



The King George Animal Rescue League's **Guide to Adopting a Dog**

KGARL's Mission

Educate both adults and youth in the proper care of pets
Raise funds to provide better lives for the homeless animals of King George
Promote adoption, spaying/neutering and complete vaccination programs

To join our group of volunteers, please call 1-888-KGARLVA or email info@kgarl.org.

To make a donation, make check payable to KGARL and send to:
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For more information, see our web-site: kgarl.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEFORE YOU BRING A DOG HOME	3
ARE YOU READY FOR A PET?	4
WWW.SAVEOURSTRAYS.COM	5
SELECTING THE RIGHT PET FOR YOU	6
SUPPLIES YOUR NEW DOG WILL NEED	9
SELECTING A COMMERCIAL PET FOOD	11
SETTLING IN	15
HELPING YOUR DOG ADJUST TO A NEW HOME	16
PET IDENTIFICATION	18
INSIDE OR OUT?	19
EDUCATING YOUR DOG	21
THE EDUCATED DOG	22
DEALING WITH NORMAL PUPPY BEHAVIOR:	23
HOUSETRAINING YOUR PUPPY	25
CRATE TRAINING YOUR DOG.....	27
"BARK! BARK! BARK!"	29
UNDERSTANDING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN DOGS	32
HEALTH	34
DOG VACCINATION RECOMMENDATIONS	35
WHY YOU SHOULD SPAY OR NEUTER YOUR PET	36
POISON-PROOF YOUR HOME.....	38
WHAT TO DO FOR A POISONED ANIMAL.....	40
REFERRALS	41

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Before You Bring a Dog Home

The decision to bring a dog into your family should not be taken lightly. When a dog goes to a new home, it can be a stressful time for everyone. The following sections are included to help make the transition easier on all involved.

If you decide to adopt a dog, the King George Animal Rescue League will be happy to help you find the right dog for you. We can be reached at 540-644-0110, or kinggeorgeanimalrescueleague@yahoo.com. Visit our web-site for more information at www.kgarl.org.

Are You Ready for a Pet?

This article is meant to help you decide if you are ready to bring a new pet into your home.

Selecting the Right Pet for You

After you decide you are ready for a pet, this article will help you identify the best pet for your situation.

Supplies Your New Dog Will Need

This article is meant to help you buy the necessary supplies before you bring your new dog home.

Selecting a Commercial Pet Food

This article is meant to educate you, the consumer, on the different pet foods available.

Are you ready for a pet?

If you love pets, chances are you already have one or two. Or perhaps this is your first pet or the first one you've had in a while. Either way, sometimes what we believe we know about taking care of a pet and the reality of what is involved differs. Read through Bob Christiansen's article that will ensure you've thought of everything before you adopt a pet. They're counting on you - please don't let them down.

Aligning Pet Expectations with Reality

Preparation

The decision to acquire a pet should be considered by all members of the family. Everyone should ask himself or herself, "Why do I want and desire a pet?" "Are we prepared to give our pet a good home?" Pets need to become part of the family. Do you want a pet to be inside your home and partake in family activity? Separation and isolation cause emotional problems. Do you know the typical behavior expected from your desired pet? Dog breeds are selectively bred for certain functions and they have different exercise, training, and grooming requirements. The trick in selecting a pet is to know what to expect from the typical behavior of the pet you favor and to match those characteristics and behaviors with your family's life style and living situation. How will your pet be cared for when you go on vacation?

Are You A First-Time Owner

Research indicated first-time adopters place the pet at greater risk of relinquishment because they do not anticipate undesirable behaviors and are not aware of successful techniques in eliminating them.

The Training Imperative

It will take time for a pet to adapt and be trained to it's new home. How will you teach the pet the rules of the house? Chewing, barking, digging and house soiling are common dog behaviors. Scratching and litter box problems are common in cats. They can continue and become annoying and bothersome unless the pet receives basic training modification. Can your family accept this and be patient, kind and consistent during the teaching process? Are you committed to working out problems when they occur? Training should start the moment you bring the pet into the home. Pets need to make positive associations at a young age to feel confident and well adjusted around other dogs and humans. Everyone in the household should train the pet, not just the primary care giver. Every person must be consistent. Children should learn to respect your pet and the pet should be taught to respect the child.

Time, Energy Commitment

Adult attachment depends, in part, on the time and energy available to the adult and the amount of nurturing required by the pet(s). Time constraints are often realized after the pet is obtained. Regular duties, like walking the dog, became time consuming and difficult, especially for children. Do you have enough time and energy for daily pet care activities? Pets require food, water, exercise, grooming care and companionship every day of their life. Surveys indicate the average owners spend two hours a day to feed, train, groom, play, exercise and clean up after their pets. Pets enjoy and need the interaction. Will you provide the time or will it become an annoyance or burden?

Costs of Pet Ownership

Have you considered the costs involved in caring for a dog, like a license, food, training, equipment, grooming supplies, toys and medical care that includes spay/neuter surgery? (Minimum \$300 per year.)

Parent Responsibility

If you are a parent, is the sole reason you want a dog to teach your preschool or grade school child to be a responsible, loving and emotionally sensitive person? Are you looking for a pet "toy" for your child? Researchers tell us there are many dogs returned to the shelter because "It just did not work out." Be realistic. It is a job for adults.

According to researchers Kidd, Kidd and George, "The responsibility for and caretaking of pets usually becomes the mother's obligation regardless of initial plans. Therefore, where parents expect the pet to teach the child responsibility and caretaking and the child does not learn and display these behaviors, the parents usually regret adopting the pet and frequently reject or abandon it" (Psychological Reports, 1992, 70, 547-561).

Landlord Permission

Do you have permission from your landlord, preferably in writing? Fewer and fewer rental units accept pets. Do you know the condominium rules regarding pets? What will you do if you have to move? Will you make the commitment to take the dog with you?

Home Compatibility

Most dogs and cats want to be in the home with the family. Extended periods of isolation will cause emotional problems. Can you keep the cat confined indoors? Can you bring your dog indoors a majority of the time? Do you have other pets at home? Will one more be too much? Will they get along? Do you have enough space to house the pet(s) properly? How will you keep the pet confined? Certain dogs are better equipped for life in a large suburban home than in an apartment. Free-roaming dogs are a nuisance to neighbors, endanger the dog and violate the law. It's cruel to chain a dog in a confined area and it often leads to behavior problems.

Health and Annoyance Concerns

Does anyone in your family have allergies that may be provoked by pet hair? Will you mind the constant fight to control hair shedding, fleas and odors, or will they annoy or burden you?

Responsible Ownership

Will you be a responsible pet owner and spay/neuter your pet before they are 6 months of age. Will you provide vaccinations, identification, visit a veterinarian regularly, obey all laws and forge a good pet citizen?

Commitment

Are you committed to keep and care for your pet its entire life, even when you move and your life style changes? Unintentional Owners and good Samaritans acquire pets and think of the pet as a temporary guest. "I am just keeping the animal until I can find it a good home." They were not seeking a pet but acquiesced when petitioned by other people or an orphaned animal came into their life. Be committed to working out all ownership problems that prevent you from enjoying your pet. Do you understand once you adopt your pet the responsibility is for life — and your pet's life depends on it.

Love Your Pet

Pets need to be part of the human pack. Do you want a pet to be part of your household? Sleep near you? Will you pet and stroke your pet daily? Will you display or carry a picture of your pet? Research indicates that the chance of relinquishment will be minimal if you bond with your pet.

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Selecting the Right Pet for You

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Puppies and kittens are babies: All babies are cute, cuddly and fun to watch whether they're playing or sleeping. It's wonderful to watch a baby grow, explore and learn. However, we can't predict what kind of personality that baby will have as an adult. It's impossible to look at the rows of human babies in a hospital nursery and know who will be athletic or academic, quiet or talkative, high-or low-energy, artistically or mechanically gifted, sociable or a "loner."

Many physical traits of certain types or breeds of dogs and cats can be fairly predictable. Some are good traits like size, coat and hair types, and some are bad, such as over-breeding, health problems and so forth. Some have general personality traits: retrievers like to have things in their mouths; terriers like to dig; and Siamese-type cats tend to be very talkative. These traits can be predicted to a limited degree, however, it's hazardous to make too many assumptions about any infant's individual personality based solely on what traits his or her "group" is expected to have.

Each baby, whether human, canine or feline, will develop into an individual with a unique personality and special characteristics all their own. Their personality will be based on some inherited and some learned traits and that combination is what makes each individual unique. When we choose our friends, we look for certain characteristics that fit into our lives, traits we share, and attitudes that help us mesh. Physical characteristics may play a part in those choices, but the real "click" comes from those combined traits that are unique to each individual. The same is true when we choose pets to share our lives with us for ten to 20 years.

How do I decide what age pet is right for me? Many people assume that puppies or kittens are the only "right" age for a new pet to be introduced into the family, when in fact, an older pet is more suitable for many situations. There are important differences between the needs and abilities of adult dogs or cats and puppies or kittens. Puppies and kittens learn many of their most important skills, such as how to be a dog or a cat, from their mothers and littermates until they're ten to twelve weeks old. Baby animals taken from their families before that age need specialized lessons and care. Just because they can eat grown-up food doesn't mean they have grown up. However, those first few weeks aren't the only time for learning.

The first six months of life are vital to the development of puppies and kittens and require a lot of time, care and energy. Many households are not able to provide what is needed during this busy period of high-rate learning and growing. Baby animals that are not properly taught and cared for during this time find it difficult to develop the proper social skills. Depending on the type of cat or dog, most pets can be considered "teenagers" or young adults from six months to 16 months old. These puppies and kittens are still growing and developing through adolescence, but are beginning to show the direction that their individual personalities will probably take. They're still high-energy "kids" at this stage and will test your patience at every turn.

Every pet has a history, no matter how young or how old. Some animals come with details about their backgrounds, and some have histories that remain mysterious. A pet of any age can bond with the people who love and care for him, giving as much to the relationship as he receives in return. Some animals may have very negative memories of humans who mistreated them, and need extra time to adjust and to learn to trust. The majority of adult cats and dogs, however, can bond with their new families as deeply as puppies or kittens raised from babyhood.

If you're looking for a pet with certain personality traits, it's more likely that you'll find the right companion to fit your lifestyle if the candidate is at least six months old. If you don't have the patience or energy for a teenager, you should consider an adult dog or cat that is at least one year to eighteen months old. Dogs and cats this age learn quickly, have more coordination and control over their physical functions, and have more predictable natures.

You must first decide if you have the time, energy, space and money for a pet – it's a huge commitment. You then need to determine whether a baby animal or a mature pet is more appropriate for your lifestyle and your expectations for this new member of the family.

