

# 5 secrets to a well-adjusted new puppy

Socializing your new furry bundle of joy (and energy!) is something you can do with your veterinarian's help. Start here.

**D**id you know that puppies learn and develop a big part of their adult personality by 16 weeks of age? It's true, and if you want a happy dog that takes life in a joyous stride, the clock is ticking. The positive (or negative) associations that young dogs develop during this critical brain development can last a lifetime — for better or worse. So let's make it better!

*Note: Don't force things! Make sure these exposures are done in a way that's comfortable for the puppy. Don't keep exposing a puppy to a new experience if the dog is scared. Talk to your veterinarian for guidance.*

## 1. Handle your puppy—literally

Make a point to touch your puppy all over. Don't ever be forceful or push to the point of struggle. Just touch and hold gently and reward his acceptance with a special treat. Remember, over time, you'll need to be able to trim toe nails, clean ears and brush teeth. If your new puppy actually enjoys these rituals, life is better for you both.

## 2. Socialize with your puppy

Let your puppy meet people of all shapes, sizes and mannerisms to learn there's nothing to fear from people of all kinds. Introduce children, men and women, and even people with hats or costumes—Halloween comes around once a year. Don't forget the treats to make "scary" fun!

## 3. Play dress-up with your puppy

If your dog is ever going to need a sweater or coat—or even a bandage—now's the time to teach him about them. Even if you just tie an adult T-shirt around him and let him get used to the feeling, it's an investment in

his future. Best of all, if you can help your new puppy learn about an E-collar—like those cones and collars the veterinarian will use when your furry friend recovers from surgery or illness—your veterinary team will really appreciate it. Someday your grown-up puppy won't be as freaked out when he needs to wear one to save his life.

## 4. Make noise with your puppy

Expose your pup to loud noises and novel objects, like the vacuum cleaner, the doorbell and even suddenly rattling a can with coins. Show that these things aren't harmful and reward her only when she's calm. Startling at a loud noise is typical, but your puppy can learn there's nothing to fear and recover quickly from a startle. Noise phobias are real, and you can do your part to prevent them.

## 5. Adventure with your puppy

You and your pup will experience all life has to offer together, but the experiences won't be as fun if your puppy is afraid or difficult to handle. Take your puppy everywhere you can for exposure to new places. Visit your veterinarian on a day just for a visit—and some friendly treats. Take the puppy on errands to see lots of new sights and smell new smells. Make all the places that you go extra special with great treats or repeat the visits until they're so normal that your pup is bored with them.

Science shows that it's easier for brains to remember bad experiences than good ones, so make sure your foundation for your puppy's brain is filled with terrific associations. You can avoid big problems in the future and, let's face it, handling and spending time with your puppy is a ton of fun!



# 5 dog items to toss right now

We all want to do the best we can by our pooches. But did you know some of the dog accessories you currently own might be better off in the trash? Read on to learn more.



## 1. Retractable leashes

Many accidents have been caused by retractable leashes, and they can be confusing to your dog because the place where you want him to walk is constantly changing. The leash portion can be very narrow and cause tangling and even injuries to people and pets.

## 2. Plastic bowls

Plastic may be a wonder to the modern world, but it is difficult to get truly clean. Plastic is easily scratched, with tiny defects all over the surface. These can trap bacteria and oil, which can create issues on your dog's lips and face. They can also be chewed into pieces and swallowed. Don't take a chance. Switch the plastic for stainless steel.

## 3. Smelly or outgrown collars

Our dogs wear collars all the time, close to their skin. These collars are like a pet's underwear and should be kept clean and fresh. Collars can rub the skin and create infections and hot spots around the neck. Don't forget to wash or replace collars regularly.

## 4. Dull nail trimmers

Many dogs don't enjoy having a pedicure—and dull nail trimmers are probably one reason why! Nail trimmers

have a cutting surface, and if it is not sharp, it will crush and split the nail instead of cutting it cleanly. Odds are this crushing effect is not particularly comfortable for your dog, either. Avoid lasting issues and keep your trimmers sharp and in good repair.

