

Puppy Potty Training Schedule

Wake-up

Post-meal

Post-water

Post-nap

Post-play

Interval

Water note

Final trip

Overnight

The gastrocolic reflex is your secret weapon. Puppies need to go 15–20 minutes after eating. Time your meals, and your post-meal trips become the most reliable potty breaks of the day. This is why feeding schedules and potty schedules are inseparable.

8–10 Weeks Old

HOLD 1–2 hours

TRIPS/DAY 10–14

OVERNIGHT Yes (1–2 alarms)

TIME	TYPE	WHAT TO DO
6:30 AM	Wake-up	Carry to potty spot immediately — no walking through the house
7:00 AM	Post-meal	Breakfast → out 15–20 min after eating (gastrocolic reflex)
7:30 AM	Post-water	Offer water → out 10–15 min after drinking
8:00 AM	Interval	Every 30–60 min while awake
8:30 AM	Post-play	After any play session or excitement
9:30 AM	Post-nap	Wakes from nap → carry to potty spot immediately
10:00 AM	Interval	Regular interval check
11:00 AM	Post-meal	Lunch → out 15–20 min after eating
11:30 AM	Post-water	Offer water → out 10–15 min after
12:30 PM	Post-nap	After midday nap
1:00 PM	Post-play	After play session
2:00 PM	Interval	Regular interval check
3:00 PM	Post-meal	Afternoon meal → out 15–20 min after
3:30 PM	Post-water	Offer water → out 10–15 min after
4:30 PM	Post-nap	After afternoon nap
5:30 PM	Post-play	After play/training session
6:30 PM	Post-meal	Dinner → out 15–20 min after eating
7:00 PM	Post-water	Last water offering
7:30 PM	Water note	Pick up water bowl (~2 hrs before bed)
9:00 PM	Final trip	Last trip before crate — calm, boring, no play
1:00 AM	Overnight	Alarm → carry to spot, no lights, straight back to crate
4:30 AM	Overnight	Second alarm if needed → same routine

12–16 Weeks Old**HOLD** 3–4 hours**TRIPS/DAY** 7–9**OVERNIGHT** Usually no

TIME	TYPE	WHAT TO DO
6:30 AM	Wake-up	Out immediately on waking
7:00 AM	Post-meal	Breakfast → out 15–20 min after eating
7:30 AM	Post-water	Water offered with meal → out after drinking
9:30 AM	Post-nap	Wakes from morning nap → out immediately
10:00 AM	Interval	Mid-morning check (signal-watch developing)
12:00 PM	Post-meal	Lunch → out 15–20 min after eating
12:30 PM	Post-water	Post-water trip
2:30 PM	Post-nap	Wakes from afternoon nap → out immediately
3:30 PM	Post-play	After play or training session
5:30 PM	Post-meal	Dinner → out 15–20 min after eating
6:00 PM	Post-water	Last water offering
7:30 PM	Water note	Pick up water bowl
9:20 PM	Final trip	Last trip before crate — keep it boring

4–6 Months Old**HOLD** 4–5 hours**TRIPS/DAY** 5–7**OVERNIGHT** No

TIME	TYPE	WHAT TO DO
6:30 AM	Wake-up	Out on waking — puppy may start signalling at door
7:00 AM	Post-meal	Breakfast → out 15–20 min after (still reliable trigger)
10:30 AM	Interval	Mid-morning — watch for signals more than clock
12:00 PM	Post-meal	Lunch → out 15–20 min after eating
3:30 PM	Post-play	After play or training — or on signal
5:30 PM	Post-meal	Dinner → out 15–20 min after eating
8:00 PM	Interval	Evening trip — signal-based or scheduled
9:20 PM	Final trip	Last trip before bed

6–12 Months Old**HOLD** 6–8 hours**TRIPS/DAY** 4–5**OVERNIGHT** No

TIME	TYPE	WHAT TO DO
6:30 AM	Wake-up	Out on waking
7:00 AM	Post-meal	Breakfast → out 15–20 min after (gastrocolic reflex persists)
12:30 PM	Interval	Midday trip — signal-driven or habit
5:30 PM	Post-meal	Dinner → out 15–20 min after eating
9:20 PM	Final trip	Last trip before bed

When to Move to the Next Schedule

SIGN	WHAT TO DO
Zero accidents for 5–7 consecutive days	Extend intervals by 15–30 min and drop one trip
Puppy signals at the door consistently	Start trusting signals over the clock for interval trips
Accidents suddenly return	Tighten back to previous schedule for 3–5 days (regression is normal at 5–8 months)
Puppy sleeps through the night dry	Drop the overnight alarm — test by pushing it 30 min later every 2–3 nights

7 Guaranteed Potty Triggers

- 1 Waking up (morning or nap)
- 2 15–20 min after eating
- 3 10–15 min after drinking water
- 4 After play or excitement
- 5 After being in a crate or confined space
- 6 Before going into the crate
- 7 Sniffing in circles or heading to a corner (learned signal)

For the interactive version and complete potty training guide, visit allaboutdogparenting.com/puppy-training/