “chip” up sticks and never actually eat them.

[Weimaraner puppies seem to be particularly fond of eating sticks. Another reason to supervise your Weim puppy in the yard, this is a habit that can persist into adulthood if left unchecked!]

Photo courtesy of Janet Taylor

Poisonous Plants
Some plants and bushes are poisonous to your pup. That being said, it usually takes quite a few trips to the salad bar to cause any harm. Check out this list of toxic plants that should be removed from your yard before your new pup comes home OR removed if your pup is showing them any interest.

If you are concerned that your pup may have gotten into too much greenery, please contact your vet or the ASPCA Pet Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435 (24 hours!).
Clear your yard of poisonous plants before your new puppy comes home. If you have an older dog that has some bad habits, think about separating your puppy from him, your Weim puppy will learn by watching!
Your Puppy's First Days at Home

This stage is what we think of as the “getting to know you” stage and is exhausting, exhilarating, and one of the most important times for bonding with your Weimaraner puppy. Training a puppy all depends on your frame of mind and your expectations, and we understand that many of you are coming into this from different perspectives, from the “Wow, what a cute puppy!” purchase, to the well-planned-out and researched puppy from the reputable breeder. And everything in between.

Regardless of which one of these you are, there are a few things that need to become your mantras:

- There are no bad puppies.
- Patience and consistency train a puppy.
- My puppy only “misbehaves” because she doesn’t know what I expect from her.

You will see these themes again!

Most people bring home their puppy sometime around eight weeks old. At this age, your puppy will be fully weaned. Her teeth will be settling into her jaw and she will explore everything with her mouth. Nothing is safe!

Weimaraner puppies at this age have brilliant blue eyes, and they generally will begin to change to a darker blue, and often to a blue-gray or amber color. By 12 weeks this change will be evident, although the eyes of many Weimaraners continue to change well into adulthood. Your puppy’s vision as well as hearing will be as acute as an adult at this age. She will continue to develop strength and coordination throughout his puppyhood, and it is often tough to think of this goofy, big-footed puppy maturing into a lean, athletic hunting dog.

Introducing Puppy to Her New Home and Family

Try to come home early in the day if possible and keep this day fairly low-key. This can be a traumatic time for your puppy, so make the transition smooth and calm.

Your puppy should be allowed to explore without being forced into anything. She should be introduced to everyone in your immediately family, but avoid letting too many visitors come see your new puppy on the first day—many puppies do perfectly fine with sensory overload but some of them really can’t handle it.

Your puppy may have some soft stools in the first few days from the stress of travelling. This does not mean she is sick, and as long as she seems normal in other ways, is nothing to worry about.
Also expect her to be a bit hesitant or “off” after she has had such a big change! Some pups are clingy, some are spooky, and some take it in stride. Expect for it to take a few days before your pup settles in and her personality comes out.

[Keep your puppy's first days home fairly low-key.]

Photo courtesy of Kim Burnell

If your puppy came from a pet-shop…
Expect a little more trouble with housetraining and socializing. This puppy will likely be more dog-oriented and while she has probably been handled by lots of people and has received plenty of attention, but she probably has very few manners with no one teaching her how to be a good canine citizen as an adult. Bad habits like biting and jumping may have been rewarded. She will be used to soiling her sleeping area, so keep this in mind and be diligent about keeping her crate clean. She will likely be used to being away from people, but will vocalize when left alone from other dogs, so if you do have another dog, it might be helpful to let your new pup sleep next to your current dog for the first few night, maybe put their crates next to each other.

If your puppy was living in a breeder’s home…
You have the ideal situation! This puppy has likely gotten one-on-one attention and may have a big
head start on life. Their experience will vary widely, but many will be conditioned to crates, used to using the yard to potty, and they will often know beginning obedience commands.

**If your puppy was living outside or in a kennel run...**
Your pup is probably a blank slate. This can be a good situation too, and also varies widely from breeder to breeder. If the puppy received lots of one-on-one time and simply spent time in a kennel run, this is much different from a puppy who was never allowed to come inside or got very little human contact. The pup in the second group may be a little skittish. Time will tell which type of puppy you have, but don’t make a judgment in the first two weeks.

**If your puppy just got off an airplane...**
This has been a stressful event for your pup, so keep that in mind. If the flight was more than a few hours, bring a change of blankets to put in the crate, since the ones she has will likely be soiled. Remember a very young puppy just can’t hold it for long! Bring scissors in case the crate is zip tied so you can get your pup out right away for a potty break after he lands. Keep everything relaxed for the first day, and please be sure to notify your breeder that your puppy made it safely to the ground!

**The Initial Vet Visit**
Your puppy should be taken to the vet within a week or two of coming home from her breeder. Some breeders request that you take your pup to a vet within a specified time period according to their health contract or warranty.

Ask your breeder when your pup got his first set of shots to determine when the next set should be given. Under no circumstances should you vaccinate your puppy any closer than three weeks after her first set of shots. This can cause life threatening vaccine reactions in Weimaraners in both the immediate and long term and may also void your breeder’s health contract. If your vet pushes you to vaccinate—find another vet.

Bordetella intranasal vaccine is controversial, but most dogs do not have reactions and it is almost always required for your puppy to enter puppy classes or attend doggie daycare or be boarded. Most experts recommend scheduling the bordetella vaccine on a separate trip from your pup’s other
vaccines. Do not allow your vet to give your young puppy a rabies vaccine at the same time as the other vaccines, and delay this vaccine until you must per local ordinances.

You should also start your puppy on flea and tick preventative, heartworm preventative, and have her dewormed again. However, as mentioned above, deworming should also not be done in conjunction with vaccination if not recommended by your breeder. It is quite common for puppies to have worms, although a heavy worm burden or a puppy who looks outwardly sick is abnormal and needs further investigation.

**Her Mind and Your Mindset**

One of the most important things to remember with a brand new puppy is that he doesn’t “know” anything yet. A puppy that has been raised properly is capable of learning as an adult would, except that she has no experiences to draw on and her attention span is frustratingly short! Keep this in mind as you interact with her, and remember that every interaction you have with her is a learning ("training") experience.

While her capacity for learning is quite mature, she still needs your guidance, a lot of it. She is still behaviorally a baby with a clean slate. Your job is to teach her what your expectations are of her in her new home and to create situations for her to succeed. Tell her how great she is when she does things right and prevent her from making poor choices. Praise, praise, praise!

**Puppy Love: Teach Her That You Will Keep Her Safe**

[Even tough guys love to cuddle pups!]
This is the easiest job of all! Love on your pup, cuddle her as often as possible, and show her that she is safe in her new home. Spend plenty of time letting her explore and don't try anything traumatic in the first week. All of your friends and relatives likely want to meet her, but depending on her temperament this may or may not be a good idea in the first week. Just let her settle in.

By puppy proofing your home and having the prevention mindset, you will not be telling your puppy "NO" very often. Nagging "no's" are not conducive to the puppy feeling that her new home is warm and caring. Do not allow your home to become a maze of guessing of what might get her trouble; always keep things positive so that your new pup learns to trust you.

JW link: "My No Game"
Tasks for the New Puppy Parent

There are a few things that you need to begin teaching your puppy as soon as she comes home. Depending on where your puppy came from she may be an easygoing natural when it comes to new things, or she may have had no exposure at all. As we stated before, it is essential that you go at your pup’s pace when it comes to socialization and training.

Name That Pup!

The first week is when you will begin teaching your pup his name. This requires lots of tasty treats and a leash. Depending on how much he likes food, you can also use his kibble. Grab a whole handful of treats and get ready for rapid-fire handouts!

Put pup on leash and say “Fido!” in a happy voice. As soon as he looks your way, give him a treat. After a few sessions, you want him looking at your face before you give him a treat. Do this at least 10-12 times per session, but quit while he’s way into the “game.” He’ll think it’s the easiest way to get treats ever! Your goal is to say “Fido!” and have him running into the room to get his treat.

Remember that your puppy’s name should always be associated with good things!

After your pup knows his name, you will turn this command into the “watch me!” command, which is one of the most valuable commands your dog can have. It is about focus on you, control, and can guide you through any reactivity issues you may have down the road. When the command is “watch me!” you want Fido giving you eye contact and holding it. You can do this with a tiny puppy but normally we will only ask for a second or two of eye contact. With an older puppy you can ask for longer before giving a treat. For “watch me!” we often use higher value treats.

[Start the "watch me" command when he’s a little puppy.]

Photo courtesy of Kim Burnell
What Do We Mean by “High Value” Treats?

Often in dog training circles you will hear people talk about “high value” versus “low value” treats. You might also hear the term “jackpot” in reference to training. These terms mean exactly what they sound like! The trick is finding what works—and what doesn’t work—for your dog.

Some dogs may work really hard for their usual kibble. But watch what happens when you up-the-ante to hotdogs, cat treats, or cooked chicken with garlic powder sprinkled on it! Those are examples of “low value” versus “high value” rewards. You can also use toys or things like walks to your advantage.

Feeding Your New Puppy

Your puppy may have come home with puppy food. You may or may not have an opinion about this brand, or like so many, you may be confused as to what is the "best" food to feed your puppy. Ultimately, the best food for your puppy is the brand that works for her.

You are looking for:

- Overall impression of good health
- Bright eyes, shiny coat, energetic
- Solid stools

Your puppy may also be on adult food rather than puppy food. Some breeders do not feed puppy formulas at all, or they switch to an adult formula as early as 10 weeks old.

Be sure to read labels carefully, especially with large breed puppy formulas. Some puppy foods, especially those marketed towards large-breed puppies, change the ratio of fat to protein and carbohydrates in order to reduce calories. While lower calories in general slow growth which is important for a large-medium breed like the Weimaraner, the more logical way to reduce calories is to feed less of a healthy well-balanced diet.

Grain-free foods have higher protein levels to bring the caloric levels to where they need to be. Recent studies have shown that high protein diets (in excess of 30%) in dogs are not detrimental. (In this litigious society, manufacturers would not be making such foods if they were dangerous!)
Your puppy may hungrily attack his food or seem mildly put off by it in the first week. You should be feeding three times a day at least for the first few weeks your puppy is home. It is sometimes helpful to moisten your puppy’s food with warm water or add some yogurt or broth. Whatever you do, don’t coddle your puppy. Give him a few minutes to eat and if he won’t, pick his food up and try again later. Picky eaters are made, not born! Weimaraners are notorious food hogs, so if yours isn’t eating, something isn’t right or your pup is playing you. Don’t make a picky eater!

Some puppies will vomit a small amount of bile early in the morning. Nobody knows what exactly causes this—some propose it is hunger and others think it may be related to a vaccine reaction. It seems to help if you feed your pup his last meal of the day or a small snack about an hour before bedtime. Some over the counter medications can also be given, but check with your vet before giving anything to a young puppy.

At some point your puppy may start refusing one of his meals. When he does this, it is time to drop your pup to two meals daily. Otherwise, drop to two meals sometime between four and five months old.

Piggy puppies that inhale their food are quite common with Weims. Put a big rock or heavy chain or something in her bowl so she has to eat around it.

**Skinny Puppy: No Roly Polies Please**

Puppies have high caloric needs, but this does not mean that feeding more is better. The amount of food you feed should NOT be determined by how hungry she acts. (Remember how we said that Weimaraners are master manipulators?) Nor can you judge by cups of food; the recommended feeding guidelines on the bag are just that, guidelines. Your pup may need more or less. Some dogs have higher metabolisms than others. Some foods are digested better than others.

Look at her from the top looking down at her back--do you see a waist? Feel her side--can you EASILY feel her ribs while LIGHTLY running your hand down her side? You should! It’s essential for a dog, especially a puppy to be at the correct weight, which may look skinnier than your image of what a puppy should look like.
**What is Correct Weight?**

Weims should be sleek, with ribs easily visible and muscles strong and lean. There should not be a “belly” when your puppy is sitting, and no “dimple” at the base of the tail. Spine and hips may be easy to see or feel during some phases of growth, and this is fine -- give your pup a week and he’ll probably grow out of it.

Overweight puppies are commonplace as people think they should be pudgy but all it is doing is putting excess weight on their growing joints. Overfeeding causes rapid growth and development, and in puppies this is bad! Slow and steady is the healthiest way for a Weimaraner to grow as it keeps excessive pressure off their joints. It is also associated rapid growth and excess weight has been implicated in Panosteitis (Pano) and Hypertrophic Osteodystrophy (HOD), HOD in particular being well represented in Weimaraners.

If you have concerns, remember that it is much better for your puppy to be a bit underweight when he is growing than to even be a few pounds overweight.

JW link: "Weimaraners and HOD"

[You can see the ribs of this 9 week old puppy who is at an optimal weight.]
No Free Feeding
We strongly recommend against free feeding. Weims aren't cats, they're dogs. They're hunting dogs at that, and it's their instinct to want to eat all the food, and eat it now (or risk not eating later). It's the way they are programmed!