To help you weigh the "pros" and "cons" of adopting a dog or cat versus a puppy or kitten, ask yourself these important questions:

- **How much time do you spend at home on an average day?** Puppies and kittens need more physical and emotional involvement with their people than you can give if you are away from home more than six hours a day. Most adult pets can easily adjust to your schedule, however, they also need time to learn what is expected of them. Some dogs never grow accustomed to being left alone. If all of your family members are away from home more than eight hours most days, a dog may not be the appropriate choice for your household, and you might want to consider adopting an adult cat (or two) instead.
- **Are there children in my home? How many? How old?** While many families think they want "a pet for the children," it actually takes a very special combination of parent/child/pet to have a successful relationship. If the child is under six years old, the pet should be over four months old. Puppies and kittens play roughly, and without careful supervision and training, both your child and your pet could have a bad experience with potentially serious consequences.

An adult pet is usually past the stage of becoming overly excited, and you can better gauge how hardy and tolerant he'll be toward childish enthusiasm. It's your responsibility, to your pet and to your child, to monitor their interaction. You can help to strengthen the relationship between your pet and child by showing your respect for your pet's needs and feelings. Teach by example that your pet is an important family member, not a "plaything" to be neglected and tossed away when no longer new and exciting.

While a family pet offers children a wonderful opportunity to learn about caring and responsibility, regular pet-care duties need to be carefully supervised by an adult. A child should never be solely responsible for a pet. You also need to keep in mind that your child's life and interests will change over the next ten to 15 years. The ultimate responsibility for a pet's care and safety is that of the adults in the household.

Will this pet be a companion to another pet? It's best to introduce a younger animal to an adult resident pet in your household, but not too young. Your resident cat or dog may respond to a very young kitten or puppy as prey to be hunted. In addition, the older pet may not like the constant bother and play. Very young pets lack the social graces to read your older pet's irritation and the reflexes to escape if the situation becomes tense. From four to 14 months old is a good age range to introduce a puppy or kitten to your adult pet.

Most pets like to have at least one "buddy." You might want to consider adopting a pair of adult pets that are already accustomed to and attached to each other. Many pets (especially cats) are surrendered to shelters in "pairs" because their human families are no longer able to care for them. There are many benefits to keeping a pair together.

Do I want a pet that will participate with me in outdoor activities? If you want a dog to take hiking and camping, to play ball or swim in the lake with, or to train to catch flying discs, you should consider a teenage or young adult dog. For major outdoor activities a dog should be a certain size and have natural hardiness. Not all dogs (even retrievers) are naturally inclined toward catching things. This is an excellent example of finding the right combination of traits to fit your particular criteria.

In addition, dogs that are involved in these types of activities must have excellent manners, and you must be willing and able to build a strong relationship with your dog, including ongoing obedience training. Many pets, like many people, don't travel well. Some reasons for chronic carsickness can be remedied, but if you specifically want a pet to travel with you to local activities or on short vacations, don't expect miracles from a young animal. There is no way to tell which pet will have the stomach for it.

Do I want a "lap-pet" that will be physically affectionate and cuddly? Most puppies and kittens will accept some physical affection, but they don't all grow up to be pets that like to be cuddled. This is another good example of a specific personality trait, which if it's important to you, will be easier to find in an adult animal.

Do I prefer a certain physical appearance, coloring or coat? If you like big cats, shiny dogs or fluffy coats, you can do some "educated guessing" with a puppy or kitten, but you'll still be guessing. By the time a cat or dog is about six months old, these physical traits will be clear, plus you'll be able to see what kind of personality traits go along with the "package."

How large is "too large" for my lifestyle? If you're renting your "home," you'll want to check the pet policies in your rental contract or lease -- especially regarding size limitations. Puppies and kittens grow up, and believe it or not, thousands of puppies and kittens lose their homes each year because someone didn't think about what their adult size might be. If you have a specific size in mind for your ideal pet, it's not

a good idea to guess. By the time cats and most dogs are six or seven months old, you can usually tell what size they'll be when they're fully grown. Many large dogs are surrendered to animal shelters because they were cute, little, fluffy puppies one week and big, clumsy, enthusiastic teenagers the next. It takes time to teach any dog basic manners, like not to pull on the leash, not to jump on people and not to play too roughly, and even more time and patience with a puppy.

You can benefit from someone else's poor planning if you adopt an adult or teenage dog, but only if you're willing to do what they did not - teach him the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. This training may take weeks or months, but it can begin very simply with a dog over six months old that's ready and able to learn quickly, and has good muscular coordination and some knowledge of social skills.

The Dumb Friends League is the source of this material. KGARL has been given express written consent to reprint this article. www.ddfl.org

Supplies Your New Dog Will Need

Collar

Everyday Collar

Even if you choose to use one of the specialty collars below, an everyday collar is a necessity. This collar should be worn at all times, with the pet's identification attached. The collar can be made of nylon or leather and should be a size appropriate for your dog.



Head Collar

If your dog takes you for a walk, instead of the other way around, you might want to consider a head collar. A head collar works by gently turning the dog's head when he pulls on the leash. While similar in appearance, the collar is not a muzzle! The dog is still able to eat, breath, bark and bite as normal. This type of collar should only be used when supervised.



Harness

For the dogs that tend to cough with the slightest pressure from any collar, a harness may be the answer. On a well-trained dog, a harness can be the solution. On an untrained dog, the harness may be what the dog uses to drag the person around. Without prior training, using a harness can actually teach a dog to pull.



Choke and Prong Collars

A choke or prong collar is for training purposes only, and should not be used as a replacement for a regular collar. Both of these collars should be used with caution and never used unsupervised.



Leash

4-6 Feet

This is the most common type of leash and gives the most control over your pet. The leash can be made of nylon, leather or chain.



Long Line or Training

This type of leash is useful for teaching "Stay" or "Come". It is also nice for letting your pet exercise in unfenced, open areas, while still maintaining control.



Retractable

This type of leash is similar to the long line, except it is retractable. Easy use and size make these devices popular. Use them with care. These leashes, for the most part, are not very sturdy. It is difficult to get an excited dog under control with a retractable leash. Traffic, wild animals, other dogs, kids, etc... can alarm your dog. Without immediate control, your dog can be injured. Be aware of this and take precautions.



Food Dishes

There are many different types of bowls for dogs. Be sure to get ones that are heavy enough not to be tipped over easily. Each pet in the home should have his own set of dishes. The dishes should be washed often. Stainless steel is the sturdiest and the easiest to clean.



Dog Food

While home-prepared food is the best, unless your dog has health problems, pre-packaged dry food should be fine. Be sure to do your research before purchasing food, as there are many different brands available. The ingredients in the food are very important; they affect the dog's coat, skin, stools, and health. Please take the time to find the best diet for your pet – he will thank you for it with good health and a long life.



Grooming Tools

Nail Clippers

Most dogs, especially those kept indoors, will need their nails clipped regularly. A dog that walks on hard surfaces or that is outside a lot may have their nails naturally worn down to an acceptable length. The average dog spends most of its time indoors, or walks on surfaces too soft to wear the nails down, like grass or carpet.



Toothbrush

As a responsible pet owner, you owe it to your pet to take her dental care seriously, both professionally and at home. Your pet's teeth should be brushed as often as possible, ideally every day.



Hair Brush

To minimize shedding you should brush the hair daily, especially for thick or long coated dogs. The slicker brush is good for removing dead hair, and can be used on all types of hair: short, medium, and long. The pin brush can be used on medium and longhaired dogs, and removes dead hair too. The comb is best for getting out tangles. Many dogs, especially longhaired ones, need trimming and clipping. You can go to a professional groomer to get this done, or buy the equipment for home.



Crate

A crate can provide a safe, personal area for your dog to curl up. Crates are a valuable tool to help house train puppies and adult dogs. They can also be used to help prevent dogs and puppies from having opportunities to be destructive or disrupt family members at inappropriate times.



Dog Bed

Just as you prefer your chair, your dog also prefers the comfort and warmth of his own bed. With the wide variety of colors, fabrics, styles, and materials, such as wicker, you are sure to find just the right bed. It is up to you and your dog. However, it is best to place any bed in a low traffic, out-of-the-way spot since it is a quiet resting-place.



Toys

Kong

The Kong is a chew toy that can withstand even the most powerful chewers. This toy can be stuffed with treats, to provide hours of entertainment. It can also be used as a retrieving toy. The red Kongs are for regular chewers, and black Kongs are for the more powerful chewers.



Buster Cube

The Buster Cube is another great toy to keep dogs entertained. There are two sizes, one small, and one large. Before giving the toy to the dog, fill it with kibble. The dog must roll the toy around for the food to fall out. This is a great way for the dog to get some exercise, and they love getting the food to come out! To be sure the dog does not get too much to eat, use the Buster Cube as a replacement to a meal.



Rope Toys

Most dogs love to play tug of war, and their humans get a work out too! The rope is also good for cleaning dog's teeth in the same way floss works for humans.



Raw Hide

While dogs love chewing on raw hide, it should be used with caution. As a dog eats the bone, large pieces could become lodged in their throat, requiring YOU to remove them immediately! Never leave your pet alone with a raw hide.



KGARL does not endorse any of these products. This document is simply an informational tool, to be used to help you find the best products for your pet. Each pet is different and will require different supplies. Ask your veterinarian if you are unsure about what your pet needs.

Selecting a Commercial Pet Food

Commercial pet food is a great convenience for busy caregivers. You want the best for your companion animals, but with a bewildering array of foods and claims to choose from, how do you decide what's best for your animals?

Standards for Ingredients

The pet food industry is huge and extremely profitable (\$25 billion a year in revenue worldwide). While manufacturers may appear to have the best interests of your companion animals at heart, they are generally more concerned about their stock prices and bottom lines. This may be especially true of pet food manufacturers owned by large, diverse, multinational parent companies. What this means to you is that if an inexpensive ingredient is available to replace a costlier one, many companies will make the substitution to save money. A few companies pride themselves on their "fixed formulas," meaning that they always use the same ingredients. This may be good ... if the ingredients are of acceptable quality to begin with.

Pet food may be labeled as "complete and balanced" if it meets the standards set by a group called AAFCO, the Association of American Feed Control Officials. These standards were formulated in the early 1990s by panels of canine and feline nutrition experts. A food may be certified in two ways: (1) by meeting AAFCO's published standards for content ("Nutrient Profiles"), or (2) by passing feeding tests or trials. While most researchers agree that feeding tests are superior in assessing the nutritional adequacy of a food, clinical experience as well as scientific studies have confirmed that even foods that pass feeding trials may still be inadequate for long-term maintenance. Also keep in mind that the standards set only "minimums" and "maximums," not "optimums." Commercial foods are designed to be adequate for the average animal, but not all foods will be suitable for an individual animal's variable needs.