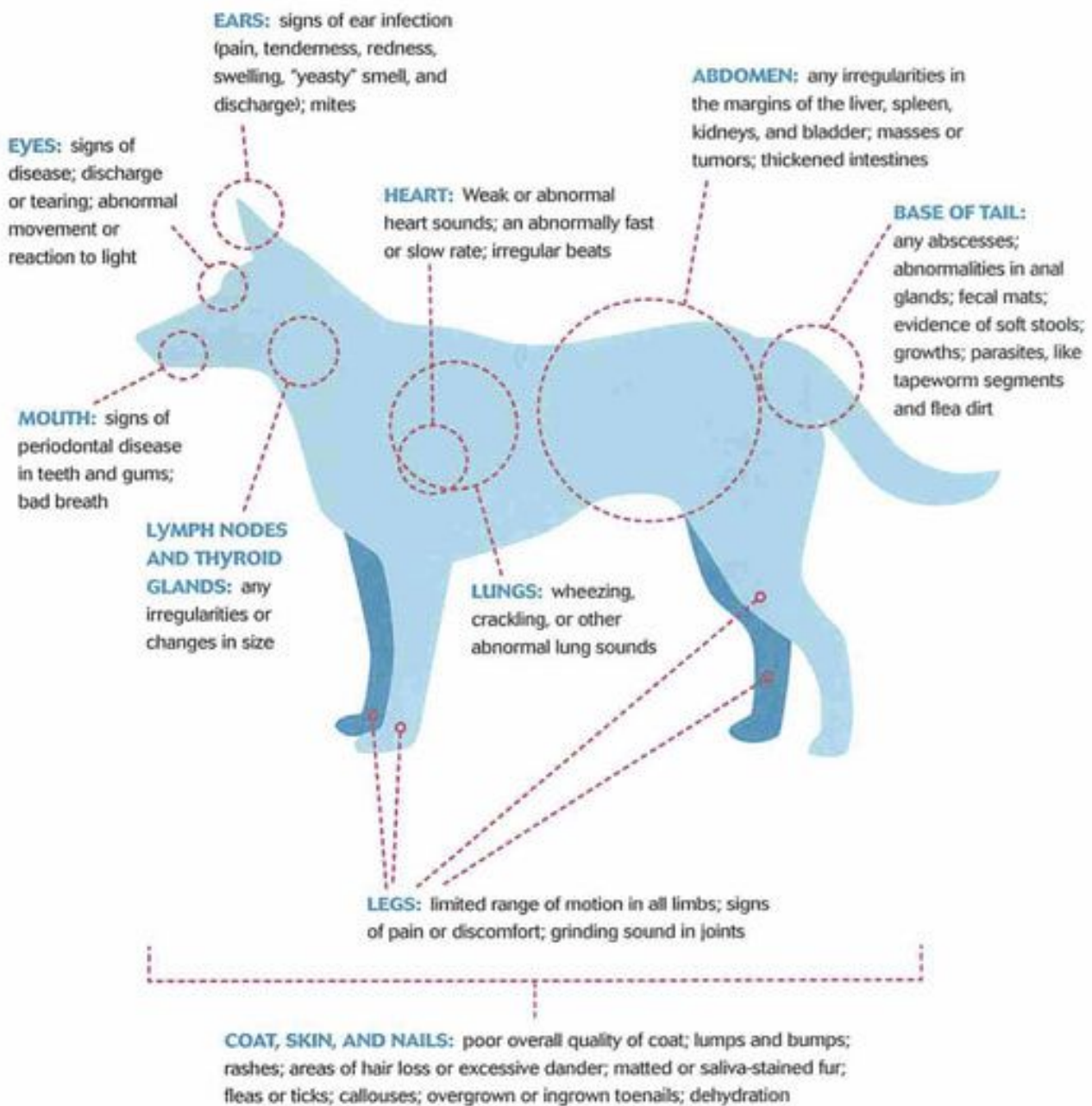
## 5. Broken or chewed up toys

Toys should be in good repair and whole. It is so easy for your dog to swallow a piece of a broken or chewed toy. You might not even notice that it's missing until your dog starts to vomit and act sick. Toys are typically not digestible and they are not designed for actual ingestion. They can lodge in the GI tract and block it, becoming a life-threatening situation. Set a schedule for checking toys at least once a week or so, if your dog is home with them frequently. Discard any that cannot be repaired. It is not worth losing your dog to a foreign body obstruction.