Free feeding is also dangerous health wise with multiple dogs because going off their feed is one of the first signs that something is majorly wrong. If you let them have free access to food then you're giving up that indicator. So there's food left, but who isn't eating? Or a more likely scenario: You don't notice that one isn't eating until you notice the other one getting fat!

You're also giving up a powerful motivator and training tool. If you have a puppy with loads of food drive, then you have a tool that you can use to train her. We use their food for crate training, for teaching stay, and sit in the beginning.

And, if you teach her that SHE is in control of her eating schedule, then you've put her a notch above you. We've already mentioned that Weimaraners are manipulative, right? YOU need to control the food -- when she gets it, how much she gets, and what she'll do to deserve it.
**Switching Puppy Foods**

Your pup may have soft stools or maybe you just want your pup on something a little better. Or maybe you are noticing some itching or dull coat and want to see if the food is the culprit. Whatever the reason, switching foods is usually pretty painless if done sensibly.

Regardless of how bad your puppy’s diet is when she comes home from the breeder, you need to keep her on that same food for at least ten days to two weeks. Leaving her mother and littermates is pretty stressful, so adding a dietary change to the mix can spell disaster—and diarrhea. It is best to make a food change slowly, over a few weeks. You can follow the guidelines below and be pretty sure that you are doing it right:

1. Week 1: ¼ “new” food mixed with ¾ “old” food
2. Following week 1, 4-5 days of ½ and ½ of “new” and “old” food
3. 4-5 days of ¼ “old” food and ¾ “new” food

If you notice loose or frequent stools or gassiness, back off a bit. You’re either switching too fast, or the food doesn’t agree with her sensitive puppy belly. If you are switching foods around the time that your pup is being vaccinated, this can also cause loose stools, so give it some time. Dietary indiscretion (eating sand, dirt, or other inedibles) can also cause loose stools.

After switching completely, give your dog at least two to three weeks before making a judgment about the food.

**Permanent Identification**

We personally feel that a tattoo or microchip, along with an ID collar is the best way to permanently identify your dog. The problem with a hanging ID tag is that they can, and do, come off your dog’s collar. A better option is a brass nameplate riveted to your pup’s collar with REWARD and your phone number listed.

Collars can be broken or removed and the only surefire way to ensure that you get your dog back is to register his microchip or tattoo. That way if your pup turns up at the shelter, you have proof that this is indeed your dog. Otherwise, someone else could claim him, he could be put to sleep or end up in Rescue!

[We recommend collars with riveted name plates that cannot be snagged or chewed off.]
Housebreaking: Where She Can and Can’t Go Potty

Most Weimaraner puppies are naturally clean animals. There are some exceptions to this and poor early training can contribute to the problem, but for the most part Weims don’t like to make a mess where they sleep, although not always. We once owned a Weim puppy who came from a really great breeder. She was raised in someone’s home and had a great start. This puppy actually seemed to ENJOY peeing on herself in the crate! After a few months where we tried every trick in the book and a good medical work-up, we just determined that she was one of those pups that wasn’t particularly concerned about being clean. Although not common in the breed, it does happen!

[This puppy lived on a third floor apartment while being housetrained. You can see how proud she was that she made it all the way to the bottom!]

The best thing you can do to help your puppy out is to learn about her “potty habits” and shape them to your routine. Limit the space available to your pup from the beginning. If you have a kitchen and living room area that can be closed off by doors, do this from the beginning. If you don’t, perhaps purchase a baby gate or exercise pen to limit your puppy’s range.
You can also “tether” your puppy to you with a leash to make sure that she isn’t out of sight doing something she shouldn’t. This isn’t usually necessary in that first week, though, as most Weim pups won’t want to leave your side!

[Tethering is also called “umbilical cord training.” Tethering helps with potty training, bonding and with overall training success. It forces your puppy to pay attention to you, and vice versa!]

Photos courtesy of Lindsay Sheppard

After you’ve mapped out your puppy “safe zone,” you’ll need to think about your new puppy’s routine. A Weim puppy is a baby and has limited control over her bowels and bladder. In the best case scenario, you will have obtained your pup from a breeder who has begun the housebreaking
process and your pup already prefers to potty outside. Usually you can tell who these pups are because they start getting antsy and looking for a door when they "gotta go!"

Regardless of where you got your puppy, you can start this process at home and easily teach your pup house manners. The times when your puppy will definitely need to go outside:

- Immediately when she wakes up
- Immediately after eating
- Every hour when awake

When you know these three facts, you can prevent your puppy from peeing or pooping in your house. And the keys to successfully housebreaking a pup are preventing bad behavior, rewarding good behavior, and catching them in the act. This is where crate training comes in.

**Crate Training: Her Crate is A Safe Place**

**Why Crate Train?**

There are really no negatives to crate-training your new puppy unless you have negative feelings about it. And these often come from lack of education about what a crate is—and what it isn’t. A crate is not a “cage” nor is it an unpleasant place for your puppy. Dogs are naturally den animals and you only have to take a look at how they sleep to see that they like tight quarters.

When dogs are properly crate-trained as puppies, they enjoy having their own place and often will use their crate as a respite when they are stressed or tired. A crate is a terrific tool for housebreaking, as puppies who are raised in clean conditions prefer not to use the bathroom in the same place that they sleep so they will “hold it” as long as their bladders will allow. The same does not apply for a puppy who is allowed free access to your expensive oriental rug!

Purchase a crate that is the appropriate size. A 22” tall crate will work perfectly for the first month or two. We recommend buying two crates: one for the first few months while pup is growing, and another as your dog’s “grown-up” crate. We transport our dogs in 36” long [Vari-Kennel size Large] plastic airline type crates, and have 42” long crates for their “house” crates. Most Weimaraners curl up into a tiny ball in their crate and don’t need a lot of room. There are also a few crates on the market that are designed to grow with your dog, but we haven’t used these as of yet. Some people have cut a piece of plywood and used it as a divider in a larger crate—this may be a good option if you are the handy type.

We like to cover wire crates with a blanket, and prefer to use some sort of device to fasten the blanket to the crate (hardware clamps or zip-ties) so pup can’t pull it into the crate with her. You can put a towel or fleece blanket in the crate with your pup, but remember that anything you put in her crate will likely get wet and needs to be readily washable! We like fleece because it doesn’t
shred as easily as a towel might. If your pup is shredding her bedding, remove it immediately! Your puppy could ingest a piece and end up very sick or even die from this.

Think about where you’ll put your crate. Some people pick one spot for their crate and stick to it, but we’ve found that dogs seem to adapt better when they are accustomed to their crate being in different places. A young dog’s life is all about socialization and that includes having her “home” in different spots.

Many people begin to trust their Weim puppy to behave out of his crate around seven months. He is reliably housebroken, so why not? There are dozens of reasons, and you need to really examine your mindset. Crates keep puppies safe. Period. Imagine how bad you would feel if you came home from work and found that your puppy ate a bottle of pills. Besides the expense of a trip (and possibly an extended stay) to the emergency vet, your pup could die. All because you felt like he was mature enough to handle himself while you were away. That’s an awful lot of responsibility to put on a baby puppy! We crate all of our dogs, puppies or not, while we are gone. This gives us peace of mind in knowing that our dogs are safe and can’t hurt anything or themselves while we’re away. The decision is up to you. Some dogs handle it fine, others do not. We feel that it’s not worth the risk to leave a Weimaraner unattended.

**Crate Training Made Easy**

**Day 1**: Try to bring pup home early in the day. Your breeder may give you a toy or piece of blanket that smells like your puppy’s mom and littermates. This will go into the crate with your puppy and help ease the transition. Some people will also put a piece of their own clothing in the crate with the puppy in the beginning—an old T-shirt or pillowcase works well.

We like to put the crate in the kitchen or living room in a corner for the first few days, and give pup a tasty treat multiple times a day for going in. When pup looks tired and is ready for a nap, carry her to the crate, and put her in it. Don’t shut the door. If she gets up and walks out, that’s fine. If she curls up and goes to sleep, even better! For the first few months we feed pup in her crate. We also hide treats randomly in the crate so pup gets spontaneous rewards for going in her crate.

You can get your kids involved in the “game” of teaching your dog the “kennel” command. Toss a really high value treat (chicken, hamburger, hotdog, cheese, etc.) into the crate and say “kennel” in a happy voice. Weims are smart—watch how fast she goes running! Eventually you’ll be able to say “kennel” and she’ll run in before you toss a treat. Give her the treat once she goes into the crate. You’ll work on getting her to go in for longer and longer periods.

This is a fine game, you say, but what about at night? Your pup does great going into her crate for a treat, but screams like she’s being murdered at night! We know...we’re getting to it!
The first few nights we always put the crate in our bedrooms and we do this for a few reasons. First, your new puppy wants to be near you and it is an important part of the bonding process. Imagine going from a nice warm pile of puppies to a cold new place all by yourself. Scary! Your puppy will feel much more comfortable knowing that you are near; where she can hear your breathing and smell your scent.

Another important reason is that it teaches your puppy that you will respond to her subtle signs (whimpers, scratching at the door, being restless) when she needs to go potty, rather than teaching her that she needs to produce a cacophony of wails, screams, and howls from another room to get your attention.

For puppies that have never been in a crate before, it is often helpful to have them within an arm’s reach by the bed, so you can reach a finger into the crate when they get restless to comfort them. This is all new to them! While we do not want to give in right from the beginning, we do need to remember that they are baby puppies and give them a bit of leeway in the first week.

The first night you may want to set your alarm for every four to five hours to get up and take pup out. Might as well be proactive about it, since pup will wake you up anyway! Use this knowledge to your advantage.

**Week 1**: We all go through the trials and tribulations of crate training. Two things are important to remember:

1. Holding your ground now will pay dividends later.
2. When your puppy howls and pitches a fit she isn’t upset about being in the crate, she’s upset about being away from you.

At night, your puppy will wake you up to go potty. It’s just physiology; she can’t hold it all night yet. When she does start scratching and yapping, calmly put her leash on, take her outside, and say “go potty.” When she does her business, praise her and bring her back inside and put her back into her crate.

It may not be of benefit to give her a treat for going potty at night, as it might encourage her to try to go out again just for the treat. (Remember: smart!) Rather, you may want to give her a treat as she goes back into her crate after you give her the “kennel” command. During the day, we do like to give her a cookie for going potty. Make sure she goes out on leash so you can control her and remind her that 3 a.m. is not play time!

If you have not brought your puppy home yet, we will warn you: your puppy will scream, howl, and carry on. How long they do this every night depends on many things, but they will all do it!
Week 2: You should be noticing that your pup is sleeping longer and putting up less of a fight at night. Keep crating your puppy while you are home and remain proactive in your crate training. Stage multiple comings and goings throughout the day. Put pup in her crate, pick up your keys, and walk out the door. Come back in immediately, say nothing, and let pup out. Business as usual. Don’t let pup out of the crate (or make eye contact) until she is quiet.

We play crate games where we will throw treats and toys into the crate many times a day, tell pup “kennel” and toss a treat in. By the end of the first week we will toss a treat in, say “kennel,” and shut the door briefly. This game will eventually turn into a game where we use the crate to teach the dog to “wait” before bolting out of the crate.

Week 3: Continue to keep comings and goings very low key. You may want to try crating your puppy at someone else’s house while you visit. Your eventual goal is that your pup’s crate = safe place. Regardless of where you put the crate!

[Puppies naturally feel safe the den-like atmosphere of crates. Make it as comfortable as possible and ease them into training.]

Photo courtesy of Corrine Renner
Crate Training Tips

• Give your pup a special toy every time they go into their crate. We like kongs stuffed with peanut butter, EZ Cheese, or frozen broth. You can also put peanut butter and kibble or freeze a concoction of your choosing in the kong.

• Make sure to give your puppy lots of opportunity to be in her crate while you’re home. You don’t want her to begin associating crate time with you always leaving her. Put her in her crate many times during the day, both with the door closed and with the door open.

• NEVER let your puppy out of the crate while she’s pitching a fit. Better yet don’t even look at or acknowledge her while she’s being bad. Even if you need to tell her —quiet! and reward that with a cookie before letting her out!

• It may be helpful to let your puppy get used to being in her crate while you’re cooking dinner, watching TV, quietly reading, or sitting at your desk. This is all part of teaching your Weim puppy how to control herself and is super important as she gets older.

• Whether your crate is wire or plastic does not matter. They both have pros and cons. We’ve never seen a dog that just hated one type of crate versus another—but we have seen dogs who were improperly crate trained to begin with!

• Make sure your dog is used to her crate being in different locations. You can start this in the beginning by moving her crate or by having multiple crates in your home.

• If your dog is eliminating in her crate, make sure to pick up her water well before bedtime and take her out immediately before going to bed. Most Weimaraners are very neat dogs and will not soil their beds unless they absolutely have to.