Problems

Commercial pet foods and some pet food ingredients have been implicated in a number of diseases in companion animals. Allergic skin disease, obesity, food intolerance, inflammatory bowel disease, chronic ear infections, cystitis (bladder inflammation), bladder and kidney stones, certain heart diseases, pancreatitis, feline hyperthyroidism, hip dysplasia, canine mammary cancer, bloat, and diabetes all have nutritional components—that is, nutritional factors are suspected or known to play a role in inducing or perpetuating these diseases. Thus, it is crucial that we, as caregivers, pay close attention to what we are feeding our animals and how they are reacting to the food.

One potential problem with commercial pet food is pesticide residues, antibiotics, and molds contained in pet food ingredients. Meat from sick animals may be loaded with drugs, some of which are known to pass unchanged through all the processing done to create a finished pet food (such as penicillin and pentobarbital). Between 1995 and 1999, there were two major recalls of dry dog food by different manufacturers due to mold contamination of grain ingredients. Some fungal toxins are very dangerous. The second recalled food killed more than 20 dogs.

Another problem is the unpredictable quality of common pet food ingredients. By-products, by-product meal, meat and bone meal, and similar ingredients can vary widely in their nutrient composition. Bone meals in the U.S. have had a lead contamination problem for many years. The protein in a meal containing a large amount of bone may be poorly digestible and fail to provide adequate nutrition, even though chemical analysis will reveal an acceptable amount of amino acids.

One of the biggest problems with commercial foods is the processing they undergo. Meals are rendered (cooked) at moderate to high temperatures for hours. Extruded foods pass through a steam heat/high pressure device that allows them to "puff" into kibble shapes when they come out of the machine. Even though they move through the extruder quickly, the extreme conditions may alter or damage some nutrients.

Pet food manufacturers are aware of these factors, and most add sufficient extra vitamins, minerals and other nutrients to compensate for losses in the manufacturing process. However, because the AAFCO profiles set only minimums for many nutrients, tests have shown that some minerals may be added to the food in excessive amounts.

Pet Food Shopping Checklist

The most reputable manufacturers of “superpremium” and “natural” foods agree with holistic veterinarians and other experts that the very best diet for your animal companion is one that you make yourself. A homemade diet, carefully balanced nutritionally and using organic foods, is closest to what Mother Nature intended. However, many of us do not have the time or energy to do home cooking, especially for multiple animals or large dogs.

For those of us who rely, partially or entirely, on commercial foods for our animals, API has prepared a checklist to use in selecting a good-quality diet.

Our extensive research has revealed that the pet food industry is extremely secretive. Manufacturers will not disclose very much information about the sources of ingredients, how they are processed, their quality control standards, or, in some cases, even where the food is made. Because the forty-odd manufacturers we contacted failed to provide us with accurate information, this API checklist gives you, the consumer, the best chance of selecting the best foods among the choices available.

- When selecting a commercial food for your animal companion, make sure the label has an “AAFCO guarantee,” preferably one that references “feeding tests” or “feeding protocols” rather than Nutrient Profiles.
- Never buy a food containing “by-product meal” or “meat and bone meal.” These rendered products are the most inexpensive sources of animal protein. The contents and quality of these meals can vary tremendously from batch to batch, and are not a reliable source of nutrition for your animal.
- In general, avoid foods that rely on by-products as the sole source of animal protein. By-products consist of organs and parts either not desired, or condemned, for human consumption. An occasional can of by-product-based food may be okay, since, in the wild, carnivores do consume the whole prey including the organs, but these foods are not acceptable as a steady diet.
- Look for a named meat or meal (“lamb” or “chicken meal,” for example, instead of the generic term “meat”) as the first ingredient.
- Avoid generic or store brands. These may be repackaged rejects from the big manufacturers, and generally contain cheaper—and consequently poorer quality—ingredients.
- Unless specifically recommended by your veterinarian, avoid “light,” “senior,” “special formula,” or “hairball formula” foods. These foods may contain acidifying agents, excessive fiber, or inadequate fats that can result in skin, coat and other problems.
- In general, select brands promoted to be “natural.” While they are not perfect, they may be better than most. Several brands are now preserved with Vitamins C and E instead of chemical preservatives (such as BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin and propyl gallate). While synthetic preservatives may still be present, the amounts will be less.
- Check the expiration date to ensure freshness.
- When you open a bag of dry food, give it a sniff—if there is any rancid odor at all, return it immediately for an exchange or refund.
- Store dry pet food in a sealed non-porous container (a large popcorn tin is ideal) in a cool, dry place. Canned food is best removed from the can and refrigerated in a glass or ceramic container.

Guidelines for Feeding Your Animal Companion

- Change brands or flavors of dry food every three to four months to avoid deficiencies or excesses of ingredients which may be problematic for your animal.
- When changing dry foods, mix $\frac{1}{4}$ of the new food with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the old food, and increase the new food a little each day. Some finicky animals may need a more gradual change over two or more weeks. Never let a cat skip more than one or two meals; return to the old food if necessary.
- With any new food or supplement, watch for subtle changes in your dog's skin and coat, appetite, energy level, mood, itchiness, discharges or odors, body weight, and the size and consistency of stool. If negative changes occur, try a different food. If the change persists, consult your veterinarian.
- If your animal companion is on a prescription diet, check with your veterinarian periodically (at least every 6 months) to make sure the diet is still correct. Many conditions resolve over time, and a diet that was needed for a younger animal may be inappropriate when she is older.
- It is usually preferable to feed one or two meals per day rather than leaving food out all the time. However, some medical conditions require more frequent feeding. Check with your veterinarian about recommendations for your animals.
- Feed some canned food, which generally contains more animal protein and less grain than dry foods. Plain dry food does not clean the teeth and is not an essential for either cats or dogs. Cats in particular need at least 50% of their diet in the form of wet food to reduce the workload on the kidneys and keep the urine dilute. Cats with a history of bladder or kidney disease should not be fed any dry food.
- Supplement all commercial pet foods with other foods, such as organic meats and steamed, pureed or finely grated vegetables (most cannot be very well digested by carnivores raw). Dogs may be supplemented with tofu and cooked grains; however, cats should receive minimal carbohydrates in the diet. (Plant products tend to raise urine pH and may predispose cats to urinary tract disease.) If you are supplementing more than 15-20% of the diet, however, you will need to consult one of the many available books or websites for information on balancing vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.
- Other helpful supplements that are especially important when feeding commercial food include probiotics such as acidophilus, digestive enzymes, and the antioxidant vitamins E (alpha tocopherol) and C (either Ester C, calcium ascorbate, or sodium ascorbate).
- Consider making at least some of your animal's food at home. This lets you control the quality of the ingredients. There are many excellent books, articles, and websites available for more detailed guidelines on ingredients, proportions, and preparations. Even one or two home-made meals a week will be a significant improvement over feeding solely commercial pet foods.

Your veterinarian only sees your companion once a year. Since you are with her every day, it is essential that you monitor her general health and how she is responding to the food she's eating. Changes in appetite, coat quality, weight, stool, urine, or water consumption may signal a problem with the food, or a more serious medical problem. Report these or any other unusual changes or behaviors to your veterinarian.

Vegetarian Pet Foods

Dogs and cats are classified as carnivores, but many dogs can thrive on a vegetarian diet. There are several vegetarian and even vegan pet foods available which are supplemented with nutrients unavailable in plants. Your dog might do very well with one of these diets, or even with a balanced homemade vegetarian diet. However, you should watch your dog carefully for problems such as a dull coat, dandruff, low energy, diarrhea, or other symptoms. It can take months or even years for a deficiency to develop.

Cats have very specific metabolic requirements for several nutrients found only in animal products, such as taurine, pre-formed Vitamin A (they cannot convert the plant precursor, beta-carotene), and arachadonic acid. They may not be able to adequately digest some plant-based proteins. There is at least one product marketed as a feline supplement for vegetarian diets, but these nutrients are chemically synthesized or highly purified, and may lack the enzymes and co-factors needed for optimal absorption and function. The long-term implications of these supplements are unknown. Therefore, API does not recommend that cats be fed a strictly vegetarian diet.

Pet Food Label “Rules”

- The 95% Rule: If the product says “Salmon Cat Food” or “Beef Dog Food,” 95% of the product must be the named ingredients. A product with a combination label, such as “Beef and Liver for Dogs,” must contain 95% beef and liver, and there must be more beef than liver, since beef is named first.
- The 25% or “Dinner” Rule: Ingredients named on the label must comprise at least 25% of the product but less than 95%, when there is a qualifying “descriptor” term like “dinner,” “entree,” “formula,” “platter,” “nuggets,” etc. In “Beef Dinner for Dogs,” beef may or may not be the primary ingredient. If two ingredients are named (“Beef and Turkey Dinner for Dogs”), the two ingredients must total 25%, there must be more of the first ingredient (beef) than the second (turkey), and there must be at least 3% of the lesser ingredient.
- The 3% or “With” Rule: A product may be labeled “Cat Food with Salmon” if it contains at least 3% of the named ingredient.
- The “Flavor” Rule: A food may be labeled or “Turkey Flavor Cat Food” even if the food does not contain such ingredients, as long as there is a “sufficiently detectable” amount of flavor. This may be derived from meals, by-products, or “digests” of various parts from the animal species indicated on the label.

Reading List

Celeste Yarnall. Natural Cat Care. Journey Editions. ISBN 1-8852-0363-2.

Celeste Yarnall. Natural Dog Care. Journey Editions. ISBN 0-7858-1123-0.

Kate Solisti-Mattelon and Patrice Mattelon. The Holistic Animal Handbook: A Guidebook to Nutrition, Health, and Communication. Beyond Words Publishing Co. ISBN 1-5827-0023-0.

Richard H. Pitcairn, D.V.M., and Susan Hubble Pitcairn. Dr. Pitcairn’s Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats. Rodale Press, Inc. ISBN 0-87596-243-2.

Donald R. Strombeck. Home-Prepared Dog & Cat Diets: The Healthful Alternative. Iowa State University Press. ISBN 0-8138-2149-5.

For more details see API’s full investigative report on “What’s Really In Pet Food.”

(Revised 10/25/00)

The Animal Protection Institute is the source of this material. KGARL has been given express written consent to reprint this article. www.api4animals.org

Settling In

There are many important factors to consider when first bringing a new pet into your home. The following sections are intended to help with this process.

Helping Your Dog Adjust to a New Home

This article will show you how to introduce a new dog to your home, resident dogs in the house and resident cats.

Pet Identification

This short article gives some options when choosing identification for your pet.

