**Puppies start with Zzzzzzz!**

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It has been with the greatest pleasure that I have seen so many new owners of Frenchie puppies appear on our FBBNZ facebook page. Seeing the love they are receiving and giving to their new family members is what any breeder wishes for. With all the new owners I wanted to write this small article on the most important thing that any new owner can give their puppy and that is sleep.

**1) Why is sleep so important for your puppy?**

Like any new born, sleep promotes growth both physically and mentally. Starting with the physical side of things, sleep promotes the growth of your puppy's bones and muscular system and the building and strengthening of the immune system. On the mental side without sleep your puppy will not have the mental energy to develop. It's behavior will become erratic, it may become aggressive and/or destructive. Traits no dog owner wants let alone encourage through a lack of sleep. All these things are no good for you and your family but most importantly the puppy.

**2) So how much sleep should your puppy get?**

Most owners in NZ will receive their puppies at around 10-12 weeks and at that age your puppy should be sleeping somewhere between 70% of the day i.e. 17 hours. It won't be in one long stretch but generally a series of naps that occur on and before any mealtime and then the big sleep at night. What about toilet training and socialisation? There is plenty of time for that during the waking hours and besides you do need to be careful about overstimulation resulting in over tiredness. As the puppy gets older the sleep pattern will change and become less and less but the important rule of thumb is that if your puppy or young dog (and when I mean young I refer to less than 1 years old) is sleeping let sleeping dogs lie!

**3) Why I like using a crate for my puppies sleep**

Crating and good puppy sleep, in my book, go hand and hand. Why? Because a crate provides physical security both for the puppy and you and when covered with a towel or blanket provides a quiet peaceful environment thereby promoting sleep. Think of it like when you have a small child, you don't leave the child outside with noise to sleep but rather you take them to a room where it is nice and quiet, same thing applies with a young puppy. Your puppy might whine when you place them in the crate to sleep but don't give up, the crying will stop and the puppy will get use to it. It is also good for puppies to get used to being crated, as sometimes, when visitors come, they can overstimulate the puppy. It is important to have some social time, but, also important to have time out from visitors, especially at a young age, and if you have young children visiting.

Remember though that you must make your crate an attractive place to sleep so that means blankets and cushions and as I said cover the crate with a nice heavy towel that covers the sides so it gives the puppy the impression that it is in a safe cave.

**4) Can a puppy oversleep?**

In all my years breeding I have never felt a puppy has overslept unless it is sick. If your puppy sleeps more than what is usually does (so observe and know your puppy) and is lethargic when its awake then its probably a good idea to take the pup to the vet for a general checkup.

Sleep is simple stuff and for the most part commonsense but as a breeder since the 1980's you would be surprised to know how many puppies I have met that look overtired and clearly sleep deprived. I completely understand the charm and fun of a new puppy but let your puppy sleep because if you don't your puppy may never reach its full potential both personality and physical wise.

**Thankyou**

**Helen**

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