• Your dog does not need a huge crate even as an adult. A 36” long crate for most females is adequate and a 42” long crate for most males will work. For their puppy crate 18-20” tall should work well for a few months.

• After a few weeks home and your dog is used to her crate, try going on a “field trip” to a friend’s house and putting the crate there. If your dog does fine, why not try an overnight crate adventure? You want your dog to realize that her crate is “home” wherever it might be!

• Never force your dog to go into a crate. If she balks at it, try a yummy treat. It should always be positive!

• The crate should never be used as a punishment. However, you can use a crate as a “time out” for an unruly puppy. The difference is in your attitude. You may calmly bring your dog over to the crate and ask her to “kennel.” Hopefully she will settle down and have a better attitude when she comes back out!

Ex-Pens

An “ex-pen” or exercise pen is a collapsible metal or plastic enclosure that is made of multiple panels so that it can be shaped to fit your space. It is a great tool to use in conjunction with your puppy’s crate to help them learned to be confined as well as an aid in housetraining. If your puppy is already hesitant to soil his crate—that’s great! You can add an ex-pen as an extension of your
puppy’s crate (under supervision at first) and teach your pup that the ex-pen is also an area that she needs to keep clean.

Ex-pens are also great for creating a safe puppy zone in your home while you fold laundry, cook dinner, or take a shower. Instead of following your pup from room to room and prying things out of her mouth, why not plop her in her ex-pen with a cozy blankie and her favorite toys. Best of all, you can help your pup learn to quietly entertain herself while you visit with friends or watch a movie. What a great tool!

[These puppies are learning to wait patiently in an ex-pen for their turn while still with their breeder]

**Socialization: Plain and Simple**

This is especially important for very young puppies (under five months) as they are in a very special window called the “critical period of socialization.” This occurs in the first 16 weeks or so of your dog’s life, and is a time where they form their view of themselves and their world. They learn socialization skills and how to interact with people. Time missed during this period cannot easily be made up.

**Why is It Important and What Does It Really Mean?**

The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior has recently released a statement saying that smart early socialization is more important than making sure that your puppy has received their
second round of shots! In other words, it is more likely that a dog who lacks proper socialization skills will be euthanized or given up later in life for behavioral issues than it is for a puppy to contract any of the diseases that they are not yet fully vaccinated against.

The risks of behavioral problems caused by improper socialization far outweigh the risk of contracting a disease in the first three months for a normal puppy. We recommend that you be smart about socializing your puppy: do not go to the dog park before your puppy's second round of vaccines, don't go to the pet store or similar places where unknown dogs hang out, and make sure that your puppy socializes with healthy, vaccinated dogs. Otherwise, get your pup out in the field, in the woods, and out to meet as many people and dogs as you can!

Socialization is even more important for Weimaraners than many other breeds. They were a breed developed to be strongly devoted to their families, and as such, they have very strong ties to home and family. Weimaraner temperaments vary depending on their lineage, but a Weim should never be high strung, spooky, aggressive, overly submissive, or extremely fearful of strangers or new situations. In fact, the “ideal” Weimaraner should be “friendly, fearless, alert, and obedient.”

Depending on the socialization your puppy received from his breeder and also his innate temperament, you will see a variety of things from a 7-8 week old puppy when he first comes home. For the first few days socialization should be with you, your family, and your home. This job will be easy or somewhat difficult depending on what the breeder has or has not done already.
[Socialization with children while with the breeder. Socialization is very important! It starts early.....]

[... and should continue extensively when your puppy comes home until 16 weeks old, and throughout her life.]
Touch her feet, rub her ears, see if there is anything that bothers her. Is she nervous about high places, dark places, children, loud noises or other dogs?

Most Weimaraner puppies are fairly outgoing, friendly but cautious, and a bit clingy. They may vocalize when their new person is out of sight and it is quite common for them to just plop down and refuse to move on their first walk. They may sleep a lot or seem fairly calm as they adjust to life without littermates. This generally lasts only a day or so before their true personality emerges.

If your puppy seems extremely fearful, cowers, constantly vocalizes, is lethargic, or otherwise seems "off," contact you breeder immediately. These are not normal behaviors for a puppy and require some follow-up.

Allow her to investigate and encourage "brave" behavior. Make sure your pup meets as many people as possible—old people, young people, children, people in stores, people in wheelchairs, on bikes and riding skateboards. You literally cannot expose your puppy to too much—and all this work now will pay dividends later when your little guy becomes a well-adjusted adult. Make sure that your puppy is comfortable on different floor and ground surfaces both inside and out. Take your pup for car rides. Integrate her into your life!

[Any new experience counts as socialization. The more new experiences the better!]
If your puppy is destined to be a hunting dog, make sure to expose him to birds during this stage, preferably not during a fear period. Let your pup climb things, put things in his mouth, carry things, play fetch, run in different fields and on different surfaces, and ride in the car. Safe and fun exposures to water are also great at this time.

[All this fun is a part of socialization!]

Your pup will likely follow you everywhere at this point, but make sure to introduce him to the feel of wearing a leash and make it a pleasant experience for him. If you teach him how to walk on a leash at this age using treats and positive reinforcement, he will likely always be well behaved on a leash. Same applies for coming when called.

My Puppy’s a Wimp!
Keep in mind that there are a few major fear periods that pups go through from 8-12 weeks and even the boldest puppy in a litter will get spooked at some point when they go to a new home. Just be patient and if a knowledgeable breeder promised that your puppy is outgoing and mellow then you need to trust that this personality will emerge.

Based on their innate temperament, some puppies need more work than others and socialization will need to be an even more active process that may require you to seek out certain types of people or situations to give the pup the breadth of experiences she needs.
While you might think, "more is better" and this is generally true, don't force and push the situation with your puppy if she is uncomfortable with something new you are introducing. Let her approach at her pace and always make sure the experience is safe and positive. This will probably involve lots of treats but not necessarily.

On the same token, do not coddle her when she's fearful. Your reaction to her fear may be reinforcing her behavior. Your Weimaraner puppy is wired to take in new things at this age, take it at her pace, but get her out there!

**Puppy Biting and Mouthing**

The gnashing of puppy teeth...we all have not-so-fond memories of those needle-sharp teeth and maybe a few scratches to prove it, but it’s an essential part of having a new pup. Puppies explore with their mouths, and they learn bite inhibition by play biting. Your puppy started getting his baby teeth around two weeks of age, and those teeth will be completely in by around nine to 12 weeks of age. At this age, their teeth are sharp but their jaws are weak, and so the bitier the puppy is, the more feedback they receive, and the better their bite inhibition as they grow older.
These lessons start with their mom and littermates. If you have the opportunity to observe puppies playing with their littermates, you may see one get wound up and bite their littermate or even mom too hard in play. The reaction can range from a screech to outright discipline from mom. Either way, this is the type of feedback ("OUCH!" and stop play) is the type of communication you need to give your Weim puppy to teach him that human skin is sensitive.

Ian Dunbar teaches bite inhibition in four stages. In the first step, you say "OUCH!" and settle the puppy down to teach no pain. Next, you work on decreasing the frequency of biting by teaching the puppy no pressure. The third step is to teach "off" or to stop biting. And finally, the puppy must learn that he cannot initiate biting.

JW Link: "Why I Love Puppies that Bite"

**Everything Goes in Her Mouth! or, You Have a Weimaraner Puppy**

While inhibiting you puppy's bite is crucial, you also have to teach them what toys are appropriate to chew on. All puppies explore with their mouths and they will not hesitate to try a taste of anything! Obviously this can present some pretty dangerous situations. Prevention is key, but if
your puppy manages to find something that you thought she would never find and chew, you are not alone! Teething puppies don’t really care what they chew on—they just need to chew!

![Image of Weim puppy stealing a shoe]

*[It only takes seconds for your Weim puppy to steal your shoe!]*

*Photo courtesy of Janet Taylor*

When you cannot watch your puppy, he really should be in a crate, but in those instances when he manages to sneak away and chew, he will usually find that one thing he has a special affinity towards. Bitter Apple will prevent some Weims from chewing, but there is always that oddball that actually thinks it’s tasty! You can make your own type of spray by using a base of vinegar and adding lemon juice, mouthwash and/or cayenne.

We like to teach our puppies a little game that encourages them to “trade” the item they stole for a treat or puppy-approved toy. When we have a puppy in the house, we try to keep treats accessible at all times so we can reward pup at the right time. When you see that your puppy has your sock (or favorite shoe, or underwear, or...) say “what did you get?” or whatever phrase you will use. Then run away from your pup, grab a treat, and trade your treat for whatever unapproved item your pup was chomping on.
You can also try teasing him with a toy and throwing it to see if he will abandon the item he was chewing in favor of the toy. We try to make it a game; do not let this turn into a tug game or struggle over the item. Sometimes the trade game won't work and your pup will have a stranglehold on the item. In these cases, we will gently use your other hand and push her cheeks (from the outside) between her teeth and exert a little bit of pressure to get her to release.

[Hey pup, I'll trade ya!]

**Hoarding**

Most Weimaraners love to carry things. This could be the behavior that precedes sitting down with the item and chewing it up. Never punish your pup for carrying or picking up as it could affect his retrieving training later. Simply play the trade game and praise her for giving.

Weims will also carry things in order to hoard them. We’ve found over the years that Weims tend to be collectors. They collect bones, shoes, socks, underwear, toys, silverware and anything else they can get their grubby thieving paws on! They will often hoard things in their dog bed or crate. This is not really a problem, but more of a peculiarity to the breed.

Hoarding usually does not require intervention unless they are destroying your things or stealing things that are dangerous. All you can do is laugh at this one!
Pica

Pica by definition is the ingestion of non-edible items. Pretty much all gundog breeds try to put everything in their mouths. As we’ve mentioned before, this is a good thing! However, many Weim puppies tend to crave non-edible items including paper products, mulch, sticks, and rocks.

Nobody knows why some puppies have pica, but generally this behavior diminishes at around six months when their adult teeth come in. But it may not disappear if you don’t manage it well. Make sure your pup has plenty of appropriate toys available to him and she is supervised at all times.

Eating grass is a normal thing for dogs, so is not included as pica. If you feel that your pup may have an unusual obsession with non-edible things (i.e., he is begging to go out to eat mulch!) wait until his adult teeth come in, then consult a behaviorist if the behavior persists.
[Oscar in front of his collection of rocks. Oscar was diagnosed with pica. This photo is part of a series of photos that the owner used to document his behavior for her veterinarian. Pica can be managed to a point, but can often be a lifelong struggle.]

Photo courtesy of Katie Wibben
Manners and More

He’s a wild one!

Well, maybe not yet. Your puppy may be the most well-behaved puppy in the world, and that’s great! But depending on your pup’s temperament, you may be starting to see glimpses of an impending rebellion around three to four months of age. Usually this little stage is short-lived and coincides with the emergence of the first adult teeth and also some bratty behavior. Knowing what’s to come, we better teach that pup some manners—and quick!

Leadership (not Dominance)

Dominance—what a dirty word! A word that often gets thrown around in doggie circles and quite frankly often misused. As a new puppy owner, you need to understand that your puppy doesn’t see you as a pack leader. He knows he’s a dog and you’re a person and there is no “pack” between species.

Dominance is a highly fluid state and always changing. This doesn’t mean your dog doesn’t understand your position of leadership or that he won’t try to challenge your leadership at times. Unless you have an oddball, your Weimaraner will at some point challenge you. Usually around 5-6 months your “perfect puppy” will start to disobey. Willfully. Is it dominance? Maybe, maybe not. We think it is generally nothing more than a young dog who is getting bigger and he is simply seeing what he can get away with. And why wouldn’t he?! All dogs, and Weimaraners in particular, like a human teenager will take advantage of a situation to see where his boundaries really are.

Remember: Your puppy is learning 24/7, about his place in your home and family (i.e., his place in his new human "pack") as well as what is acceptable behavior.

Young puppies are wired so that they can absorb new information at an incredible rate, and this happens regardless of whether you are actively training or your puppy is sitting in his crate learning to be calm.

How to Train Your Weim Puppy

There are lots of different training styles, most of them now focusing on both positive reinforcement (where a dog increases the frequency of a behavior because the consequences are something that he enjoys) and negative reinforcement (where a dog works to avoid something that he dislikes or finds unpleasant).
All dogs are different, and all trainers are different, so it is important that you find a dog trainer who has a style that you and your dog are comfortable with. The Association of Pet Dog Trainers has some useful information about how to find a trainer and explains some training methods, and we suggest that you use this as a resource.

It may also be useful to ask your breeder, who is familiar with the training temperament of dogs in her bloodlines. Often your local UKC or AKC club will offer training classes, from puppy socialization to advanced obedience and agility classes. These people are knowledgeable about training dogs and are always looking for newcomers to the sport.