Inside or Out

This article tells of the importance of an inside dog.

Helping Your Dog Adjust to a New Home

Going to a new home can be an exciting and anxious experience for a dog. He is not sure what is going to happen to him next. He may have just gotten used to the shelter and now things are changing again. It is very confusing for him in the beginning and your patience and understanding during his initial adjustment period can do a lot to help your new dog feel at home.

The Ride Home

It's a good idea to have two adults with you when taking your new dog home. That way one can keep the dog under control while the other concentrates on driving. Be sure to keep your new dog on leash until you have him safely inside your home.

The New Home

Be prepared to see some stress behaviors (panting, pacing, housebreaking accidents, excessive chewing and/or gastric upset) for up to 3 to 4 months after adopting your new dog. Try to develop and use a consistent daily routine for feeding, exercising, and bathroom duties. Dogs are creatures of habit and routine means security for them. If you do the same things in the same way and in the same order, he will settle in more quickly and learn what is expected of him and when. Most dogs will begin to feel comfortable with your routine after 2 to 4 weeks. For those dogs that adjust more slowly, patience and gentleness are critical.

Once you've arrived home, you should leash walk (even in a fenced yard) your new dog outside for at least 10-15 minutes or until he relieves himself. Let him get the "lay of the land" by sniffing and becoming acquainted with all the smells associated with your yard. The combination of the car ride and the excitement of a new family and home will cause him to have to relieve himself more often, so be sure to give him plenty of opportunities in the beginning. We recommend you take your new dog out every two to three hours when you're home for the first couple of weeks until he settles in and learns your routine!

It is best to keep a new male dog on a leash when first bringing him inside. He may, out of nervousness (or he may smell remnants of another dog), mark a doorway, plant or chair. If he starts to lift his leg on something, give the leash a short jerk (not too hard, just so he can feel it) and tell him "No," and he should stop immediately and remember his manners.

In the beginning, if you have to leave your dog at home alone for longer than two hours, try confining him to a crate or a safe, dog-proofed room. You don't have to do this forever, just until he's learned all the house rules.

Make sure that you teach your new dog what it is you expect from him, don't assume he knows your house rules and punish him for something he hasn't learned yet. Preventing unwanted behavior is easier than correcting it! For example, provide bones and chew toys and keep tempting items like shoes, belts, purses and clothing out of the dog's reach. Consistency is critical. Don't allow your dog to do something one day, then scold him the next day for the behavior. If you don't want your dog to jump on you or others when you are dressed up, don't allow him to jump on you when wearing jeans, he can't tell the difference. Make sure all family members know and use the same commands consistently to minimize confusion and mixed messages to your dog.

Sleeping Arrangements

The first few nights you may want to confine your new dog in the bedroom with you or in a crate. Age, behavior and your preferences will dictate which you choose, but you will not want to give him too much freedom until you are sure he has learned the house rules. After the initial adjustment period is over, you might choose to let your dog sleep in your bed, on a dog bed or just leave him free to pick his own favorite spot.

Introduction to Other Animals

The ability of animals to get along together in the same household depends on their individual personalities. In relationships between animals, there will always be one who dominates. A new dog will often upset the existing "pack order" or the old dog may feel it necessary to establish dominance immediately. Wise handling of the "getting acquainted" period is an important factor in the successful introduction of a new dog. The first week or two may be hectic, frustrating and time consuming. Be patient, the adjustment will take time.

New Dog/Old Dog

Meeting outside (preferably in a fenced yard) can be less threatening for canine introductions. If you have more than one dog, introduce them one at a time. Make sure all dogs are leashed and there is an adult holding each leash.

From the first meeting, you want both dogs to expect “good things” to happen when they’re in each other’s presence. Let them sniff each other, which is normal canine greeting behavior. As they do, talk to them in a happy, friendly tone of voice -- never use a threatening tone of voice. After a short time, get both dogs’ attention, and give each dog a treat in return for obeying a simple command, such as “sit” or “stay.” Walk the dogs around and let them sniff and investigate each other at intervals. Continue with the “happy talk,” food rewards and simple commands.

Watch carefully for body postures that indicate an aggressive response, including hairs standing up on the other dog’s back, teeth-baring, deep growls, a stiff legged gait or a prolonged stare. If you see such postures, interrupt the interaction immediately by calmly and positively getting each dog interested in something else. For example, both handlers can call their dogs to them, have them sit or lie down and reward each with a treat. The dogs will become interested in the treats which will prevent the situation from escalating into aggression. Try letting the dogs interact again, but this time for a shorter time period and/or at a greater distance from each other.

When the dogs seem to be tolerating each other’s presence without fearful or aggressive responses, and the investigative greeting behaviors have tapered off, you can drop the leashes (if you’re in a fenced yard) and let them explore the yard together. Leave the leashes on them so that you can quickly get control if you need to. When the dogs come inside, you may find that the more personal space will cause a squabble or two, so you may still want to leave the leashes on for quick control. You may also want to put all toys (and especially all treats, like rawhide, etc.) away until everyone is comfortable.

Feed your new dog away from your other dog(s) but at the same time. You can feed in the same room, but use opposite corners, putting the dominant dog’s bowl down first. Watch that each dog sticks to his own bowl. Keep vigilant during the feeding time for a couple of months until the pack positions are worked out.

New Dog/Old Cat

Confine your cat to a room and let the new dog walk around the house and become familiar with his surroundings, including the cat’s scent. Then take the new dog and confine him to a quiet room or a crate while your cat is allowed to investigate the newcomer’s scent which is now in the home.

Next, put the dog’s leash on, and using treats, have him either sit or lie down and stay. Have another family member or friend enter the room and quietly sit down with your resident cat, but don’t have them physically restrain her. Have this person offer your cat some special pieces of food or catnip. At first, the cat and the dog should be on opposite sides of the room. Lots of short visits are better than a few long visits. Don’t drag out the visit so long that the dog becomes uncontrollable. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other’s presence without fear, aggression or other undesirable behavior.

Next, allow your cat freedom to explore your dog at her own pace, with the dog still on-leash and in a “down-stay.” Meanwhile, keep giving your dog treats and praise for his calm behavior. If your dog gets up from his “stay” position, he should be repositioned and praised and rewarded for obeying the “stay” command.

Although your dog must be taught that chasing or being rough with your cat is unacceptable behavior, he must also be taught how to behave appropriately, and be rewarded for doing so, such as sitting, coming when called, or lying down in return for a treat. If your dog is always punished when your cat is around, and never has “good things” happen in the cat’s presence, your dog may redirect his aggression toward the cat.

You may want to keep your dog on-leash and with you whenever your cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your cat has an escape route and a place to hide. Also, be sure that your cat still has access to her food, water, and litter box and is free to use them without being harassed by the dog. Keep your dog and cat separated when you aren’t home until you’re certain your cat will be safe.

The Second Chance Sheltie Rescue of St. Louis is the source of this material. KGARL has been given express written consent to reprint this article. www.DogForMe.com

Pet Identification

Both dogs and cats need identification. Even if your cat is a 100% indoor cat, she still needs ID - scared or excited pets can slip out the door before you can stop them. High kill shelters give pets a limited amount of time to be reclaimed by their owners. You don't want your pet to end up in a shelter without identification!

Check with your city for any licensing or identification requirements for your pet. Here are your three main choices; a combination of them is the best choice just in case one form of ID fails.

License tag

Usually purchased from the city, your pet is assigned a number which is tracked in a computer database. Tags are attached to your pet's collar. If your pet is found, the animal control officer can check the tag number, pull up your address, and call you to let you know they have your pet.

The disadvantages to using a tag are: the tag can fall off and get lost; it might not be readable; your pet may not always be wearing its collar; your pet may slip out of or lose its collar.

Tattoo

Tattoos are commonly etched into one of your pet's ears during spay/neuter surgery (pets must be under anesthetic for this procedure). Tattoos are a visible and somewhat permanent method of identification.

Unlike tags, tattoos are not reliant on your pet wearing its collar. However tattoos usually fade over time, making them illegible. They **can** be retraced ... but since pets must be under anesthetic and there is always a risk with anesthetic, retracing a tattoo should be done at the same time your pet is undergoing another procedure anyways.

Microchip

A microchip is a small, electronic chip (approximately the size of a grain of rice) that is implanted just under your pet's skin. It is administered quickly and painlessly by a simple injection.

Microchips each have an identification number associated with them; along with this ID number, your name, address, and phone number are entered into a computer database. If your pet gets lost, animal shelters or city pounds equipped with scanners will be able to scan your pet's body to quickly locate the ID number of the microchip along with the corresponding owner information. Many shelters and pounds these days are equipped to handle microchips.

Inside or Out?

Making Your Dog Part of the Family

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Some dog owners believe that dogs, especially large ones, should be "outdoor only" pets. At the Dumb Friends League, we believe that dogs of all sizes are happier, healthier and safer when they can be indoors with their people the majority of the time. Dogs have a need to be social just like we do.

Exercise

Some people believe that dogs need to be outside so they can get plenty of exercise. The truth is that most dogs don't exercise when they're in a yard by themselves; they spend most of their time lying by the back door, waiting for "their people" to either let them in or come out and play with them. However, dogs do need exercise every day, so we recommend walking your dog or engaging him in a regular game of fetch!

Socialization

Dogs need to spend time with "their people" in order to learn their rules and how to get along with them. Dogs that spend most of their time alone or only in the company of other dogs may demonstrate fearful, aggressive or overactive behavior toward family members or strangers because they've never learned how to act around people.

Safety

Dogs that spend most of their time outdoors are at risk for a variety of reasons. They could escape from the yard and become lost; a disgruntled neighbor could throw poison over the fence or spray the dog with mace or pepper spray; or the dog could be stolen and possibly sold to a research facility or dog-fighting ring.

Behavior Problems

Dogs left alone in the yard for long periods of time often get bored, lonely and frustrated. As a result, they may dig or bark excessively. Most cities have noise ordinances that penalize owners of barking dogs. If a dog escapes the yard in search of interesting things to do, not only is he at risk of being injured by a car, but his owner is liable for any damage or harm that he might do.

Protection

Dogs that spend time with their owners and feel attached to them are more likely to be protective of "their family." Dogs that spend most of their time outdoors may be friendly to any stranger who pets or feeds them. Alternatively, some yard dogs may become overly territorial and feel the need to protect their territory even from family and friends. If a dog is hardly ever allowed to come indoors, it will be difficult for him to distinguish between family, friends and uninvited "guests."