You are your dog's guardian and it falls to you to keep him safe. These are easy hazards that you might not have thought of. If you think that your dog has eaten something foreign or has been injured, do not hesitate to call your veterinarian. And if you ever have questions about the products your pet uses, let your veterinary practice know. They are there to help!

# Your dog's physical exam

Just what is the veterinarian looking for when they stare and gently push, pull, and poke your dog during a visit? Here's a breakdown of the major body systems they're checking out and what they're looking for (and hoping not to find).



# Protect your puppy's pearly whites

Dental health is a fundamental part of your furry best friend's future. Use this handout to start good habits in puppyhood that carry over into adulthood.

**T**wenty-eight: That's the number of teeth in your puppy's mouth, and each of these teeth is vitally important to your puppy's daily activities and overall health. As with your own teeth, neglected puppy teeth can collect plaque and tartar that can lead to periodontal disease and even tooth loss—a fact that becomes even more important when those 28 puppy teeth are replaced with 42 permanent adult teeth.

But if you start training your puppy now, you can teach him to tolerate (and even like) tooth brushing as a puppy and as an adult.

## Brush up on your toothbrush options

You have lots of options when it comes to choosing a toothbrush for your puppy—from brushes that look like your own toothbrush (make sure you can tell the difference!) to a soft, rubbery brush that fits over your finger. Choose a brush made specifically for dogs that can safely and comfortably fit in your puppy's mouth. Ask your veterinary team to help you pick the best brush for the job.

## Don't use the force

Teach your puppy that his toothbrush is super cool and that when it comes out, great things happen (like treats!).

Slowly introduce the brush into your puppy's mouth. As long as your puppy is still comfortable, move forward. But if your puppy withdraws from your touch, go back to the last step where he was happy. Never use force—it will teach your puppy to hate the toothbrush.

It's very unlikely that you'll brush all 28 teeth on the first try, and that's OK. Patiently move up to longer brushing periods over time, and keep it positive with encouragement and rewards as he improves. The goal is to brush daily because the plaque can harden into tartar in as fast as 36 hours, so brush it off every 24 hours to make the most impact.

## Visual aids

We tried out some toothbrush tips on a very cute 11-month-old dalmatian and took pictures to show it can be done! Check out [dvm360.com/dalmatiandental](http://dvm360.com/dalmatiandental)

## Pick a paste

You can also choose a pet toothpaste. (Don't use ones meant for people!) These products can help make the experience fun for your puppy because they come in different flavors, like chicken and peanut butter. Ask your veterinary team for a recommendation.

## One last tip ...

If you keep the toothbrush in a drawer or container, store other goodies there too so your puppy can learn that opening that drawer always means good things. Then, the toothbrush becomes just another one of the fun things you do together.



# SPAYING or NEUTERING *your dog*



Part of being conscientious dog owner is considering the importance of spaying or neutering your pup. Read on for more info on this surgery and the truth behind some common myths.

## **Spaying and neutering your dog**

If you've ever visited an animal shelter, you've seen some of the thousands of pets each year who are homeless. And many of those pets run out of time for adoption and are euthanized. You can't save them all, but you can help prevent pet overpopulation by spaying or neutering your dog.

Need more reasons to "fix" your pet? Besides preventing unwanted litters, spaying or neutering helps prevent many life-threatening diseases and can head off some irritating behaviors.

## **Spaying**

Although it's commonly referred to as a spay, this surgery is actually a complete ovariectomy, or the removal of both ovaries and the uterus. Spayed dogs are at much lower risk for ovarian cancers and cysts, mammary gland tumors, and uterine infections.

## **Neutering**

Neutering is the removal of both testicles. It sounds worse than it is—and no, he won't miss them! Neu-

tered males are less susceptible to prostate disease and testicular cancer. They're also less likely to act aggressive or to wander away from home, so neuter your pet before his heart leads him into the path of an oncoming car.

## **Common myths**

Often people worry that their spayed or neutered pet will get fat. However, the aging process probably affects weight gain more than anything—as many of us are painfully aware from our human experience. It's true that lowered hormone levels may decrease your pet's activity. The key to this problem is simple—give your pet less food and more exercise.