Over the years we have found that Weimaraners learn best with consistent, firm teaching combined with a trainer who recognizes their special kind of flair. Weims like to have fun, and often do not excel when trained with repetition. Almost all of them will do anything you ask for a bit of food, but you may need to experiment a little to find out what your dog will do backflips for. They seem to do best when you can combine a “boring” activity (heeling, anyone?) with something that is super fun (free time off leash, playing fetch, etc). All Weims will happily heel if they know that a fetch session is in their immediate future!

[Play can be just as rewarding as food!]
Photo courtesy of SaraRenee Photos and Design
Because Weims can be different in their learning styles, often training alone or in a small group is a good option. Just make sure it is someone who will help you, not hinder your progress. A downside of training alone is that it’s very hard to be motivated when there isn’t a weekly meeting to show off your dog’s improvements. Plus, Weims are often the star pupils in an obedience class, so you will miss out on that!

Some easy (and cheap!) treat ideas: hotdogs sliced into circles, with each circle cut into four pieces. Microwave for a few minutes until cooked. You can use the same method for thick-sliced bologna by cutting it into squares of about ½”. These will keep well in the fridge. The best thing that we have found for puppies is to make an effort to feed all of their food in the form of treats, rather than in a food bowl. Spread it out throughout the day, and make that puppy work for his food! Cat food or just another brand of kibble different from their “usual” brand also make for yummy treats and are easily portable. Lastly, string cheese is a favorite because it isn’t messy and fits nicely in a pocket.

Sometimes due to genetics or just a lack of early socialization, a young puppy might show some signs that need intervention. It is always better to fix a small problem before it turns into a very serious one—especially if you have children in your home. We have compiled a list of behaviors that are not normal for a puppy, and if your puppy is showing these behaviors you should probably consult with a professional. What are “red flags” to look for in a young puppy?

- Your puppy shows extreme dislike or avoidance to being handled (teeth, paws, or ears being touched). This includes snapping at you, shaking, or showing fear with all the things related to these grooming activities.
- Your puppy is showing reactive behavior. This can include staring at other dogs, lunging and barking on a leash, or “pointing” and stalking other dogs when playing.
- Your puppy shows extreme fear towards objects at a young age (less than 4-5 months) and is so worked up that you are unable to distract or redirect him.
- Your puppy is showing food or toy aggression and you feel uncomfortable in your skills as a trainer to deal with this.

**Shaping vs Luring**
Weims like to do things that they think are their idea, so shaping a behavior is a natural thing for them. Not all behaviors can be shaped easily, so luring is often needed to get an initial behavior. When you shape a behavior, you are asking a dog to give you a behavior on their own. When you lure a behavior, you are asking for a behavior that you are telling them to do. Often the dog is focused on the lure/reward rather than the task at hand. People who shape behaviors (people with agility dogs are very good at this) swear that by teaching their dog to give them behaviors, they are building a better bond and making the dog think for themselves. This goes along perfectly with training a Weim! What could be better than the dog working for you to get a behavior right, then getting rewarded for something that was his own idea?!
What About Clicker Training?
Clicker training is a popular method used to shape and mark desired behavior. A clicker is a small mechanical device that makes a short, distinct “click” when pressed, and this tells the dog (or whale, or bird!) that they have correctly performed a behavior. It is initially combined with the positive reinforcement of a food reward until the dog strongly associates the clicker with the reward. The clicker is a very nice way to “mark” correct behavior. You can also use your voice to mark the behavior, and this serves as the bridge to a reward. “Yes!” is a good marker.

More about shaping, luring, and clicker training at Karen Pryor’s website.

What Can a Young Puppy Learn?
Everything! Puppies as young as 4-5 weeks can begin learning basic obedience and the skills they will need to turn into good canine citizens. Start now and get those good habits going!

Puppies begin learning as soon as they are born. They can be trained as soon as their eyes and ears are open, although this process really speeds from 5-20 weeks. They can be taught to do almost anything an adult dog can do! There is no reason your puppy can’t be taught to heel, sit, lay down, shake, or stay for brief periods of time. Your puppy can fetch short distances and this is a natural instinct that most Weims have as early as 4-6 weeks, as soon as they are coordinated enough to walk and carry at the same time.

The only limit to what your puppy can learn is that his eyesight isn't too great until about four months (which explains why he won't chase something he didn’t see you toss!) and that his physical and mental stamina aren’t quite what they will be as an adult. Other than that, the sky’s the limit!

Sit, Stay, Come and Other Basics
Even if you do no other training with your puppy, you need to train the basic commands. We'll cover the bare basics here so you get the idea on the best ways we've learned to train our Weimaraner puppies, however, there are many dog training resources available (see Resources and Further Reading) if you want to delve further into training techniques or if your Weimaraner puppy is to be a future obedience star.

Sit
To train “sit,” you'll need some tasty treats. We find that the easiest way to do this is by luring your dog. With your puppy on leash, stand in front of your dog and get his attention. Put a treat in the palm of your hand and close your hand. Putting your hand right in front of your pup’s nose, slowly move your hand over his head towards his tail. As soon as his butt hits the floor tell him “sit” and give him the treat. After a while, you can fade out the lure and give him a treat after a verbal command.
**Down**
For “down,” you need a solid sit command. When your pup is sitting, take the treat in your hand and move the treat down past her head towards her rear legs. As soon as she gets close to a “down,” give her the treat.

We have also trained “down” by using our leg as a tunnel of sorts, making the puppy do an army crawl. This “down” can be trained before your pup knows the sit command. As before, you can eventually fade out the lure and only use a verbal command.

**Recall**
“Come” or “here” are perhaps the most important commands your puppy will learn. This is most easily trained using two people. Stand about 8-10 feet away from a friend, and have your friend hold your puppy. Tell him “come!” in a happy voice and squat down, with a treat in your hand. If your pup gets distracted, run quickly the other way while calling him. Now you hold your puppy, and have your friend call him. You’ll be amazed how fast he catches on!

Be sure to allow your puppy to be off-leash as soon as he comes home. If you always keep him on leash, then taking him off becomes a cue to take off. Allowing him his freedom while you can still catch him is extremely important!

**More Than One and Copy Cat Behavior**
Weims are like potato chips, you can't have just one! They tend to do best in a pack of two, although we strongly discourage littermates for about a million reasons, and we strongly encourage that you run far away from any breeder who would allow you to take home two puppies.

The best scenario is a male and female combination at about two years apart or more. Having one of each gender is usually just easier in terms of avoiding fighting. On the same token, having an age gap lowers the likelihood of fighting. But it's more than that. Two dogs of the same age or close in age tend to bond with each other, often excessively and unhealthily. This usually happens because the owner allows littermates to “entertain each other” leaving them to be overly dog-focused.

The other benefit for a larger age difference is that the older dog can help train the younger one by setting a positive example for him. Weims are one of those breeds that seem to always be learning things from the other members of their household “pack.” The scientists call this “allelomimetic” behavior, but it basically means that your new Weim puppy is learning by watching. Scary stuff! You can use this to your advantage if you have another well-behaved dog in your house, and a two year old is usually starting to become a well behaved dog.
If you do decide to get another Weim, your best bet is to go to a reputable breeder who knows their bloodlines or to a Weimaraner Rescue. In a multiple dog home it’s all about management. If you have two alpha-type females who are very strongly pack oriented, you are making a lot of extra work for yourself. If you combine a more submissive male with your alpha female, chances are your multiple-dog life will be much smoother! A rescue or a good breeder can give you a lot of insight and help you choose a puppy that will fit in.

One puppy is a lot of work, one Weimaraner puppy is even more work, and forget two Weim puppies, unless you are willing to separate them from each other and train and interact with them separately!

[This pup is looking to his grandmother for tips on how to act. Clearly chewing on “sticks” is fun!]

[This 9 week old puppy looks to her older housemate for advice. They are both chewing on a Nylabone]
One more caveat. Your pup is also learning by watching YOU. Remember that favorite Weim pastime, counter-surfing? Guess how she learned that?

Alone Training: Your Weim Needs to Learn to Cope in Your Absence

Dogs are natural pack animals, and Weimaraners as a whole tend to be more people-oriented which makes alone training more critical for this breed. Separation anxiety can be avoided with proper introduction to alone training at an early age.

The beginning stages of alone training actually start with crate training. Remember to make sure to give your puppy lots of opportunity to be in her crate while you’re home. You don’t want her to begin associating crate time with you always leaving her. Put her in her crate many times during the day, both with the door closed and with the door open.

Be sure to come and go frequently so that your puppy will start to learn to be comfortable in her crate both in and out of your presence. Vary your ins and outs and the length of your absence, starting with short periods of time at first.
Start crate training with the door open.

The point of alone-training is to establish an early pattern of your puppy understanding that you will always return. Where most well-meaning Weimaraner owners make a mistake is to spend 24/7 with their new puppy. Do not do this! Alone train your Weimaraner puppy, it is very important!

JW Link: "Alone Training Your Weimaraner"

Puppy Mind Games

While the mantra, "A Tired Weim is a Good Weim" is definitely true, it is very important to understand that this means BOTH physically and mentally. Weimaraners are inquisitive, curious, fun-loving and energetic with a quick mind. Boredom comes easily to this breed and it is challenging to keep up with him. The good news is the mind games don't have to be intense for you or involve your entire day. You can spend five minutes three times a day doing some very quick obedience; combined with socialization and teaching your pup some obedience and "tricks" should keep your Weim puppy sufficiently mentally occupied.

You'll thank us for these ideas when you are fed up with chasing around your land shark puppy screaming NO constantly as he tears up your home getting into EVERYthing. When this happens work on some mental stimulation to calm your puppy down and get him thinking!
Toys: Every Pup Needs an Outlet

While puppies naturally enjoy play, they don’t naturally know what to play with. One of the first things they need to learn when they come home is what they can play with and what they can’t. Everyone has seen those agility dogs on TV who seemingly run the entire course just so they can tug on their toy. Those pups are high drive—and that’s genetic—but they were taught to love that toy. Likewise, you need to teach your puppy to love toys. This will make training easier and more fun for both of you. It will also help with shaping a retrieve, which will help get rid of some of that excess energy when your puppy is an adolescent!

Pick a toy that is soft, squeaky, and easy for your puppy to pick up. Tease, squeak and throw! Generally it is as easy as this for Weim puppies who as a whole are pretty good retrievers. Play this game and leave her wanting more as a little pup. As she grows older, it will allow you to play form her retrieve making formal retrieving for obedience or field work later a piece of cake.

We rotate toys around and leave many on the floor, leaving the pup many options to make correct choices in chewing. They are also around for redirection when puppy decides a cord looks tasty! Special toys are reserved for the crate when crate training.

[This puppy learned what toys she preferred at an early age, and this preference stuck with her into adulthood]
Work ‘Em Up & Wind ‘Em Down

This is a great way to “play” obedience with your Weim. We all know that if it ‘ain’t fun, they probably won’t do it. So things like heeling, and staying still and other “high boredom” activities? Forget it. We really like to alternate the FUN stuff with the DUMB stuff. So a puppy obedience session at our house might look a little like this: Sit. Fetch! Heel. Sit. Stay (walk around dog). Fetch! Sit. Heel (at a run). Down. Fetch! Crazy (free) time!! Down stay (30 seconds). Fetch! Heel….etc.

You think a dog is born knowing how to settle down? Sure, some of them are better at it than others, but some of them are also taught!

Tug of War

We are big fans of playing tug with your Weimaraner! It builds drive, teaches them to settle, and can be a great reward.

Most Weims need very little encouragement, but we recommend that you start with something soft or fleecy (we LOVE fleece tugs!) and something that doesn’t look like anything else in your home (i.e., an old sock is a bad idea for most dogs!). Grab the designated tug toy and wiggle it really fast in front of their face…when they grab it praise them. Say “good tug!” and gently pull back while wiggling.

[Teaching tug to your puppy can be a great training tool as long as both of you follow the rules!]

Don’t yank or jerk, this can confuse them at first. We recommend that you wait until permanent teeth are in around 5-6 months, but you can gently teach them this game before then. Just go easy
on those baby chompers! Make sure that when you do play tug, that you follow the Rules of Engagement (see link below).

JW Link: "Tug Rules and Engagement Plan"

**Hide and Seek**

Weims love this game!! It makes them use their nose and their noggin so it’s the perfect game! Have a helper hold your dog in another room, and go hide with a few yummy treats. When you find your hiding place, have your helper say “find mom!” and when he finds you, reward him with praise and a few treats. They can usually be fairly low value. If your pup has some trouble with the game in the beginning, call your pup if necessary.

You’ll be amazed how fast your dog will “get” this game! Once he’s got the hang of it inside, you can try it outside.

When your pup hits adolescence you can use a version of this game to make sure he is paying attention to you when exercising off leash. When he’s not paying attention, just go hide. Watch how fast he makes a beeline to try and find you! That’ll teach him to pay attention to mom!

