



Guide Dogs for the Blind

Puppy Raising Department

Crate Bedding Guidelines

Bedding in the crate provides a warm, cozy place for baby puppies to snuggle up when they leave their littermates. Many older puppies also appreciate a soft surface to lie down upon when crated. We want our puppies to be comfortable, but safety, and the prevention of undesirable habits, is important. These guidelines will help ensure that our puppies can continue to enjoy the benefits of bedding in their crates.

- Bedding may be left in the crate, even when the puppy is unsupervised. Suitable chew toys may be made available to help prevent chewing on bedding.
- For puppies that exhibit a high level of stress/anxiety when crated, adding protocols, such as the Treat & Train Protocol, is encouraged. Speak to your PFM about suitable options.
- It is not necessary to wean the puppy off crate bedding, however, as the puppy matures it may go through an intense chewing phase. Puppies should be periodically monitored, and bedding checked regularly, to ensure ripping and shredding isn't occurring. To prevent ingestion, puppies that do start chewing on bedding should have the bedding removed.
- Some puppies, just like some people, tend to 'run hot'. These puppies, and those being raised in warmer climates, may not appreciate bedding in the crate. If the bedding is constantly being pushed to one side of the crate (and not being used as a 'nest') then it should be removed.

Types of Bedding

- Bedding should not lend itself to shredding/ingesting. Certain types of bedding are more appealing than others when it comes to oral behaviors. Seams, stitching, loose weaves, bolsters, and texture that lends itself to plucking, should be avoided. This precludes most available dog beds, even most 'ballistic' dog beds are not chew proof and are quite expensive. We recommend fleece fabric purchased inexpensively from any fabric store e.g.:
<https://www.joann.com/fabric/fleece-fabric/>
- Blankets cut from fleece fabric do not need stitching/hemming and can be easily washed.
- Alternatively, the fleece pads we have available in the gift shop are conveniently cut to size:
<https://store.guidedogs.com/fleece-rug.html>
- Plusher fleece, such as the pads and the 'faux fur' available at fabric stores, lends itself to plucking by puppies. If the puppy tends to pluck at the longer fleece, it should not be left alone with this type of bedding in the crate. If in doubt, stay with regular fleece fabric.
- Larger pieces of fleece can be folded over to make a thicker, heavier 'bed'. Inexpensive fleece blankets with the hemmed edging/seam cut off (the part most likely to attract chewing) also work well.