Puppies

People who are away from home for eight to ten hours a day may be inclined to leave their new puppy in the yard because he can't control his bowels and bladder for that length of time. Although it's true that puppies need to eliminate more frequently than adult dogs, it's also very important for puppies to receive adequate people time at this formative stage of their lives. If dogs aren't adequately socialized when they're young, they're likely to become fearful or aggressive toward people, and possibly other animals. Puppies are also more vulnerable to extreme weather conditions than adult dogs. If you must be away from home for more than four or five hours at a time every day, this may not be the right time for you to adopt a puppy.

The Garage

While dogs may be safer in the garage than in the yard, unless people spend time with them in the garage, they'll still suffer from isolation and, as a result, may develop any of the behavior problems previously mentioned. Most garages are very hot during the summer months and cold during the winter. Garages are often storage places for tools and chemicals that could cause injury to a curious dog. If the garage has an automatic door opener, the dog could run out into the street when the door is opened.

Changing Times

Some of us may have fond childhood memories of a family dog that lived outside, but times have changed. More mothers used to stay at home and children used to spend more time outdoors. The outdoor dog had company while mom hung laundry or gardened and the children played outside. With the advent of two-income families, television and computer games, the outdoor dog is more likely to spend most of his time alone.

No Alternative

If you **must** leave your dog outdoors, unsupervised for extended periods of time, please provide him with the following:

- An insulated shelter with a wind-proof opening. Some very short-coated breeds like greyhounds, beagles and labs, may not be able to tolerate extreme cold, even with a shelter.
- Shade in the summertime. All dogs need shade, but remember that heavy-coated dogs, such as huskies and chows, are more susceptible to the heat.
- Fresh food and water every day. In winter, you'll need a heated water bowl to keep the water from freezing. In summer, you'll need a tip-proof bowl so your dog won't tip the bowl over in an effort to get cool.
- Interactive play time daily.
- A daily walk.
- An escape-proof fence with a locked gate.
- "Busy" toys.

The Dumb Friends League is the source of this material. KGARL has been given express written consent to reprint this article. www.ddfl.org

Educating Your Dog

Your dog's training is a direct reflection on you, the owner. If your dog has bad manners, it will make you look bad; just the opposite is true if your dog has good manners!

The following sections will get you started in training a well mannered dog.

The Educated Dog

This article relates the importance of having a well trained dog. It also gives some recommendations on finding a dog trainer.

Dealing With Normal Puppy Behavior

Puppies are very cute, but when they bite you or chew up your favorite shoes, they are not so cute anymore! This article gives advice on how to curtail these normal puppy activities.

Housetraining Your Puppy

When you bring home your cute little puppy, you have to expect accidents. No puppy is born housetrained. This article gives advice on housetraining your puppy that can work with adult dogs as well.

Crate Training Your Dog

A crate can be a valuable tool when housetraing, or dealing with other behavior problems. This article details the steps necessary to crate train a dog.

Bark! Bark! Bark!

A dog that will not stop barking can get on everyone's nerves! This article helps you identify the reason for the barking, and gives tips on how to make it stop.

Understanding Aggressive Behavior in Dogs

An aggressive dog can be very dangerous. This article identifies the reasons for the behavior, and gives tips on how to work through it.

The Educated Dog

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When you feel frustrated with your dog's behavior, remember that someone must teach a dog what is acceptable behavior and what is not. A dog that hasn't been given any instructions, training or boundaries can't possibly know what you expect of him. By teaching your dog how you want him to behave, you'll not only have a saner household, but a healthier and happier dog as well.

An Educated Dog:

- Allows you to handle every part of his body, to check for injury or illness and to give him medication.
- Has good manners, so he can spend most of his time indoors with his people. That means more supervision, less boredom and fewer opportunities for dangerous mischief. The more time you spend with your dog, the more likely you'll be to notice when something is wrong with him, like a limp, a cough, a sensitive area or a loss of appetite. By recognizing such irregularities early, you can seek medical attention immediately and, hopefully, prevent more serious problems.
- Wants to stay near you, listening for instructions (and praise). This means he'll have less opportunity to stray into danger.
- Will walk or run beside you on a leash without pulling, dragging or strangling, so you and your dog can get more exercise and spend more time together.
- Knows that "drop it" and "leave it alone" are phrases that mean business, so he'll have fewer opportunities to swallow dangerous objects. He also can be taught what things and places are out of bounds, like hot stoves, heaters or anxious cats. However, you'll still need to limit his access to dangerous places when you cannot supervise or instruct him.
- Will "sit" immediately, simply because you say so. No matter what danger may be imminent, a dog that is suddenly still is suddenly safe. And a dog that will "stay" in that position is even safer.
- Understands his boundaries, knows what's expected of him and has fewer anxieties. Less stress means a healthier dog.

By training your dog, you can help prevent tragedy and develop a better relationship with him. Keep in mind, however, that even an educated dog needs supervision, instruction and boundaries -- sometimes even physical boundaries. Allowing your dog, no matter how educated he may be, to walk, run or roam outside of a fenced area or off of a leash, is putting him in danger.

Selecting a Class

Check the Yellow Pages under "pet training" or "dog training." Your local park or recreation department may also offer classes in your neighborhood.

Here are some tips to help you select an obedience class that's right for you:

- Good obedience instructors are knowledgeable about many different types of training methods and use techniques that neither the dogs nor their owners find consistently unpleasant.
- Good training methods focus primarily on reinforcing good behavior and use punishment sparingly, appropriately and humanely. Excessive use of choke chains or pinch collars or using collars to lift dogs off of the ground ("stringing them up") are not appropriate or humane training methods.
- Good obedience instructors communicate well with people and with dogs. Remember that they're instructing you about how to train your dog.
- Specific problems you may have with your dog may not be addressed in a basic obedience course. If you're seeking help with house soiling, barking, aggression or separation anxiety, ask if the course covers these issues -- don't assume it will.
- Ask the instructor what training methods are used and how they (the instructor and staff) were trained. Also ask to observe a class before you commit to one. If you're refused an observation, or if your observation results in anything that makes you uncomfortable, look elsewhere.
- Avoid anyone who: guarantees their work; whose primary methods focus on punishment; or who want to take your dog and train him for you (effective training must include you and the environment in which you and your dog interact).

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Dealing with Normal Puppy Behavior:

Nipping and Rough Play

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When puppies play with each other, they use their mouths. Therefore, puppies usually want to bite or "mouth" hands during play or when being petted. With puppies, this is rarely aggressive behavior in which the intent is to do harm. Because puppies are highly motivated to exhibit this type of behavior, attempts to suppress it or stop it are unlikely to be successful unless you give your puppy an alternative behavior. The goals of working with this normal puppy behavior are to redirect your puppy's desire to put something in her mouth onto acceptable chew toys and to teach her to be gentle when a hand is in her mouth.

Encourage Acceptable Behavior

Redirect your puppy's chewing onto acceptable objects by offering her a small rawhide chew bone or other type of chew toy whenever you pet her. This technique can be especially effective when children want to pet her. As you or the child reach out to scratch her behind the ears (not over the head) with one hand, offer the chew bone with the other. This will not only help your puppy learn that people and petting are wonderful, but will also keep her mouth busy while she's being petted. Alternate which hand does the petting and which one has the chew bone. At first, you may need to pet or scratch your puppy for short periods of time, since the longer she's petted, the more likely she is to get excited and start to nip.

Discourage Unacceptable Behavior

- You must also teach your puppy to be gentle with hands, and that nipping results in unpleasant consequences for her. Teach your puppy that nipping "turns off" any attention and social interaction with you. After a nip, look your puppy right in the eye, and yell "OUCH" as though you've been mortally wounded, then ignore her. Leave the room if you must, but ignore her until she's calm, then try the chew bone and petting method again. It's even better if you can coax your puppy into a sitting position using food. It may take many repetitions for her to understand what's expected.
- Nipping and mouthing hands can also be discouraged by loosely holding your puppy's lower jaw between your thumb and forefinger after she's taken your hand in her mouth. Don't hurt her by squeezing too hard, just gently hang on so that wherever her mouth goes, your hand hangs on. This will quickly become tiresome and she'll eventually pull away. After several seconds, release her jaw, but continue to offer her your hand. If she licks or ignores it, praise, pet and offer a tidbit. If she closes her mouth on your hand again, repeat the procedure.
- A third alternative is to wear cotton gloves coated with a substance with an unpleasant taste such as "Bitter Apple." In this way, your puppy will learn that "hands in mouth taste bad." For this method to work, *every time* she nips your hand she must experience this bad taste. The possible disadvantage to this method is that your puppy may learn "hands with gloves taste bad and those without gloves don't.
- Remember that any of these three methods will probably not be effective unless you work hard to teach your puppy the right behavior by offering her an acceptable chew toy.

Jumping Up

When your puppy jumps up on you, she wants attention. Whether you push her away, knee her in the chest or step on her hind legs, she's being rewarded for jumping up (even though it's negative attention, she's still getting what she wants).

When Your Puppy Jumps Up:

- Fold your arms in front of you, turn away from her and say "off."
- Continue to turn away from her until all four of her feet are on the ground, then quietly praise her and give her a treat. If she knows the "sit" command, give the command when all four of her feet are on the ground, then quietly praise her and give her a treat while she's in the sitting position.
- When you begin to praise her, if she begins to jump up again, simply turn away and repeat step two, above. Remember to keep your praise low-key.
- When your puppy realizes that she gets no attention from you while she's jumping up, but does get attention when she stops jumping up and sits, she'll stop jumping up. Remember, once you've taught her to come and sit quietly for attention, you **must** reward her behavior. Be careful not to ignore her when she comes and sits politely, waiting for your attention.

What Not To Do

Attempts to tap, slap or hit your puppy in the face for nipping or jumping up are almost guaranteed to backfire. Several things may happen, depending on your puppy's temperament and the severity of the correction:

- She could become "hand-shy" and cringe or cower whenever a hand comes toward her face.
- She could become afraid of you and refuse to come to you or approach you at all.
- She could respond in a defensive manner and attempt to bite you to defend herself.
- She could interpret a mild slap as an invitation to play, causing her to become more excited and even more likely to nip.

A Note About Children And Puppies

It's very difficult for children under eight or nine years old to practice the kind of behavior modification outlined here. A child's first reaction to being nipped or mouthed by a puppy is to push the puppy away with their hands and arms. This will be interpreted by the puppy as play and will probably cause the puppy to nip and mouth even more. Dogs should never be left alone with children under ten and parents should monitor closely all interactions between their children and dogs.

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Housetraining Your Puppy

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Housetraining a puppy requires time, vigilance, patience and commitment. Following the procedures outlined below, you can minimize house soiling incidents, but virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house (more likely several); expect this – it's part of raising a puppy. The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will learn acceptable behavior. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy, and with some of the smaller breeds, it might take longer.