**Find (Toys, Kibble)**

This is a variation on the hide and seek game. Have a helper hide some food or treats in a place that is visible to your dog—maybe across the room. Yes, we know this is crazy easy! But we have to teach the command first so she won’t get frustrated. You can also put your pup in her crate and put the kibble out by yourself.

Say “find it” and let your pup go. Of course she’ll make a beeline to the food!

Next time, hide the food behind the couch or somewhere she can’t actually see it. Say “find it!” and watch her beeline again. Next time put it a bit farther away. You only have to do this a few times and your pup will have the idea!

There is no limit to what you can do with this game! Our favorite thing to do is use this game to give our pups a job while we’re busy doing something—like getting ready for work or cooking dinner. This is a great mental energy burner for their morning routine; we highly recommend hiding their entire breakfast in different places.

One word of caution: be careful about putting food anywhere that it could get stuck or you’ll end up with de-stuffed or destroyed household items.
Naming Toys

For this trick, you’ll need to have your dog clicker-trained or responding to a marker like “yes!” some tasty treats, and a bunch of your dog’s toys. You need his favorite toys as well as those that he doesn’t really care for. To start with, you’ll set him up to succeed. Put his favorite toy on the floor, and tell him “Get your ball!” and praise him, give him a treat if necessary.

Next, put his favorite toy on the floor next to a toy he doesn’t really like. Now say “get your ball!” Praise him when he does it. It’s important that you praise him (click or “yes!”) as soon as his nose touches the item you tell him to get.

Now name the second toy, and tell him “get the monkey!” and ignore him when he brings you the ball. Praise/mark the second he touches the monkey (or whatever the second toy is), sometimes you might have to praise/mark as soon as he shows interest to the monkey. Praise him like crazy when he gets it right. Repeat a few times, just teaching him to differentiate between the two items.

Now add a third item, and as before, ignore him when he is wrong, and mark/praise the right choice. Remember to watch your body language. You can “help” your pup by facing towards the object you want him to bring you—make sure your shoulders, nose, and eyes are all looking at the same item.
Beginning Tracking and Agility

Tracking
Weimaraners love to track! Whether you obtained your pup from a world class breeder or a pet store, tracking seems to be in their DNA. Remember the “hide and seek” game? Your puppy was tracking! So now take him outside, have your helper hold your dog while you go hide. Start with a short distance and increase it, keep your pup on leash, and tell him to “track!” and watch him go! You can also teach him to track other people this way. They are so smart!

Agility
Most vets recommend that you do not allow your puppy to jump more than the height of their wrists before they are 18 months old because it can cause damage to their growing bones and joints. But if you have a pup who is climbing everything and you think she might be a future agility star, you can do plenty of things with her to get her started.

Training can begin in your yard with the puppy learning about different surfaces and various obstacles. Your pup will be off leash when she does agility, so you’ll need to be able to get her to focus on you and come when called. Beginning agility training is all about attention games and simple obedience drills. Get started on your own and move on to a training facility when you are ready for more!

The Art of Stuffing a Kong

The KONG company reliably makes durable toys that dogs love. Their original “Kong” is a great toy for incorporating into crate training and teaching your Weim about quiet time.

You can stuff Kongs with almost anything from peanut butter to broth to puppy kibble. Find recipes here and here. A Kong loaded up and frozen solid is just about the best teething toy you can find—but beware, it’s messy!

[It’s Kong time!]
Photo courtesy of Kim Burnell
Testing, Testing...

Pre-Adolescence

You are in the last stages of his puppyhood by 16 weeks, and while still definitely a puppy, his emotional make-up is relatively set. This stage often coincides with the beginning of teething, when his adult teeth start to come in and is sometimes called "Age of Cutting." In other words, they are cutting teeth and cutting apron strings! This is when you'll start seeing some testing and rebellion.

We often get phone calls or emails that suddenly a new owner's “perfectly behaved” puppy is suddenly going to the bathroom in the house or in their crate. He won’t listen. He is getting nippy with family members or growling when anyone tries to take his toys. He might growl or bark at you when you look at him, or refuse to get off furniture when you ask him to. Sometimes pups will start showing some reactivity on leash and will bark at people coming to the door—things that he never did before.

So what’s going on?! You are getting the first glimpse of your puppy's adolescence. Most pups go through a pre-adolescent stage, and how you deal with it (along with their temperament) shapes the rest of his puppyhood. So don’t mess around! Show your puppy that you are a strong and gentle leader and that you mean what you say. Most puppies will grow out of this stage quickly.

Teething

Some of your puppy's bad behavior at this age is not just bratty but simply because his gums are sore with adult teeth emerging. This is a great time to introduce your puppy to ice cubes, something that will serve him well as he grows up and grows old. Why not make chicken broth and freeze that, too?

Another favorite trick is to soak a washcloth or small towel (in broth or water), tie some knots in it, and freeze it solid. This feels great on sore gums! You can encourage your pup to chew on things like kongs or other novel chew toys by putting some peanut butter or Easy Cheese on them. You can also get a head start on getting your pup used to having his teeth and mouth handled by massaging his gums if your pup likes that.

How to Stop...

It’s in this pre-adolescent stage that sometimes bad habits can creep in and might even be inadvertently encouraged. It’s not at all unusual to start noticing some of the behaviors listed below, and it's important to realize what is happening and stop them early.
These behaviors don’t make your Weim puppy a bad dog, but left unchecked, they can become major problems that turn your good puppy into a dog with very bad habits that may be very hard to overcome once ingrained.

Barking/Crying/Whining
Depending on their breeding and background, Weims run the gamut from extremely quiet to obnoxiously loud dogs. You may find that your puppy is extremely quiet after settling into your home. Most of them don’t really know that they can bark until they get their “big dog” voice around 5-6 months. This often coincides with the emergence of another fear period and a protective phase (thanks to hormones beginning to surge in both sexes). Make sure to keep this in check. Weims are not supposed to be "barky dogs," but it is something of a breed trait for them to be good watchdogs and appropriately protective of their people and homes.

Some Weim pups are just plain sassy from the beginning, and we have owned a few of these, too. One would look you in the face, and bark nonstop. These pups need discipline, but they also need an owner who can distinguish whether they really are distressed or just being a brat. If it is unlikely to be a potty issue and you have determined that she is trying to manipulate you, then we generally allow our pups to howl until they tire and shut up. Out-stubborning your Weim puppy actually takes some discipline on your part, and ear plugs go a long way! Do not give in! If you are unsure if your puppy is being a brat or truly distressed, consult a professional as these two problems must be treated very differently.

For prevention, we’ve found that teaching the “Quiet!” command early, along with praising for silence, is the best way to curtail this bad habit. We also suggest that you never allow your Weim pup to have “free time” in the yard or house unattended. They will learn quickly that barking, digging, fence fighting, or chewing on inappropriate objects are really fun pastimes. You need to be the center of their world and the gatekeeper of all that is good. Allowing them access to run, dig, bark, or whatever else they can come up with (don’t ask!) is a bad idea.

JW Link: "Woof, Woof, Woof -- Quiet!"

Poop Eating
Coprophagia (or poop eating) is one of those issues that seems to follow some bloodlines and seems to go with owning a hunting dog in general. Rigorous attention to it can often make things worse in Weims, since they are a creature that thrives on any attention—good or bad. Over the years we have noticed a few different types of poop eaters and we feel that they should be dealt with differently:

The “gotta have it” girl: These pups just love eating poop. They are super tough to break and probably changing diets is the best method. You may never break them of it. Whether it be genes
or early life, we'll never know, but they sure do love their turds! Sorry. Keep your yard spotless and you may not have a problem.

The “poopsicle lover” or “experimentalist” is just like he sounds. He samples now and then, especially loves those frozen solid hunks of pup poop. His, theirs, anyone's. It seems best to ignore this type and the problem will go away. They are just experimenting.

Of course we also know of pups who look grossed out if they even STEP in dog poop. Oh! The nerve of that dog dropping their refuse here! “Mom, clean it up!” Of course the same dog will often happily eat any other critter’s poop...

**Motion Sickness**
This is certainly not a problem specific to Weims! We have heard of many cases of pups who did not like the car or became sick in the car. Personally, we feel that prevention is the best medicine for this issue. Make sure that your puppy gets plenty of car rides as soon as she comes home. Motion sickness is linked to anxiety and often comes about because people only take their puppy to “bad” places like the vet when they are in the car.

Signs of motion sickness include uneasiness, pacing, whining, excessive yawning, drooling, and of course vomiting. If your pup is showing some of the milder forms of motion sickness, you can try to help him see the car as a fun place by feeding him in the car while it’s stationary and praising him for hopping into your car. If he gets sick riding loose in the car, try and crate him instead—as long as he loves his crate! If he gets stressed about being crated, don't try it. You can also try making him or his crate face forward, or opening the window a bit for him to get some air.

Luckily, many Weim puppies will grow out of this issue, just as most children outgrow being carsick as their inner ear develops fully. You may want to try and take a break for a few weeks rather than forcing the issue. If it is indeed related to her inner ear, a few weeks to mature may help out.

**Guarding Food and Toys**
Resource guarding is actually a natural canine behavior. However, it can’t be tolerated when you have a dog living in your home, especially if there are children around. All resources are YOUR resources!

Prevention, prevention, prevention! Dogs guard because of insecurity, not aggression.
When you feed your puppy, drop tasty morsels into his food bowl as he is eating, moving your hand closer and closer. Feed your puppy out of your hands rather than a bowl. Work up to being able to quickly remove his bowl, give him some chicken, and return the bowl immediately. Pet him while he eats. Start all these things as soon as your puppy comes home!

You can also help teach your dog not to guard his toys by getting him used to being petted and handled while he has a toy. Feed him from your hands while he has a toy. Swap him some chicken (or any high value treat) for his toy. Trade him one toy for an even better one. The goal of this is to be able to take any toy from your puppy and allow him to be confident that it's worth his while. If he is sure you'll give him something even better, he's more likely to give up his fav toy ever.

**Jumping Out of Reach**

Anyone who has owned a puppy remembers that one time that they were embarrassed in front of people when they tried to get their dog back. This is almost a universal game that puppies will play when they reach a certain age. How you deal with it can cause major problems or assure that you'll never have to deal with it again.

It often comes from people playing rough “chase me!” games or for calling their puppy to them to punish them, clip nails, etc. When you teach recall be sure to grab their collar and then praise/treat. We do this little exercise many times as our pups are growing up, teaching them that someone grabbing their collar is a good thing. We also make sure to never play the “chase the puppy!” game.

[Practice hovering around your Weimaraner puppy when he eats so that he is secure and comfortable with his food being touched and eventually even removed.]
[When teaching your puppy to come, be sure to give a grab her collar and then give her a treat.]

If you are in an urgent situation, the best thing to do is make yourself the most interesting thing to your puppy. This is where the “watch me” command can help—if your pup won't even look at you in distracting situations, how do you expect him to come to you?

Get your pup’s attention, then drop to the ground, flop around, make goofy noises, do anything to get his interest piqued. When he looks at you, try running the opposite direction, flapping your arms as you go--most puppies will follow you.

**Digging**

All dogs dig. Your Weim pup is no exception! Weims will dig out of boredom, for attention, to make a cool spot to lay in, and when they find underground critters to hunt.

To combat the digging problem, we usually take the following steps:
• Keep in mind that if your pup or young dog is digging a lot, he may not be getting enough mental stimulation or exercise. Always try to increase those things first and see if the digging issue resolves.
• Fill any existing holes with poop. Most Weims will avoid digging in poop.
• Bury chicken wire under your fence if your Weim is trying to escape. (And never leave him alone in the yard if this is his tendency!)
• We always provide a “safe” area for digging or even a specific sandbox to dig in. Reward pup for digging in his box, and encourage digging there by placing his toys and treats in that area only.

JW link: "If Ya Can't Beat It.... Allow It"

**Jumping Up**

Jumping up on people is cute when your pup is twelve pounds, but nobody likes to be rushed and tackled by a seventy pound beast, friendly or not! Jumping up to greet people at the door is natural, and difficult for a puppy to control, they are very happy to see you after all!

Teaching your pup that he only gets attention when he has “all four on the floor” will go a long way to help you avoid the jumping issue. Make sure that everyone in your family agrees that if the puppy jumps up, they will avoid all eye contact and turn the other way and ignore the puppy. Weimaraners are suckers for attention and ignoring can be a powerful deterrent for them. Most pups will offer another behavior instead, and if you've been teaching sit, they will usually offer sit. If he doesn't sit, then give him the command and then praise him for the alternate behavior.

[This pup earned the nickname “Bunkers” thanks to her digging habit]

[Rewarding a Weim puppy with attention when he jumps up will only make this a permanent habit.]
Once your Weim has developed a habit of jumping, it is extremely hard to break! More active ways to control this behavior is to keep a leash on your puppy and step on the leash so that he physically restrained from being able to jump up. You can also use your body language to invade their space (see link below for video), or you can physically remove your Weim from the situation (crate your puppy).