It's also a myth that females need to complete a heat cycle before being spayed. There is no medical reason for this old wives' tale. In fact, the fewer heat cycles your pet goes through before getting spayed, the better her protection against mammary cancer.

Worried that your male dog may lose his personality or "spunk" after being neutered? Don't! If he loses anything, it'll be the potential for bad behavior.

# Why many pets need vaccines

Doctors have a way to protect pets from diseases: vaccines. Here's why our hospital recommends them.

## What is a vaccine?

The history starts with an epidemic of smallpox, which killed millions of people. In 1796, a physician named Edward Jenner noticed that the milk maids, who were routinely exposed to cowpox, did not get sick with smallpox. He wondered whether their exposure to cowpox protected them ... and the idea of vaccination was born.

A vaccine exposes the immune system to inactive or incomplete disease-causing agents to train the immune system to quickly and effectively respond when exposed to the real thing.

## Why do we vaccinate puppies?

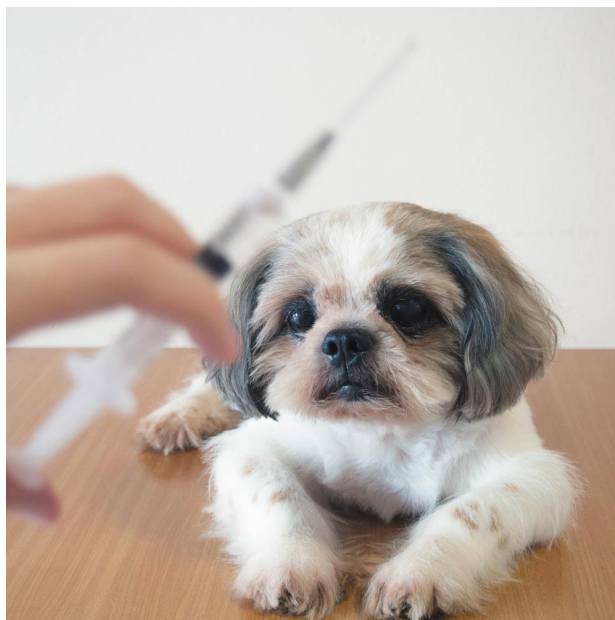
Since we know that vaccines train the immune system how to react quickly to certain diseases, we want to protect puppies from diseases we have vaccines for. If we expose our pups to vaccines, if and when their immune systems face the real disease, they can fight it more easily. Think of vaccination like a training gym where athletes prepare their bodies and minds for actual competition.

## Which vaccines does my puppy need?

When a disease is widespread, dangerous—or both—researchers develop a vaccine against it. Vaccination choices are based on an individual puppy's lifestyle and risk factors. Your veterinary team can tell you which vaccines are appropriate and how they can be given.

## Why does my puppy need to repeat vaccines ("boosters")?

We know that an immune system "remembers" diseases from vaccines, but we don't know how long the memory is for each individual animal. Because we don't want to gamble with protection, veterinarians and other medical



professionals believe it's far better to vaccinate too often than not enough.

While puppies receive some immune protection from their mother after they're born, that doesn't last for a dog's entire puppyhood. Eventually, puppies need to develop their own protection, and that's where vaccines come in. Since maternal immunity can interfere with the effectiveness of vaccines, we repeat them to make sure they're present when the puppy's own immune system takes over. This timeline varies between individual dogs, so we follow guidelines to protect as many puppies as possible.

## Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines have been accused of being dangerous. There is no scientific evidence to support these claims for dogs. Vaccination has saved innumerable lives, both human and animal. There are isolated cases of allergic reactions, but these are rarely life-threatening when treated appropriately. It is important, however, that puppies not be randomly vaccinated outside of published recommendations. Vaccines are not one-size-fits-all and should be tailored to the individual puppy.

# Are you *stressing* your dog?

If your dog seems anxious or tense, make sure you refrain from the making these 10 canine faux-pas, which could trigger behavior problems.

**1. Punish your dog.** Dogs are creatures of opportunity, so avoid opportunities for them to get into trouble. If you leave trash or your personal items where your dog can get them, she will explore the wonderful-smelling tidbits and assume they're hers. If you value your things, keep them picked up and put away.