Establish A Routine

- Like babies, puppies do best on a regular schedule. Take your puppy outside frequently, at least every two hours, and immediately after he wakes up from a nap, after playing and after eating.
- Praise your puppy lavishly every time he eliminates outdoors. You can even give him a treat. You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he's finished eliminating, not after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he'll know that's what you want him to do.
- Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. Always take your puppy, on a leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Take him for a walk or play with him only after he has eliminated. If you clean up an accident in the house, take the soiled rags or paper towels and leave them in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your puppy recognize the area as the place he is supposed to eliminate. While your puppy is eliminating, use a word or phrase, like "go potty," that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he's supposed to be doing.
- If possible, put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule. Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed three or four times a day. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that he'll eliminate at consistent times as well. This makes housetraining easier for both of you.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Don't give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house. He should be watched at all times when he is indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates, to keep him in the room where you are. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

Confinement

When you're unable to watch your puppy at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down and turn around in. This area could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room, blocked off with boxes or baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your puppy and use the crate to confine him (see our handout: "Crate Training Your Dog"). If your puppy has spent several hours in confinement, when you let him out, take him directly to his bathroom spot and praise him when he eliminates.

Oops!

Expect your puppy to have an accident in the house – it's a normal part of housetraining a puppy.

- When you catch him in the act of eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt him, like make a startling noise (be careful not to scare him). Immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there.
- Don't punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your puppy's nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other punishment or discipline, will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals don't understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds later. Punishment will do more harm than good.
- Cleaning the soiled area is very important because puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces.

It's extremely important that you use the supervision and confinement procedures outlined above to minimize the number of accidents. If you allow your puppy to eliminate frequently in the house, he'll get confused about where he's supposed to eliminate which will prolong the housetraining process.

Paper Training

A puppy under six months of age cannot be expected to control his bladder for more than a few hours at a time. If you have to be away from home for more than four or five hours a day, this may not be the best time for you to get a puppy. If you're already committed to having a puppy and have to be away from home for long periods of time, you'll need to train your puppy to eliminate in a specific place indoors. Be aware, however, that doing so can prolong the process of teaching him to eliminate outdoors. Teaching your puppy to eliminate on newspaper may create a life-long surface preference, meaning that he may, even in adulthood, eliminate on any newspaper he finds lying around the house.

When your puppy must be left alone for long periods of time, confine him to an area with enough room for a sleeping space, a playing space and a separate place to eliminate. In the area designated as the elimination place, you can use either newspapers or a sod box. To make a sod box, place sod in a container, like a child's small, plastic swimming pool. You can also find dog litter products at a pet supply store. If you clean up an accident in the house, take the soiled rags or paper towels, and put them in the designated elimination place. The smell will help your puppy recognize the area as the place where he is supposed to eliminate.

Other Types of House-Soiling Problems

If you've consistently followed the housetraining procedures and your puppy continues to eliminate in the house, there may be another reason for his behavior.

- **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.
- **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play or when they're about to be punished.
- **Territorial Urine-Marking:** Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded.
- **Separation Anxiety:** Dogs that become anxious when they're left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization.
- **Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your puppy is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, he may house soil when he's exposed to these sounds.

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Crate Training Your Dog

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Crate training your dog may take some time and effort, but can be useful in a variety of situations. If you have a new dog or puppy, you can use the crate to limit his access to the house until he learns all the house rules – like what he can and can't chew on and where he can and can't eliminate. A crate is also a safe way of transporting your dog in the car, as well as a way of taking him places where he may not be welcome to run freely. If you properly train your dog to use the crate, he'll think of it as his safe place and will be happy to spend time there when needed.

Selecting A Crate

Crates may be plastic (often called "flight kennels") or collapsible, metal pens. They come in different sizes and can be purchased at most pet supply stores. Your dog's crate should be just large enough for him to stand up and turn around in.

The Crate Training Process

Crate training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. It's important to keep two things in mind while crate training. The crate should always be associated with something pleasant, and training should take place in a series of small steps - don't go too fast.

Step 1: Introducing Your Dog to the Crate

- Put the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such as the family room. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Bring your dog over to the crate and talk to him in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is securely fastened opened so it won't hit your dog and frighten him.
- To encourage your dog to enter the crate, drop some small food treats near it, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If he refuses to go all the way in at first, that's okay – don't force him to enter. Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. If he isn't interested in treats, try tossing a favorite toy in the crate. This step may take a few minutes or as long as several days.

Step 2: Feeding Your Dog His Meals in the Crate

- After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding him his regular meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate. If your dog is readily entering the crate when you begin Step 2, put the food dish all the way at the back of the crate. If your dog is still reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as he will readily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed him, place the dish a little further back in the crate.
- Once your dog is standing comfortably in the crate to eat his meal, you can close the door while he's eating. At first, open the door as soon as he finishes his meal. With each successive feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until he's staying in the crate for ten minutes or so after eating. If he begins to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving him in the crate for a shorter time period. If he does whine or cry in the crate, it's imperative that you not let him out until he stops. Otherwise, he'll learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine, so he'll keep doing it.

Step 3: Conditioning Your Dog to the Crate for Longer Time Periods

- After your dog is eating his regular meals in the crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can confine him there for short time periods while you're home. Call him over to the crate and give him a treat. Give him a command to enter such as, "kennel up." Encourage him by pointing to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand. After your dog enters the crate, praise him, give him the treat and close the door. Sit quietly near the crate for five to ten minutes and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, then let him out of the crate. Repeat this process several times a day. With each repetition, gradually increase the length of time you leave him in the crate and the length of time you're out of his sight. Once your dog will stay quietly in the crate for about 30 minutes with you out of sight the majority of the time, you can begin leaving him crated when you're gone for short time periods and/or letting him sleep there at night. This may take several days or several weeks.

Step 4:

Part A/Crating Your Dog when left Alone

After your dog is spending about 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving him crated for short periods when you leave the house. Put him in the crate using your regular command and a treat. You might also want to leave him with a few safe toys in the crate. You'll want to vary at what point in your "getting ready to leave" routine you put your dog in the crate. Although he shouldn't be crated for a long time before you leave, you can crate him anywhere from five to 20 minutes prior to leaving. Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged, but matter-of-fact. Praise your dog briefly, give him a treat for entering the crate and then leave quietly. When you return home, don't reward your dog for excited behavior by responding to him in an excited, enthusiastic way. Keep arrivals low key. Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time to time when you're home so he doesn't associate crating with being left alone.

Part B/Crating Your Dog at Night

Put your dog in the crate using your regular command and a treat. Initially, it may be a good idea to put the crate in your bedroom or nearby in a hallway, especially if you have a puppy. Puppies often need to go outside to eliminate during the night, and you'll want to be able to hear your puppy when he whines to be let outside. Older dogs, too, should initially be kept nearby so that crating doesn't become associated with social isolation. Once your dog is sleeping comfortably through the night with his crate near you, you can begin to gradually move it to the location you prefer.

Potential Problems

- **Too Much Time In The Crate**

A crate isn't a magical solution. If not used correctly, a dog can feel trapped and frustrated. For example, if your dog is crated all day while you're at work and then crated again all night, he's spending too much time in too small a space. Other arrangements should be made to accommodate his physical and emotional needs. Also, remember that puppies under six months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They can't control their bladders and bowels for longer periods.

- **Whining**

If your dog whines or cries while in the crate at night, it may be difficult to decide whether he's whining to be let out of the crate, or whether he needs to be let outside to eliminate. If you followed the training procedures outlined above, your dog hasn't been rewarded for whining in the past by being released from his crate. Try to ignore the whining. If your dog is just testing you, he'll probably stop whining soon. Yelling at him or pounding on the crate will only make things worse. If the whining continues after you've ignored him for several minutes, use the phrase he associates with going outside to eliminate. If he responds and becomes excited, take him outside. This should be a trip with a purpose, not play time. If you're convinced that your dog doesn't need to eliminate, the best response is to ignore him until he stops whining. Don't give in, otherwise you'll teach your dog to whine loud and long to get what he wants. If you've progressed gradually through the training steps and haven't done too much too fast, you'll be less likely to encounter this problem. If the problem becomes unmanageable, you may need to start the crate training process over again.

- **Separation Anxiety**

Attempting to use the crate as a remedy for separation anxiety won't solve the problem. A crate may prevent your dog from being destructive, but he may injure himself in an attempt to escape from the crate. Separation anxiety problems can only be resolved with counter-conditioning and desensitization procedures. You may want to consult a professional animal behaviorist for help.

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"Bark! Bark! Bark!"

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Some canine behavior problems, such as house soiling, affect only a dog's owners. However, problems such as escaping and excessive barking can result in neighborhood disputes and violations of animal control ordinances. Therefore, barking dogs can become "people problems." If your dog's barking has created neighborhood tension, it might be a good idea to discuss the problem with your neighbors. It's perfectly normal and reasonable for dogs to bark from time to time, just as children make noise when they play outside. However, continual barking for long periods of time is a sign that your dog has a problem that needs to be addressed.

The first thing you need to do is determine when and for how long your dog barks, and what's causing him to bark. You may need to do some detective work to obtain this information, especially if the barking occurs when you're not home. Ask your neighbors, drive or walk around the block and watch and listen for a while, or start a tape recorder or video camera when you leave for work. Hopefully, you'll be able to discover which of the common problems discussed below is the cause of your dog's barking.

Social Isolation/Frustration/Attention-Seeking

Your dog may be barking because he's bored and lonely if:

- He's left alone for long periods of time without opportunities for interaction with you.
- His environment is relatively barren, without playmates or toys.
- He's a puppy or adolescent (under three years old) and doesn't have other outlets for his energy.
- He's a particularly active type of dog (like the herding or sporting breeds) who needs a "job" to be happy.

Recommendations:

Expand your dog's world and increase his "people time" in the following ways:

- Walk your dog daily - it's good exercise, both mental and physical.
- Teach your dog to fetch a ball or Frisbee and practice with him as often as possible.
- Teach your dog a few commands and/or tricks and practice them every day for five to ten minutes.
- Take an obedience class with your dog.
- Provide interesting toys to keep your dog busy when you're not home (Kong-type toys filled with treats or busy-box toys). Rotating the toys makes them seem new and interesting.
- If your dog is barking to get your attention, make sure he has sufficient time with you on a daily basis (petting, grooming, playing, exercising) so he doesn't have to resort to misbehaving to get your attention.
- Keep your dog inside when you're unable to supervise him.
- Let your neighbors know that you're actively working on the problem.
- Take your dog to work with you every now and then, if possible.
- When you have to leave your dog for extended periods of time, take him to a "doggie day care" or have a friend or neighbor walk and/or play with him.