JW Link: "Taking the Jump Out of Your Weimaraner"

**Zoomies**
All puppies get zoomies: running around like their tail is on fire and taking out anything that is in their path. We even have older dogs (like 10, or 11 years or even older!) who will occasionally race around like a puppy!

Truth be told, puppy zoomies are a fact of life and usually harmless. If your pup has frequent zoomies he may need more exercise or may need a lesson in self-control. He might also be balking your “come” command. The best thing to do is ignore it, smile at it, and don’t give your pup any commands—he’s too fired up to listen, anyhow!

![Puppy zoomies!](image)

**Sulking**
Weims have different temperaments from very tough to very sensitive. Their temperaments can also be a conundrum, as many physically tough Weims can be emotionally very sensitive. You can actually hurt their feelings! This brings up something that is a fairly common issue for new Weim
puppy owners: sulking. This behavior is a learned behavior and something that they will do to get “out of” punishment.

Picture this scenario: you catch your new puppy stealing food and you grab him by the scruff and give him a little shake. Or even just yell at him for his indiscretion. He immediately runs to the corner and cowers in fear. You get up and go coddle your little guy because you thought maybe you were too rough on him. In his mind, this is a score! He stole food AND got some loving! From then on, this sulking behavior will likely be his default response to punishment—it worked, so why wouldn’t he?!

The best thing to do—after you honestly ask yourself if the punishment was too severe—is to ignore this behavior. Completely. It’s a tough thing to do when you are worried that you might have hurt your little guy. But just remember that anything that “works” for a dog will be repeated.

**Aggression**

This is a tricky topic and one that we won’t cover in depth here. Most of what people call aggression in a puppy is really not that. Often people will get their pup so hyped up with rough games, that their pup cannot—or will not—control himself. However, if you see warning signs such as extreme fear or retaliation when he is corrected (among other things), or even if you feel that your puppy has a behavior that you can’t deal with, please contact your vet or an animal behaviorist.

**Adolescence**

This ebook is not about dealing with your adolescent dog. However, you will start to see changes in your Weim—male or female—around five months of age that are precursors to adolescence. Your dog will test you in various ways, some blatant and others more subtle. How and for how long your pup pushes your buttons has a lot to do with her temperament as well as how she has been raised up to this point.

You will see behaviors emerge such as marking in the house (males) and potty training “mishaps” in the house for females. Both sexes may begin marking outside as early as six months, although this generally happens later.

Your previously well-trained puppy will likely go deaf overnight—or at least it will seem that way as she happily trots in the other direction as you scream her name. When this temporary lapse occurs, we find it best to keep puppies on a leash (short, long, or flexi) when getting exercise until they get a refresher on their “come” command.

From six to 12 months of age is when most Weims get dumped in shelters. Steps you take now can help prevent this outcome with your puppy!
We often implement the Nothing In Life Is Free (NILIF) plan until pup starts to shape up. In other words, your puppy needs to work for everything she gets. No free lunch—literally! She needs to sit before meals, wait before barreling out of her crate, wait for you to release her before she hops out of the car or goes down stairs, and no couch or bed privileges until she straightens up. Make sure she gets plenty of exercise and mental stimulation. This means boot camp!

**Boot Camp & NILIF**

We have mentioned these things before, and it bears review: what do you do when your little angel is on the edge of rebellion? Here are some quick ways to nip it in the bud before it turns into all-out war:

- If your puppy has been sleeping out of his crate, it’s time to revisit crate training
- Make sure that your puppy sits (or gives you some behavior) before she goes outside, gets her food, or does any desirable behavior.
- This is the time to start teaching the “long down” drill. Put your dog in a “down-stay” and start with 15 seconds or so, and work up to 30 minutes. You will thank us later!
- Make her “wait” before coming out of her crate, walking through doors, or getting out of the car.
- Don’t let her go through doors before you.
- Leash her to you during the day. Make her follow you to the bathroom, in the kitchen, and sit nicely while you are doing your daily routine. She needs to remember that you are the center of her universe.
- Make your pup heel, and don’t let her drag you down the street.
- Back to obedience basics. Start an obedience class or agility if you aren’t already doing so.
Weim Specific Health Issues in the First Six Months

What's "Abnormal" for My Puppy?

...and what is okay? What constitutes a true medical emergency? We will preface this section by saying that we are not veterinarians nor are either of us trained in canine first aid. What we do have is over two decades between us of vet trips—some of them necessary, others of them a complete waste of time and money.

Your breeder and your vet should be the two most important people in your dog's life, and both will be very helpful as your puppy grows up. Neither can function to their fullest without the help of the other. For those of you without the assistance of an experienced breeder, we hope that this section will help you. If you are concerned about your puppy, it is always best to go to the vet and have it checked out. Peace of mind is worth the money!

Finding a Vet

The most important factor in finding a vet is that you are comfortable with him or her. Period.

You will come to rely on your vet and their expertise for many years as your puppy ages. Sutures, staples, accidental ingestions, puncture wounds, and the list goes on! With young puppies, complaints such as diarrhea and skin problems often top the list for new owners.

Even if you never need a vet for anything but vaccinations, it is extremely important that you follow the WCA's minimal vaccination protocol to ensure the health of our dog. Each year more research comes out on the dangers of over-vaccination, and yet many vets (we're not saying they're bad guys!) still push for yearly vaccination. For a breed like the Weimaraner, this could have deadly consequences in the long term—even if your dog has had no problems in the past. Vets simply can't be an expert in everything, and most of them don't know breed tendencies.

Begin by asking friends and family about their vets, perhaps you can get some leads in this way. When you do go visit with your vet of choice, pay attention to how he or she treats your dog—they may or may not have good interpersonal skills, but the best ones take their time examining your dog, talk to your dog, and often get down on their level rather than putting your dog up on a table. Our very favorite vet actually sits on the floor and will put a puppy in her lap! A good vet returns phone calls when possible, has competent office staff, and is reasonably affordable.

A good vet is hard to find! If you feel like you and your vet aren't seeing eye to eye, it's time to find a new one. If your vet makes you feel uncomfortable, tries to get you to do unnecessary procedures, blows off your concerns, or doesn't adequately answer your questions, it's time to move on.
When to Call Your Breeder

Your breeder has (hopefully!) worked very hard to produce a puppy with a stable temperament, sound conformation, and healthy body. There are many health problems that can be screened for, but also many that we have no idea how they are inherited—or even if they are inherited. Certain things tend to run in families but even avoiding those bloodlines (or avoiding “doubling up” on those problems) is no guarantee. Most of the time, a good breeder gets exactly what they plan on, but this is not always how it happens.

You can count on a good breeder to be truly concerned when a health issue does pop up in their puppies, and they are truly grateful when you let them know about any issues you may be having. For a new Weim owner, there are lots of things to learn as your puppy grows, and your breeder is always the best guide. Here is a list of things that a reputable breeder would like to be notified about:

- Any type of vaccine reaction within a week of vaccination (lingering diarrhea, site reactions, anaphylaxis, limping or soreness, lethargy, etc.)
- Hives or skin infections, especially if it occurs more than once
- Testicles that have not descended by five months of age
- Hernias that need surgical repair
- Missing teeth or bites that are over- or undershot
- Eye problems (extra eyelashes, “cherry eye,” ectropion, entropion, etc.)
- Heart murmurs, especially serious ones, that your pup does not grow out of
- Any tumors or growths on the head, face, or mouth
- Any diagnosis of HOD, panosteitis, OCD, or other disorder of rapidly growing puppies.
- Before you obtain a lyme vaccination, leptospirosis vaccine, or rattlesnake vaccine unless you have already discussed this with your breeder. It may also be helpful to call your breeder if your pup is having diarrhea, vaginitis, or if your vet plans on prescribing an antibiotic.
- Spaying/neutering
- Anything else that you are concerned with regarding your puppy

Before You Go to the Vet...

Any time something seems wrong, trust your gut instinct and take your Weimaraner to the vet. Here are some common problems that can happen with Weim puppies, what you can do at home, and when to take your pup to the vet.

Vaccines and Vaccinosis

When the founders of our breed selected dogs for their distinctive color, there was a package of genes that came along with that color. Some of those genes were not desirable, including ones that predispose Weimaraners to autoimmune disease and vaccine reactions. In their first year of life,
many Weim puppies experience a variety of reactions from mild to very severe that are lumped into a cluster of seemingly random symptoms that are termed “Vaccinosis.”

Some of the more common suspected vaccine reactions seen in young Weims are:

- lethargy following vaccination
- lumps at the vaccination site that go away within a week or two
- mild to moderate diarrhea or soft stool
- food sensitivities
- skin reactions or sensitivity to grasses or bug bites (that do not affect the dog into adulthood)
- ulcers on inside of lips
- anaphylaxis after second round of vaccines
- rock/stick/paper/dirt/mulch eating or craving in excessive amounts (pica)
- papillomas
- vomiting small amounts of bile at night
- seizures
- temperament changes
- hypothyroidism
- IBD/IBS
- frequent vaginitis or UTIs in females

JW Link: "Confused about Vaccines?"

The following puppy vaccination protocol can be found on the Weimaraner Club of America website.

A small percentage of Weimaraner puppies manifest an autoimmune reaction following vaccination. When the immune system of susceptible individuals is challenged by the multiple antigens found in combination vaccines, it becomes hyper-reactive and responds in the same way it would respond to fight off an infection: fever, elevated white blood cells and inflammatory reaction of tissues and joints.

Although many puppies can be vaccinated with no adverse reactions, there is no way at the present time to determine which puppies may react. Although controversial, some research has suggested that the distemper component of the combination vaccines may present the highest risk for immune mediated problems. It is noted that the recombinant DNA vaccines available for Distemper have shown significantly lower incidence of reactions, and will provide protection if the last dose is given at 12 weeks of age or over. Past research has documented that most vaccine reactions occur between 12 and 16 weeks of age.
In an effort to reduce the incidence of serious vaccine reaction, an alternative to the traditional vaccination protocol may be considered, where the maximum level of protection is accomplished with the minimum number of vaccines.

In view of this, the Weimaraner Club of America Health Committee recommends the following vaccine schedule:

- 8 weeks: Canine Distemper, Adenovirus Type 2, Parainfluenza- Parvovirus
- 12 weeks: Canine Distemper, Adenovirus Type 2, Parainfluenza- Parvovirus
- 15-16 weeks: An antibody titer is recommended to confirm immunity since a small proportion of puppies may still not be covered. Puppies showing no evidence of antibody production in the titer should be re-inoculated.

The use of Corona, Leptospirosis, Bordatella and Lyme vaccines are not recommended unless these diseases are prevalent in the area; and should never be administered along with the core vaccines listed above, but rather separately, and at a time when the pup's immune system is mature. Rabies vaccinations should be given as required by law, but not coincident with other vaccinations. If possible, wait until the puppy is older than 16 weeks.

If a serious adverse immune response occurs, further vaccination prior to one year of age is not recommended. Options should be discussed with your veterinarian. Some states provide exemptions for Rabies in cases where an underlying medical condition is likely to result in a life threatening condition in response to vaccination.

While this protocol helps in preventing reactions, it does not prevent them in all susceptible individuals.

The recommendations expressed are those of the WCA and the WCA Health Committee. These recommendations are not a substitute for professional veterinary advice, diagnosis or treatment. The WCA recognizes that decisions about veterinary care are private matters which must remain within the purview of an individual dog's owner(s) and veterinarian(s). It is the responsibility and ethical mandate of all WCA members to ensure that their dogs receive appropriate and timely veterinary care.

(Approved by the Weimaraner Club of America Board of Directors, February 9, 2011. Any questions regarding this protocol can be sent to: wcahealth@gmail.com)

**Puppy Acne**

Puppy acne shows up in young pups any time in their puppyhood. It is most commonly found around their chin, lips, and vulva area in females. Keep your pup’s food bowls clean, and make sure that you have metal, not plastic, bowls. This is thought to be due to an immature immune system...
system and is usually staph bacteria. This generally requires a trip to your vet for antibiotics if the bumps don’t subside with routine cleansing.

**Hernias**

Umbilical hernias are somewhat common in Weimaraners. Most of them are harmless, and few of them need surgical intervention. Generally, if the hernia is too small for the tip of your finger to fit into, it will not require intervention. If your puppy does have a true hernia, you will need to consult your vet and your breeder to decide what to do. Often the best course of action is to wait until your puppy gets spayed or neutered to have them repaired.

Weimaraners also are prone to having umbilical “bubbles” that are different from true hernias. These tend to go away on their own, and are likely related to excess traction on the umbilical cord—although we don’t really know what causes them. If your puppy has one of these, you can tell because it is often very small, and easily slides back into their body. You can often help the process along by softly massaging the bubble back in when the puppy is relaxed.