**2. Keep telling your dog "no."** When you tell your dog "no," she likely will stop the behavior but then repeat it a short time later—making the "no" simply an interrupter. Skeptical? Try saying "pickle" instead of "no," and the same pattern of stopping then repeating the behavior is likely to return. Instead, show your dog what you want her to do.

**3. Assume your dog understands English.** Animals communicate using body language and are very good at figuring us out, but they have no command of language. So, unless you have taught your dog to "drop it," "leave it," "come" or any other commands, she may not actually know these terms. Using them without sufficient training will result in stress as your dog attempts to guess what you want.

**4. Expect your dog to "love everyone."** Just like you, not all dogs love all other people and animals. Some dogs are social butterflies; others would prefer to stay home enjoying a nice toy. Dragging your "introverted" dog to many places in the hopes of socializing her will likely result in frustration and anxiety.

**5. Pull on the leash.** Leash pulling is miscommunication at its best. You walk slow, your dog walks fast. Your dog is frustrated that he has to pull that lazy human around; meanwhile, you think your dog is being stubborn, willful or disobedient. Bridge this gap in communication and reduce frustration all around by teaching your dog—in a humane way—to walk on a loose leash.

**6. Hug or kiss your dog.** Do you like when someone holds onto you so you can't move away? Dogs generally don't like to be hugged and kissed—especially by strangers. Restraining a dog so it can't get away puts you on her "not-to-be-trusted" list.

**7. Stare at your dog.** Direct, prolonged eye contact with dogs is considered very confrontational. In canine body language, it suggests that you would like to interact—and not necessarily in a good way.

**8. Touch your dog or take her food away while she is eating.** Imagine you are in a restaurant and your waiter touches your shoulder every time he walks by, or he takes your plate away as soon as you start to eat. If this occurred at every visit we would likely not return to that restaurant. Our pets do not have that luxury. Bothering pets or taking their food away while they are eating will not lead them to be more accepting of people/toddlers being in close proximity while they are eating. To the contrary, it likely teaches dogs to be more concerned

and anxious about people approaching them while eating.

**9. Command your pet to "get down" when it's jumping.** What word do you use when you want your dog to get into the position where her belly is touching the floor? If it's "down," then when your pet is jumping up to greet a guest, use a different term such as "off," or "four on floor" and teach her what the word means. The name of the cue is irrelevant, as long as you show the dog the action that goes along with it. (*See No. 3 above.*)

**10. Don't "let sleeping dogs lie."** Dogs don't like to be bothered while they're sleeping any more than we do. **dvm360**

Information was provided by Valarie V. Tynes, DVM, DACVB, DACAW, Premier Veterinary Behavior Consulting, Sweetwater, Texas, and Colleen Koch, DVM, DACVB, Lincoln Land Animal Clinic, Jacksonville, Ill. For more information, check out *Decoding Your Dog: Explaining Common Dog Behaviors and How to Prevent or Change Unwanted Ones*, from the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists.



# Why punishment **fails**; what works **better**

Think some form of punishment is necessary when training your dog? The following examples will show you why it just doesn't work and can make matters even worse. *By Valarie V. Tynes, DVM, DACVB*

**P**unishing a dog often doesn't work or can even make a behavior problem worse. Three important rules must be met for punishment to be effective.

- 1.** The punishment must occur every time the unwanted behavior occurs.
- 2.** The punishment must be administered within a second or two of the inappropriate behavior.
- 3.** The punishment must be aversive enough to stop the dog from repeating the unwanted behavior in the future but not be so aversive as to frighten the dog.

Meeting all three of these criteria can be difficult. That's why punishment often fails to solve behavior problems and should not be the first training method of choice. Positive reinforcement training, in which animals are rewarded for appropriate behaviors, is safer and more effective.

As seen in the two examples below, punishment teaches an animal what you don't want it to do but fails to teach it what you expect of it.

## **Example A**

**Problem behavior:** A dog gets on the furniture.

**Owner's response:** Every time the owner sees the dog on the furniture, she yells at it and threatens it with a rolled up newspaper.





When she does this, the dog slinks off the furniture.