Territorial/Protective Behavior

Your dog may be barking to guard his territory if:

- The barking occurs in the presence of "intruders," which may include the mail carrier, children walking to school and other dogs or neighbors in adjacent yards.
- Your dog's posture while he's barking appears threatening – tail held high and ears up and forward.
- You've encouraged your dog to be responsive to people and noises outside.

Recommendations:

- Teach your dog a "quiet" command. When he begins to bark at a passer-by, allow two or three barks, then say "quiet" and interrupt his barking by shaking a can filled with pennies or squirting water at his mouth with a spray bottle or squirt gun. This will cause him to stop barking momentarily. While he's quiet, say "good quiet" and pop a tasty treat into his mouth. Remember, the loud noise or squirt isn't meant to punish him, rather it's to startle him into being quiet so you can reward him. If your dog is

frightened by the noise or squirt bottle, find an alternative method of interrupting his barking (throw a toy or ball toward him).

- Desensitize your dog to the stimulus that triggers the barking. Teach him that the people he views as intruders are actually friends and that good things happen to him when these people are around. Ask someone to walk by your yard, starting far enough away so that your dog isn't barking, then reward him for quiet behavior as he obeys a "sit" or "down" command. Use a very special food reward such as little pieces of cheese or meat. As the person gradually comes closer, continue to reward his quiet behavior. It may take several sessions before the person can come close without your dog barking. When the person can come very close without your dog barking, have them feed him a treat or throw a toy for him.
- If your dog barks while inside the house when you're home, call him to you, have him obey a command, such as "sit" or "down," and reward him with praise and a treat.
- Don't inadvertently encourage this type of barking by enticing your dog to bark at things he hears or sees outside.
- Have your dog neutered or spayed to decrease territorial behavior.

Fears and Phobias

Your dog's barking may be a response to something he's afraid of if:

- The barking occurs when he's exposed to loud noises, such as thunderstorms firecrackers or construction equipment.
- Your dog's posture indicates fear – ears back, tail held low.

Recommendations:

- Identify what's frightening your dog and desensitize him to it. You may need professional help with the desensitization process. Check with your veterinarian about anti-anxiety medication while you work on behavior modification.
- Mute noise from outside by leaving your dog in a basement or windowless bathroom and leave on a television, radio or loud fan. Block off your dog's access to outdoor views that might be causing a fear response, by closing curtains or doors to certain rooms.

Separation Anxiety

Your dog may be barking due to separation anxiety if:

- The barking occurs only when you're gone and starts as soon as, or shortly after, you leave.
- Your dog displays other behaviors that reflect a strong attachment to you, such as following you from room to room, frantic greetings or reacting anxiously to your preparations to leave.
- Your dog has recently experienced: a change in the family's schedule that results in his being left alone more often; a move to a new house; the death or loss of a family member or another family pet; or a period at an animal shelter or boarding kennel.

Recommendations:

- Separation anxiety can be resolved using counter-conditioning and desensitization techniques.

Bark Collars

Bark collars are specially designed to deliver an aversive whenever your dog barks. There are several different kinds of bark collars:

- **Citronella Collar:** This collar contains a reservoir of citronella solution that sprays into your dog's face every time he barks. A citronella collar is considered humane and a recent study reported an 88% rate of success with the use of this collar. One possible drawback is that the collar contains a microphone, so the aversive is delivered in response to the sound of the bark. Therefore, other noises may set off the collar, causing your dog to be sprayed even if he hasn't barked. Also, some dogs can tell when the citronella reservoir is empty and will resume barking.
- **Aversive Sound Collar:** This collar emits a high-frequency sound when your dog barks. Some are activated by the noise of the bark, while others are hand-held and activated by a handler. The rate of success for this type of collar is reportedly rather low.
- **Electric Shock Collar:** We don't recommend an electric shock collar to control your dog's barking. The electric shock is painful to your dog and many dogs will choose to endure the pain and continue barking. The success rate of this type of collar is less than 50%.

The main drawback of any bark collar is that it doesn't address the underlying cause of the barking. You may be able to eliminate the barking, but symptom substitution may occur and your dog may begin digging, escaping, or become destructive or even aggressive. The use of a bark collar must be in conjunction with behavior modification based on the reason for the barking, as outlined above. You should never use a bark collar on your dog if his barking is due to separation anxiety, fears or phobias, because punishment always makes fear and anxiety behaviors worse.

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Understanding Aggressive Behavior in Dogs

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Dog aggression is any behavior meant to intimidate or harm a person or another animal. Growling, baring teeth, snarling, snapping and biting are all aggressive behaviors. Although aggressive behaviors are normal for dogs, they're generally unacceptable to humans. From a dog's perspective, there's always a reason for aggressive behavior. Because humans and dogs have different communication systems, misunderstandings can occur between the two species. A person may intend to be friendly, but a dog may perceive that person's behavior as threatening or intimidating. Dogs aren't schizophrenic, psychotic, crazy, or necessarily "vicious," when displaying aggressive behavior.

Because aggression is so complex, and because the potential consequences are so serious, we recommend that you get professional in-home help from an animal behavior specialist if your dog is displaying aggressive behavior.

Types Of Aggression

Dominance Aggression: Dominance aggression is motivated by a challenge to a dog's social status or to his control of a social interaction. Dogs are social animals and view their human families as their social group or "pack." Based on the outcomes of social challenges among group members, a dominance hierarchy or "pecking order" is established.

If your dog perceives his own ranking in the hierarchy to be higher than yours, it's likely that he'll challenge you in certain situations. Because people don't always understand canine communication, you may inadvertently challenge your dog's social position. A dominantly aggressive dog may growl if he is disturbed when resting or sleeping, or if he is asked to give up a favorite spot, such as the couch or the bed. Physical restraint, even when done in a friendly manner, like hugging, may also cause your dog to respond aggressively. Reaching for your dog's collar, or reaching out over his head to pet him, could also be interpreted by him as a challenge for dominance. Dominantly aggressive dogs are often described as "Jekyll and Hydes" because they can be very friendly when not challenged. Dominance aggression may be directed at people or at other animals. The most common reason for dogs in the same family to fight with each other is instability in the dominance hierarchy.

Fear-Motivated Aggression: Fear-motivated aggression is a defensive reaction and occurs when a dog believes he is in danger of being harmed. Remember that it's your dog's perception of the situation, not your actual intent, which determines your dog's response. For example, you may raise your arm to throw a ball, but your dog, perceiving this to be a threat, may bite you because he believes he is protecting himself from being hit. A dog may also be fearfully aggressive when approached by other dogs.

Protective, Territorial and Possessive Aggression: Protective, territorial and possessive aggression is all very similar, and involve the defense of valuable resources. **Territorial aggression** is usually associated with defense of property. However, your dog's sense of territory may extend well past the boundaries of "his" yard. For example, if you walk your dog regularly around the neighborhood and allow him to urine-mark, to him, his territory may be the entire block! **Protective aggression** usually refers to aggression directed toward people or animals that a dog perceives as threats to his family, or pack. Dogs become **possessively aggressive** when defending their food, toys or other valued objects, such as Kleenex stolen from the trash!

Redirected Aggression: This type of aggression is relatively common, but is a behavior that pet owners may not always understand. If a dog is aroused into an aggressive response by a person or animal that he is prevented from attacking, he may redirect this aggression onto someone else. A common example occurs when two family dogs become excited, bark and growl in response to another dog passing through the front yard. The two dogs, confined behind a fence, may turn and attack each other because they can't attack the intruder.

Predation is usually considered to be a unique kind of aggressive behavior, because it's motivated by the intent to obtain food, and not primarily by the intent to harm or intimidate.

Individual Variation

Dogs differ in their likelihood to show aggressive behavior in any particular situation. Some dogs tend to respond aggressively with very little stimulation. Others may be subjected to all kinds of threatening stimuli and events, and never attempt to bite. The difference in this threshold at which a dog displays aggressive behavior is influenced by both environmental and genetic factors. If this threshold is low, a dog will be more likely to bite. Raising the threshold makes a dog less likely to respond aggressively. This threshold can be raised using behavior modification techniques. How easily the threshold can be changed is influenced by the dog's gender, age, breed, general temperament, and by whether the appropriate behavior modification techniques are chosen and correctly implemented. Working with aggressive dogs can be potentially dangerous, and should be done only by, or under the guidance of, an experienced animal behavior professional who understands animal learning theory and behavior.

What You Can Do

- First, check with your veterinarian to rule out medical causes for the aggressive behavior.
- Seek professional help. An aggression problem will not go away by itself. Working with aggression problems requires in-home help from an animal behavior specialist.
- Take precautions. Your first priority is to keep everyone safe. Supervise, confine and/or restrict your dog's activities until you can obtain professional help. You're liable for your dog's behavior. If you must take your dog out in public, consider a cage-type muzzle as a temporary precaution, and keep in mind that some dogs can get a muzzle off.
- Avoid exposing your dog to situations where he is more likely to show aggression. You may need to keep him confined to a safe room and limit his people-contact.
- If your dog is possessive of food, treats or a certain place, don't allow him access to those items. In an emergency, bribe him with something better than what he has. For example, if he steals your shoe, trade him the shoe for a piece of chicken.
- Spay or neuter your dog. Intact dogs are more likely to display dominance, territorial and protective aggressive behavior.

What Not To Do

- Punishment won't help and, in fact, will make the problem worse. If the aggression is motivated by fear, punishment will make your dog more fearful, and therefore more aggressive. Attempting to punish or dominate a dominantly aggressive dog is likely to cause him to escalate his behavior in order to retain his dominant position. This is likely to result in a bite or a severe attack. Punishing territorial, possessive or protective aggression is likely to elicit additional defensive aggression.
- Don't encourage aggressive behavior. Playing tug-of-war or wrestling games encourages your dog to attempt to "best" you or "win" over you, which can result in the beginning of a dominance aggression problem. When dogs are encouraged to "go get 'em" or to bark and dash about in response to outside noises or at the approach of a person, territorial and protective aggressive behavior may be the result.

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Health

With all of the love and devotion our pets give us, the least we can do is look after their health. Pets need yearly checkups, vaccinations and preventative tests to keep them healthy. Please see your vet regularly, your pet will reward you with many years of unconditional love!

Dog Vaccination Recommendations

This article gives a generic vaccination schedule. Please see your vet for more details

Why You Should Spay or Neuter Your Pet

This article talks about some common excuses for not having your pet altered, as well as why it is important that your pet be altered as soon as possible

Poison-Proof Your Home

Many common household products can make your pets very sick. This article gives tips on keeping your pets safe.

What to do for a Poisoned Animal

If you suspect your pet has been exposed to a poison, you must act quickly! Read this article and post the number for poison control in a convenient place.