**Parasites**

Parasites come in all shapes and sizes—all of them fierce! Most people immediately think about fleas and ticks and certainly depending on where you live in the country this should be a major concern. They are a problem all year long in the Southeastern states and if you obtain a puppy and live in that region you should talk to your vet about starting your pup on a flea and tick preventative.

If you live in other regions, discuss it with your breeder and vet. As Weim breeders and owners, we feel like it’s best to give your pup’s system the fewest number of insults as possible, so if a medication/dewormer isn’t absolutely necessary, we recommend waiting. For example if you live in Maine and got your pup in November, you can probably wait on the flea and tick preventative. Use your common sense!

**Worms**

Let’s get this out of the way: almost all puppies have worms. Sorry for the gross-factor right off the bat, but it’s true. Good breeders stay on top of deworming their puppies every two weeks, but that doesn’t mean that your puppy won’t have worms. Often if they are well socialized or taken to many different places (swimming, playing in the woods or running in different areas) they may pick up worms.

The problem comes when they have a very large worm burden that their bodies can’t fight off, or if they are vaccinated while their bodies are trying to fight off a parasite. It’s a good idea to deworm your pup when he comes home, but makes sure that you don’t do it around the same time that he gets a vaccine. The most common symptoms of worms are vomiting, frequent or intermittent diarrhea, lack of appetite, or coughing or gagging.
**Demodex**
This is caused by the mange mite that normally lives on the skin of healthy animals. It causes small bald spots in puppies due to their immature immune system. It may or may not cause itching. It is also contagious but puppy mange usually does not spread.

If the hair loss is minimal in your puppy, and there is no itching, you can usually leave it alone to resolve on its own. Watch for secondary bacterial infections if your puppy is scratching, as the scratching may introduce bacteria into the skin which causes the secondary infection, in which case antibiotic treatment is necessary.

Goodwinol ointment, a topical treatment which can be purchased over-the-counter, can be used to speed the healing process.

**Ear Mites**
These mites are very common in young and adolescent Weims and are often—but not always—related to food allergies. You can spot the telltale head shaking, scratching, and gunky brown or black ear buildup that often have a yeasty odor. You should rarely have to clean a healthy dog’s ears—every few months at most. Ear mites love to feast on the yeasty gunk that builds up when your dog’s system is not operating at its best! If you see the signs, see your vet or talk to your breeder.

*The classic symptoms of ear mites are itchy ears, shaking their heads and a smelly buildup in their ears.*
Coccidia
This is not exactly a parasite, but we will mention it here. Puppies can pick this up easily and often she will not show symptoms until she is stressed—i.e., shows up at your house. Dogs get this from many places but a common cause is pigeons or game birds or contaminated water. Generally adult dogs do not become sick but they shed the bacteria in their feces—which the pups are exposed to.

Limping
A limp can be caused by many things, and we've listed a few of them here.

Sore/Pulled Muscle, Tendon, or Ligament
If a dog has a sore/pulled muscle, tendon, or ligament (not even torn, just sore or pulled), they may not limp when moving, but may just barely hold the leg up when standing, especially when they are on a slick surface such as linoleum or hardwood floors.

Lyme Disease
Lyme disease classically causes shifting lameness where the dog will limp on one leg, then limp on another. In the early stage of the disease there are no symptoms, so it’s very important to have your pup on flea and tick preventative (if not contraindicated) and to have them checked yearly for tick diseases.

“Growing Pains”
While it's definitely not a technical term, this is something observed by people who own large and rapidly growing dogs. We don't know what causes them, but if your pup seems otherwise normal, you might not need a vet visit yet. Panosteitis has been called a disease of “growing pains” and if slowly pulling or stretching your pup's legs elicits a yelp, you may be dealing with this. “Pano” also generally causes shifting lameness. Use your judgment.

Hip Dysplasia
HD is not common in young puppies, but it can happen, especially if your pup is overweight as a youngster. You will see a hopping gait, pups will often look “cow hocked,” and they may stand in a way to take more weight off their rear end.

Elbow Dysplasia
Genetic elbow problems are rare in Weims, especially at an early age. BUT it does happen. If you notice your pup consistently limping on a front leg, you might need to check into this as a possibility. Often elbow problems actually will look like a shoulder injury, so don’t be so quick to assume you have a shoulder problem. Dogs carry most of their weight on their front legs, so a Weim puppy with an elbow issue will often be hesitant to begin walking or running.
**Foot or Pad Injuries**
These can be common since Weimaraners are so active. Examine your pup’s pads and between their toes and check their nails, too.

Often if your pup is running on tennis courts or concrete you’ll see them “slip a pad” which is basically the same thing as when you get a blister on your hand from working in the yard. If that blister pops, you’ll see raw red skin beneath, and that causes pain. This doesn’t really need to be treated, just kept clean and watched for infection. Your pup will probably chew and bite at it and that’s fine. It should heal in a few days.

If your pup has a splinter, thorn, sandspur, or other menace stuck in her pad, you should probably see a vet unless you feel comfortable trying to remove it.

If the foot or toe also looks swollen and is painful to the touch, you may either have an abscess or a broken toe to contend with. Either one will require a vet visit.

**Malingering**
Oh yes they do! We have had an eight week old puppy learn quickly that faking an injury elicits coddling and this pup would start limping for attention. If you trust your assessment skills, give the dog crate rest and leash walks ONLY for a few days and see if the limp improves. If it's a muscle or something similar, it will improve. If it's Lyme disease it probably won’t, and the joint/s may also be tender and warm. If the dog's a faker, they'll still be faking, but might forget to fake (or forget which leg they were limping on!) for a day or two if you totally ignore them...

A good rule of thumb is that if a limp does not get better within a few days or seems to get worse, you should make an appointment with your vet. NEVER give your puppy Tylenol or Ibuprofen!

**Peeing a Lot**
Weim puppies vary in their potty habits. Most of the time it takes a few weeks to a month to get a “feel” for your puppy's pee routines, and sometimes there is a gray area during this month or two when you might wonder if he is “going” too much.

Commonly this question comes up when a puppy is taken outside, urinates, and then 5 minutes later pees on the floor in the house. Many puppies are "multiple peers" and will squat a few times a session before they are actually empty. We have also owned puppies who are a little bit “spacey” when they need to be doing their business. Those pups would squat frequently, stand up and walk off midstream, and follow their nose. Remember Weims are hunting dogs! Especially those pups from hunting lines may be too distracted when they are outside and start smelling around.

You may also see female puppies around five months “forget” their housetraining manners. This seems to be fairly common, and while we don’t know the true cause of it, we suspect that it has to
do with hormones. It seems best to ignore the incident unless you catch her in the act, and make sure that you get back to a strict housetraining regimen again. Be sure to praise her for pottying outside!

If your Weim puppy's peeing habits have changed considerably, you may be dealing with something more than just peeing a lot.

**Urinary Tract Infection**

UTI symptoms you will most commonly see in your pup are:

- Squatting frequently, with only a drop at a time coming out
- Blood in urine
- Pain when he urinates
- Frequent accidents in the house or crate, or seems like he can’t “hold it”
- Increase in water intake
- Recent antibiotic use

Your vet will want a urine sample to diagnose a UTI, about a tablespoon will do -- but it has to be from the same day that you bring your pup into the vet. It’s okay to put it in the fridge for a while before your visit if necessary. A low-sided container or even a clean bowl work best for females. Just make sure you ultimately put it in something with a lid! The “ideal” sample is caught mid-stream, and after making sure your dog’s private parts are clean, but anytime you can catch your pet in the act is fine.

In addition to a urine sample, it may be beneficial for your vet to obtain blood work as well.

**Pooping a Lot/Soft Poop/Diarrhea**

There are many reasons that a puppy may have soft poop or diarrhea -- stress, excitement, worms, virus (such as parvo) eating rich food, “garbage diving,” abrupt change in food, blockage, etc.

Some puppies never really have solid stools but always have soft poop. The culprit could be a food allergy or just something in a particular brand that does not agree with your puppy. Switching foods can help and may require several switches to see what works best. Just because a particular brand worked before, doesn’t mean it is the best thing now! Formulas do change.

And please don’t fall into the "vet recommended" designer food. It is no better than anything else on the market. Whatever works best for YOUR dog is what’s best for him. We know lots of people with dogs who have IBS and have struggled with finding the right mix. And with Weims, that’s very important!
If the diarrhea is mild, in other words not totally watery and uncontrolled, you may treat at home by feeding canned plain pumpkin (not the pie filling) and a bland diet of rice and cooked chicken or ground beef with fat skimmed. Also be sure to keep your pup hydrated. You may use a bit of chicken soup to flavor water in order to get your puppy to drink.

Pepcid and Pepto Bismol can both be used with dogs. Contact your vet for dosage information. Holistically, we also use Slippery Elm to help with stomach upsets. This can be purchased at a health food store.

**Ate a (Fill in the Blank)**
If you have never owned a Weim before, this puppy will be a crash course in all the various things a dog can put in her mouth, and also all the things that, surprisingly, can also come out the other end. The first rule of thumb that you have to remember is that if it is quarter-sized or smaller, it will come out again. However, Weims seem to have rather peculiar digestive tracts in that they seem to crave odd things well into old adulthood.

**Chocolate**
Chocolate is toxic to dogs, but don’t freak out if your pup eats a single Hershey's Kiss (even if they suck down the wrapper, too!). For the most part, the darker and more bitter the chocolate, the worse off they’ll be.

**Tomatoes, Avocados, Raisins, Grapes, Onions, Macadamia Nuts**
These foods are all toxic in large amounts. Weimaraners we know that have ended up having their stomachs pumped have been cases where they ate in excess of five pounds of grapes in one case, and over two pounds of macadamia nuts in another.

Don’t spaz over a couple of grapes or if you see him stealing your perfectly-ripe Roma’s off the bush, he won’t likely get sick. But do be aware of what your Weim can steal from your garden. Many seek out goodies such as avocados from your trees.

**Socks, Tampons, Dough**
Anything that they ingest that could expand in their bellies requires a vet trip. Or at least a vet consult! Your dog can easily bloat or get a blockage from any of these things. If you are lucky, they will pass it without you even knowing they ate it.

**Paper Products**
We don’t know why, but paper products seem to be a special favorite of Weims. Depending on how much he ate and the dog’s digestive tract, some could scarf down a sheaf without any belly woes, others can get sick from this.
Rocks, Sticks, Mulch, etc.
Most Weims don’t actually eat the stick, they just like to chew them up, so make sure your pup actually ate what he chipped up before you panic. As far as rocks go, if they are small they should pass. Not always true, but more than likely your little canine garbage disposer will be fine.

Ingesting birds or other dead critters
You’ve got a Weim so it’s almost inevitable. We don’t know what a vet would tell you, but practical advice, and our own experience, tells us that your dog will have no ill effects, maybe some vomiting if they ate too many feathers! If your Weim finds and eats a dead mouse around a home that has been using poison control for them, watch carefully, rat poison is deadly for dogs and can be ingested by eating the dead critter itself.

Gum with Xylitol, Sorbitol
Anything with artificial sweeteners will require you to induce vomiting. Give your vet a call if you think it has been more than 30 minutes since your pup ingested it.

Advil or Tylenol
These drugs are TOXIC to dogs! A small amount can cause kidney and liver damage, and a large amount can kill your dog. Induce vomiting if the ingestion was recent, and call your vet. Your Weim will likely need IV fluids to help flush her system.

How to Induce Vomiting
Hydrogen Peroxide (3%) is safe to give your puppy to induce vomiting. The correct dosage is 1 teaspoon (5mL) per 10lbs of body weight. Your aim is to induce vomiting, so you need to make sure that your pup has enough to make them vomit. If the first dose is not enough, repeat the dose after 10 minutes. DO NOT induce vomiting if your dog has ingested anything with sharp edges or anything that is caustic (such as bleach). In this case, please consult your veterinarian.

When to Go to the Vet
Here is our list of true veterinary emergencies. Know this list and don’t stop to read it if your pup is showing any of these signs!

- Difficulty breathing: noisy, labored respirations, blue tongue, pale gums (along with other signs), gasping to breathe.
- Bleeding that does not stop in 5 minutes or is pulsatile. Grab a clean cloth (or a finger!), occlude the source, and go!
- Bloated, distended belly or painful abdomen, with or without vomiting. This is even worse if your pup is trying to vomit but unable to. Call your vet while you are driving and tell them you’re on the way!
• Heatstroke including heavy panting, weakness, body temperature above 104 degrees Fahrenheit.
• Loss of balance, loss of consciousness or seizures. This can include tremors (along with other signs of illness), coma, staggering, convulsions, sudden blindness, tilting of the head, biting at imaginary objects, confusion, or sudden changes in character.
• Pain, either severe or continuous. Extreme anxiety.
• Major trauma or shock from falls, vehicle accidents, wounds, broken bones, etc. If your pup sustained an injury that has potential for consequences (such as a bad fall or a car accident with impact), take him to a vet, regardless of whether he is showing symptoms.
• Violent vomiting or diarrhea.
• Venomous snake-bites.
• Hives or swelling around the face, neck, or tongue. Call your vet and give your pup Benadryl before hitting the road.
• Lameness that is new and concerning to you.
• Ingested poisons—bring the container along with you to the vet and call before leaving.
• Penetrating wounds anywhere—chest or abdomen being especially severe. Even benign appearing wounds can end in nasty infection and require an antibiotic.

Less emergent, but still requiring a vet trip:

• Inability to move bladder or bowels, painful or bloody urination or defecation.
• Ongoing vomiting or diarrhea enough to make you concerned about dehydration.
• Severe hives, itching with nonstop chewing on the affected area
• Multiple stings with swelling
• Non-venomous snake bites
• Eye problems
Weims Will be Weims

How Big Will He Get?

One of the most common things we hear as breeders and mentors is the question, “How big will my puppy get?” Well, the answer is, “It depends.”

Your breeder is always the best person to ask about this, as they should have knowledge of the size of both parents and grandparents and often even farther back than that. Medium sized dogs can produce small puppies or behemoths.

Breeders who are working to meet the standard for the breed try to stay within the typical 22”-26” for females and 23”-28” for males. Most dogs are ¾ their adult height at 16 weeks, and they are half of their lean adult weight. If your pup is 55lbs at 16 weeks, either you have a monster on your hands, or you may want to look into a diet plan for Mr. Big!

[We created this graph by poling hundreds of Weim puppy owners. It is not scientific, but may give you an idea how big your pup will get.]

JW Link: "Skinny Puppy"
Girl Puppy Issues

Puppy Vaginitis occurs in young females and is a white to yellow-tinged discharge that will go away with her first heat cycle. DO NOT let your vet put her on antibiotics without talking to your breeder first or unless there are associated Urinary Tract Infection symptoms (frequent urination and squatting with only a drop or two or urine each time or blood in her urine, drinking more water than usual, etc.). Adding antibiotics at this time can actually cause a cycle of infection leading to more problems down the road.

Your girl puppy has always been cleaned by her mother and she is just now learning to keep herself clean. Girl puppies squat on the ground to urinate and some of them squat pretty low! It is also quite common for females to have a recessed vulva, which predisposes them to vaginitis and UTIs. For these females it is imperative that they are allowed to go through their first heat cycle or their anatomy will make their UTIs a lifelong problem which may lead to kidney problems down the road. You may want to try adding some probiotics, yogurt, or cranberry to get her urinary tract back on track if your little girl does develop a vaginitis.

Expect your female to go into season around a year old. Some will start their first heat at around nine months, and some may wait until 15 or even 18 months. We find that this follows family lines, so ask your breeder when your puppy's mom first came in season for a guestimate of when yours might. You will likely notice some personality changes to go along with their heat cycle, and it is best to ignore these although you should not let her get away with bad behavior.

We have also noticed that each one of our female puppies has had a lapse in housetraining between four and six months. Whether hormones, behavioral, or just too busy to go outside, we have found that it is best to ignore these “incidents” and after only a few of them they get back to their usual accident-free selves.

JW Link: "Living with Bitches"

Boy Puppy Issues

Boys are generally known to be sweet, loveable and goofy, whereas the girls tend to be a bit more cunning and manipulative.

The most common worry that people have with boy dogs is leg lifting and marking. Your male Weim pup will start lifting his leg around 5-8 months of age. Neutering him prior to this MAY prevent leg lifting, but more often than not, they still learn to leg-lift from observing other males.

Marking is different from house breaking, so you may have to teach your boy that marking is ALSO a no-no. Following the same steps as you did for house breaking will teach him this, and just as when he was a little puppy, you must be vigilant to keep accidents to a minimum. Urine smells will
trigger his desire to mark so the fewer the accidents the better. In a pinch you can use a "belly band" to prevent his marking your furniture and drapes. A "belly band" is a piece of fabric that wraps around your boy's belly like a diaper to keep him from marking.

Your eight week old boy puppy may or may not have dropped his testicles. Undescended testicles is not cause for alarm at this age, although when getting a male puppy, it's better if a vet or breeder had palpated the testicles before they left their home. The testicles go up and down until they are permanently down, and especially somewhere like a vets office, pups will "suck 'em up." It is not unheard of to see a puppy's testicles drop at five or six months, we've even heard stories of up to 12 months, but there was probably a lot of nail biting involved there! If you see one come and go, try massaging them down. Yes really, it helps.

Cryptorchid dogs should eventually be neutered if the testicle is in the abdomen since there is some cancer risk there, but there is really no urgency to get him neutered right away. Cancers usually do not develop in a young dog so we feel that waiting is worth getting the benefits from his hormones even if the testicle is indeed in his abdomen.

[Placing a puppy in a "sitting" position as pictured above is an easy way to see if testicles have dropped on a young male puppy.]

JW Link: "Living with Dogs"
Spay/Neuter

Bottom line, it's up to you. However, our recommendation is to wait until your dog is physically/mentally/emotionally mature until they are spayed/neutered. It is better for them for many reasons and recent research has started to show that.

Estrogen and testosterone are important for growth and development. BUT it is also an important commitment to curb your dog's behavior whether male or female, and you need to understand some things regarding sexual development.

Most female Weims are over a year when they go into heat for the first time and most males are the same when considered sexually mature.

[Argos gets neutered!]

Photos courtesy of Luke Chapman of thrillmere.com

JW Link: "Spay/Neuter: What Hormones Have to Do with It"
Cats

Most people will tell you the standard answer: Weims and cats don’t work well together. We have all heard stories of Weims killing a household cat that they’d lived with all their lives. It does happen.

But there’s more to this story. Weims tend to do fine with THEIR cat when boundaries are set from the beginning. If you have a cat and are committed to making it work, chances are that it will work out fine. We’ve both raised our hunting Weims with cats, but we were cautious to never let our guard down! All bets are off for ferrets, chinchillas, or that pet flying squirrel you may have been eyeing.

Regardless of the socialization your pup may have had as a baby, your dog is still a hunter at heart and will tend to see fast-moving and furry critters as a snack. Make sure that your new puppy understands that he can’t play too rough with Mr. Jingles, and that he is YOUR cat. Also make sure to give your cat a safe hideaway where his food and litterbox are kept—an escape route that only he can access and your new puppy terror can’t get to. Many people install a small cat door in the bathroom or basement that serves just that purpose. To keep your cat safe, management and thinking ahead are the common themes here.

JW Link: "Keeping the Peace"

Nooking/Nucking

Many people bring home a new Weim puppy and find that she still exhibits nursing and even kneading behavior. They often mistakenly believe that their pup was improperly weaned. In reality, many Weims continue to do this for their entire lives, picking out a special toy or blanket and preferring to nuck on that toy rather than perform the usual de-stuffing. Nobody knows exactly why some Weims do this, but it is rather unique to the breed and prevalent in certain
bloodlines. If you have a nucker, enjoy it! In our experience, these pups tend to be gentler with their toys. At least their special toy!

[Nooking, nursing, milking, whatever you call it, it’s a Weimaraner trait and runs heavy in certain family lines]

Photo courtesy of Corrine Renner
Grooming

Teeth

You should spend some time getting your puppy used to having your fingers in his or her mouth. We have begun this by putting a dab of peanut butter on our fingers and letting pup lick it off, by making sure to put our fingers in the pups’ mouth, and not letting them spit our finger out. You should not, however, engage in a long or protracted wrestling match over this exercise. If your pup puts up a big fight, say nothing and walk away, and just try it again later. Usually the best time to do this is when your pup is tired and ready to snuggle.

[Get your puppy used to having his mouth touched to make handling easy as he grows older.]

There are plenty of doggie toothpaste and toothbrush combinations on the market and these work well. We have had the best luck, however, with Nylabones and teaching our dogs to enjoy chewing on appropriate tooth-scrubbing items. Greenies are another good option, but more expensive.

Make sure that any introduction to toothbrushing or mouth care that you do stops between four and six months as your puppy will be teething and this can be traumatic and painful for him. We have found the best thing for a teething puppy is a frozen dishtowel or washcloth rolled and knotted, soaked in water or broth, and frozen solid. This makes a mess but they love it and it soothes sore gums really nicely.
Coat

Of course we have to talk about that oh-so-distinctive Weimaraner coat. A trademark of the breed, it ranges in color from a very light “mouse gray” to a darker shade of “deer gray” all the way to a nearly black gunmetal shade of “blue.” They also come in a longhaired variety.

Whatever color your dog may be, his coat should be glossy and wash-and-wear.

Shedding

Weimaraners do shed, but this is minimal when they are on an appropriate diet, and shedding can be decreased even more with the addition of a fatty acid supplement during the spring and fall. We use a rubber brush called the Zoom Groom and it works beautifully to remove dead hairs.

Most Weimaraners start out life with a distinctive zebra stripe pattern that fades in a few days. Their puppy coat is often lighter than their adult coat, but this is not always the case. Around a year old, some Weimaraners will shed in some odd patterns that you may notice as they “blow” their puppy coat.

The first shed is always the worst, and your dog’s coat may develop almost a “moth eaten” appearance. This is fine. Other possibilities are a “buckshot” pattern and the “eel stripe” down the middle of the back. The eel stripe may be noticeable on some adults even when they are not shedding.

JW Link: "Yes, Weims Do Shed"
**Bathing**

For the most part, the Weimaraner is a breed that does NOT need frequent bathing, and in fact bathing too frequently can be harmful for their coat and skin. Two to four baths a year should suffice, other than a quick towel off to remove any obvious dirt. A healthy dog will not have an odor. Their coat sheds dirt once it dries, and burrs, stickers, and other inconveniences often do not stick to their slick coat.

![Wash n' wear!](image)

*Photo courtesy of Corrine Renner*

**Summer Crud (aka Staph Infection of the Skin)**

This often begins as an atopic dermatitis, or contact allergy. It is common to see in young Weimaraners, usually around a season change in the spring or fall. It begins as red, raised bumps in your dog's armpits and groin area, maybe spreading to their belly as well. Often this is self-limiting and will never happen again, as your dog's immune system will mature as he or she does. Don't vaccinate your dog while this is going on, although it is not likely related.

You can try Benedryl (1 mg per lb of body weight) and washing your dog's coat more frequently for the next few weeks. If the bumps become pustules, wash with a sulfa based shampoo such as Mal-Acetic. If the bumps don’t get better or appear to be getting worse, you may need to go to the vet for a course of antibiotics.

JW Link: "[Summer Crud (Staph Infection of the Skin)](http://justweimaraners.com)"
Nails

Weimaraner nails come in various shades from black to very light, and grow at different speeds depending on the hardness of their nails, where they are exercised, and how their feet are shaped. Some of them need weekly trimming and others can go a month between sessions. As a pet owner this is important and goes beyond just looks. As an active breed with a high pain tolerance, Weimaraners can easily tear a nail or cause damage to their toes.

[A typical “de-shelling” injury that can occur if nails are kept too long. This one was kept clean and healed on its own, and the picture is taken about three weeks after the original injury.]

As soon as your Weim puppy comes home, you will need to begin the process of teaching your puppy to enjoy having his or her nails clipped. We frequently play with our puppy’s feet while they are calm and/or sleeping, making sure to go over each toe and nail, in between webbing, and up to the hock joint. We will often clip one toe at a time with a treat in between when pups are young.

There are no rules about clipping an entire foot or doing all the nails at once. Many breeders begin clipping their puppies’ nails weekly, so how well your puppy accepts handling of his feet will depend on this. Remember that you cannot be too generous with treats! We prefer clipping our dogs nails and then dremeling them to keep them short and blunt. We hate to hear “ticking” on the hardwood floors!

There are some good websites out there showing how to dremel your dog’s nails and we have a URL in the References section. Some breeders will already have your pup somewhat accustomed to the feel and sound of a dremel, but you will need to continue this acclimation if you want to dremel your pups nails.
Resources and Further Reading

Websites

- JustWeimaraners: http://justweimaraners.com
- Diamonds in the Ruff Dog and Puppy Training http://diamondsintheruff.com
- Dog trainer Suzanne Clothier's Website: http://flyingdogpress.com
- Patricia McConnell’s Website http://www.patriciamcconnell.com
- Ian Dunbar’s blog http://dogstardaily.com
- Find a Weim Club in your area.

Recommended Books

- “Training with Mo” by Martha Greenlee sold online by Glade Run Press
- “Weimaraner Ways” by Virginia Alexander sold online at http://weimways.net

The following are available on Amazon. Please use our link on JW to enter Amazon if you'd like JW to get "credit" and a small commission for the sale.
- Anything by Suzanne Clothier
- Anything by Ian Dunbar
- "The Culture Clash" by Jean Donaldson
- “Don’t Shoot The Dog. The New Art of Teaching and Training” by Karen Pryor
- “The Other End of the Leash: Why We Do What We Do Around Dogs” by Patricia McConnell