Dog Vaccination Recommendations

One of the easiest and most effective ways of preventing your dog from getting sick is by making sure he gets all his vaccinations on a regular basis. Puppies need vaccinations every two to four weeks until they are at least 14 weeks of age. Most vets follow the schedules given below, although there may be some variation from state to state. Some vaccines are given separately, while others may be combined into a single shot, which makes things easier.

If a dog over 16 weeks of age has an unknown vaccine history, has not been previously vaccinated, or is **more than six months over due**, vaccinate and booster in 3 weeks, then annually. Intranasal Bordetella and Rabies are exceptions to the 2-4 weeks booster rule (see recommendations below).

Vaccination Recommendations for Dogs

Disease	Age at 1st Vaccination (weeks)	Age at 2nd Vaccination (weeks)	Age at 3rd Vaccination (weeks)	Age at 4th Vaccination (weeks)	Revaccination Interval (months)
DHLPPC (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza, Corona combination)	6-8	9-11	12-14	16-17	12*
Bordetella (Intranasal)	14	--	--	--	6
Rabies	16*	--	--	--	12-36**
Giardia	14	17	--	--	12
Lyme	14	17	--	--	12

* There is some controversy over the need to vaccinate yearly, as opposed to every other year. Please talk to your vet if you have concerns.

**Check with your veterinarian as to type of vaccine and state regulations.

Information and advice contained in this article is for your consideration only. Please consult your veterinarian for specific advice concerning the care and treatment of your pet.

Why You Should Spay or Neuter Your Pet

Would you kill a happy, healthy, loving pet?

If you answered "no", then spaying or neutering your pet is absolutely essential.

Spaying is the surgical sterilization of a female animal by removing the ovaries, oviduct, and uterus. **Neutering** is the surgical sterilization of a male animal by removing the testicles. Both surgeries are safe when done by a qualified veterinarian. And not only are they safe, having your pet spayed or neutered also has significant health benefits.

The other compelling reason to spay or neuter your pet is the very real fact that there are not enough loving homes available to adopt all the needy pets. Humane societies, animal shelters, dog pounds, rescue foundations ... they are all forced to humanely euthanize animals simply because no homes were available. Others, who are not so fortunate, die in the streets. Their deaths are not so humane: they can die from exposure to the elements - bitter winds, cold temperatures, or extreme heat; a slow starvation, trying but unable to scrounge enough food to survive; a painful disease, slowly weakening them until they can no longer keep going; poisoning, or outright cruelty.

Most common reasons people give for not wanting to spay or neuter:

Reason #1:

"It's not right to neuter a male. Only females should be sterilized because they're the ones that have litters."

This view forgets one important point: it takes **both** a male and a female to produce a litter. In fact, males can father far more young than a female could ever produce in a lifetime.

And what happens if your intact male escapes the house and mates with an intact female?

It's both owners' responsibilities to be sure their pets have been spayed or neutered.

Reason #2:

"I want my children to see the miracle of birth."

There are other ways of teaching children about birth that do not involve bringing unwanted animals into this world. For example, visits to a farm or a zoo can show them the same thing. Videos and books are also an option.

Reason #3:

"Don't worry, we'll find homes for the litter."

Maybe so ... but for every new animal that's brought into this world, there are others waiting to be adopted from humane societies and animal shelters.

Reason #4:

"Females should be allowed to have one litter."

There is no reason for a female to have a litter; she will mature properly without it. It will *not* improve her health or permanently change her personality.

In fact, spaying your pet *before* her first heat will significantly reduce her chances of developing breast cancer later in life.

Reason #5:

"Spaying or neutering my pet will make it fat."

Proper exercise and nutrition will keep your pet healthy. If your pet is overweight, cut down the amount you feed and fit in a few more minutes of exercise.

We must all work together to stop uncontrolled and irresponsible breeding of our pets. We can help to stop the suffering of these innocent creatures by reducing the number of unwanted pets being brought into this world. Do your part by having your pet spayed or neutered. You'll be saving more than just one life!

Benefits of Spaying

- Prevents pregnancy and the complications arising from pregnancy and delivery
- Eliminates the heat cycle - you won't have to listen to the sounds of your female in heat, trying to get out and find a mate
- Prevents unwelcome males from trying to seek out your female pet in heat
- Reduces the urge to roam. This makes it less likely that you will lose your pet, which in turn makes your pet less likely to contract a disease, get in a fight, get injured, or become a victim to cruelty, poison, or traffic.
- Eliminates sexual discomfort, distress, or distraction ... making your pet happier and more content.
- Reduces or eliminates the possibility of disease in the reproductive system.

Benefits of Neutering

- Reduces the distracting and destructive behavior associated with the male's efforts to get out and find a mate
- Reduces the urge to roam. This makes it less likely that you will lose your pet, which in turn makes your pet less likely to contract a disease, get in a fight, get injured, or become a victim to cruelty, poison, or traffic.
- Eliminates sexual discomfort, distress, or distraction ... making your pet happier and more content.
- Eliminates testicular tumors and reduces prostate gland problems.
- In cats, neutering stops or reduces marking behavior (territorial spraying of urine).
- Reduces the urge to fight.

This article has been provided courtesy of www.PetFriendly.ca. Visit PetFriendly.ca for pet-friendly cottages, cabins, B&Bs, resorts, hotels, and other lodging from across Canada that the whole family can enjoy!

Poison-Proof Your Home

Your dog may have a sweet tooth. He or she may even enjoy the holidays but there are some things that won't bring your companion animal joy. Read our lists below of dangerous substances that can be found in or around your home.

Foods to Avoid Feeding to Your Pet

- Alcoholic beverages
- Avocado
- Chocolate (all forms of chocolate)
- Coffee (all forms of coffee)
- Fatty foods
- Macadamia nuts
- Moldy or spoiled foods
- Onions, onion powder
- Raisins and grapes
- Salt
- Yeast dough

Warm Weather Hazards

- Animal toxins - toads, insects, spiders, snakes and scorpions
- Blue-green algae in ponds
- Citronella candles
- Cocoa mulch
- Compost piles
- Fertilizers
- Flea products
- Outdoor plants and plant bulbs
- Swimming pool treatment supplies

Pesticide Hazards

When using herbicides or insecticides in or around you home:

- Always use pesticides in accordance with label instructions.
- Keep pets away from treated areas for the label recommended amount of time.
- Store unused products in areas that will always be inaccessible to pets.
- Be aware that fly baits containing methomyl and slug and snail baits containing metaldehyde are particularly dangerous.

Medication Precautions

- Keep all prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs out of the reach of your pets, preferably in closed cabinets.
- Remind guests to store their medications safely as well.
- Pain killers, cold medicines, anti-cancer drugs, antidepressants, vitamins, and diet pills are common examples of human medication that could be potentially lethal even in small dosages.
- One regular-strength ibuprofen tablet (200mg) can cause stomach ulcers in a 10-pound dog.

Cold Weather Hazards

- Antifreeze: If you think your pet has consumed antifreeze, contact your veterinarian right away.
- Liquid potpourris: Exposure to some types of liquid potpourris can result in severe oral, dermal and ocular damage.
- Ice melting products can be irritating to skin and mouth.
- Rat and mouse bait - place these products in areas that are inaccessible to your companion animals.

Christmas Tree Hazards

- Christmas tree water may contain fertilizers, which, if ingested, can upset the stomach. Stagnant tree water can be breeding grounds for bacteria, which can also lead to vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea, if ingested.
- Electrical cords - Avoid animal exposure to electrical cords. If they are chewed they could electrocute your pet. Cover up or hide electrical cords and never let your pet chew on them.
- Ribbons or tinsel can become lodged in the intestines and cause intestinal obstruction. This is a very common situation for kittens!
- Batteries contain corrosives, and if ingested they can cause ulceration to the mouth, tongue, and the rest of the gastrointestinal tract.
- Glass ornaments can cause internal laceration when ingested.

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center is the source of this material. KGARL has been given express written consent to reprint this article. www.aspca.org

What To Do For A Poisoned Animal

Be Prepared for a Poison Emergency

Your animal may become poisoned in spite of your best efforts to secure your home. Because of this, we urge you to be prepared. Your animal companion should regularly be seen by a local veterinarian to maintain overall health. You should know the veterinarian's procedures for emergency situations, especially ones that occur after usual business hours. You should keep the telephone numbers for the veterinarian, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, and a local emergency veterinary service in a convenient location.

Poison Safety Kit

Keep a pet safety kit on hand for emergencies. Such a kit should contain:

A fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide 3% (USP)

Can of soft dog or cat food, as appropriate.

Turkey baster, bulb syringe or large medical syringe.

Saline eye solution to flush out eye contaminants.

Artificial tear gel to lubricate eyes after flushing.

Mild grease-cutting dishwashing liquid for the animal after skin contamination.

Rubber gloves.

Forceps to remove stingers.

Muzzle. An excited animal may harm you.

Pet carrier.

Calling the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (888) 426-4435

A \$45 consultation fee may apply. When you call the center, be ready to provide:

Your name, address and telephone number.

Information concerning the exposure (the amount of agent, the time since exposure, etc.). For various reasons, it is important to know exactly what poison the animal was exposed to. Have the product container/packaging available for reference.

The species, breed, age, sex, weight and number of animals involved.

The symptoms your animal(s) is(are) experiencing.

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Referrals

Local Veterinarians

Ferry Farm Animal Clinic
(540) 371-5090 or 1-800-541-9942

King George Veterinary Clinic
(540) 775-9439

Potomac Ridge Animal Hospital
(540) 775-3777

Eagles Nest Animal Hospital
(540) 775-6800

Animal Emergency Clinic of
Fredericksburg
(540) 371-0554

Fredericksburg Regional Veterinary
Emergency Center
(540) 372-3470

Vet Emergency Treatment Services
Waldorf, MD
(301) 638-0988

Dr. Molly
House Calls, Exotics, Avian
(540) 538-9414

Low Cost Spay/Neuter Clinics

Virginia Kincheloe Spay/Neuter Clinic
(540) 507-7461
www.lionheartsinc.com

Waldorf Well Pet Clinic
(301) 885-0263

Animal Rescue

King George Animal Rescue League
(888) 542-7582

King George County Animal Control
(540) 775-2120

The Fredericksburg SPCA
(540) 373-9008

Pet Assistance League (PAL),
Stafford County
(540) 659-5018, (540) 441-9310, or
(540) 221-8937

Rappahannock Humane Society
(540) 785-1470
www.rhspetnet.org

Homeless Animal Rescue Team (HART)
(703) 691-4278

Humane Society of Caroline County
(804) 633-4830

Wendy's Feline Friends
(804) 224-1079

Poison Control

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center
(888) 426-4435
www.aspca.org