**Result:** The dog continues to get on the furniture, although it is less likely to do so in the owner's presence. Because the dog still gets on the furniture when the owner is away, it is being rewarded part of the time for the unwanted behavior, and the first rule above is not being met. So the punishment does not solve the problem. If the owner gets increasingly frustrated with the dog, she may increase the severity of the punishment, and depending on the dog's temperament, it may respond by becoming fearful of the owner and avoiding her. Some dogs might even begin growling and snapping when the owner approaches.

**Suggestion:** Success will be more likely if the owner blocks the dog's access to the furniture whenever she can't be around (e.g. confine the dog to a crate or a different room in the house). Or the owner can make the furniture less appealing by covering it with plastic. Commercially available devices for keeping animals off surfaces such as elastic mats, plastic mats with rigid points (or plastic carpet protector material laid upside down) can also be used. A comfortable bed should also be made available to the dog in the vicinity of the favored furniture, and the dog should be rewarded every time it is caught resting on the bed.

### Example B

**Problem behavior:** A dog greets people by jumping on them.

**Owners' response:** Whenever the dog jumps on its owners, they knee it in the chest or kick it.

**Result:** The dog avoids the husband (the largest man in the household; he has kicked the dog hard enough that it is now afraid of him) but continues to jump on everyone else. Many dogs are highly motivated to greet people by getting close to their faces. In most cases, kneeling or kicking such a dog is less powerful than the dog's desire to greet people by jumping on them. In addition, since not all people the dog meets will knee it or kick it, the punishment doesn't meet the first rule. The third rule is also not met because the dog doesn't always perceive the kneeling as punishment and, in fact, is reinforced for jumping because it's getting attention.

**Suggestion:** Rather than trying to punish the dog for jumping, the owners should use positive reinforcement to teach the dog to sit to greet everyone. Sitting is an alternative behavior that can be rewarded with petting or a food treat.

### Appropriate behavior modification

These examples highlight the fact that when the punishment criteria are not met, behavior problems can worsen, and the bond between the pet and the owner can be damaged beyond repair. When punishment is used incorrectly, it will appear unpredictable and confusing, so many pets become anxious or fearful around the owner that administers the punishment. When punishment is used in an attempt to train an animal that is already afraid or anxious, its fear and anxiety are likely to worsen and may lead to aggression.

If your dog is exhibiting inappropriate behavior, consult your veterinarian. He or she will help you develop an appropriate behavior modification program that focuses on using positive reinforcement or will refer you to someone with extensive experience in developing such behavior modification programs.



# Teaching your new puppy the right way to play

Puppies can play rough. So to ensure a lifetime of safe and happy interactions, learn how to play appropriately with your new puppy from the start.

Most puppy play consists of chasing, pouncing, barking, growling, snapping, and biting. So how can you tell the difference between normal play and possible signs of true aggression in your new puppy?

## NORMAL PLAY BEHAVIOR

In normal play, a puppy may play bow (lower its head and raise its hind end), present its front end or side to the owner, hold the front part of its body up, wag its tail, dart back and forth, emit high-pitched barks and growls, and spontaneously attack. Of course, even normal play can become too intense.

## AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Behaviors that may indicate a problem include prolonged, deep-tone growling; a fixed gaze; a stiff posture; and aggression that is situational or stimulus-dependent (not spontaneous). These aggressive behaviors may be related to fear, possessiveness, conflict, or pain. Talk to your veterinarian if your puppy is exhibiting these behaviors.



## 7 steps to proper play

Follow these steps to prevent inappropriate play:

### 1) Provide plenty of exercise.

New puppies are bundles of energy, so give them productive ways to expend that energy such as going on walks or playing “Monkey in the middle” (see sidebar).

### 2) Provide mental stimulation.

Rubber toys that can be filled with treats, such as Kong (Kong company) or Busy Buddy puzzle toys (Premier), offer puppies a chance to chase and bite the toys and obtain a food reward.

### 3) Play with your pup.

Playing fetch or throwing a soccer ball for your pet to push around will sap some of your pup’s energy.

### 4) Teach and review basic obedience commands.

A well-trained dog is more likely to follow orders when behaving inappropriately.

### 5) Conduct leadership exercises.

Follow three rules to maintain overall order:

- **Nothing in life is free.** Ask your puppy to respond to a command such as “sit” before it receives anything it wants or needs.
- **Don’t tell me what to do.** It’s OK to give your puppy the love and at-

tention it needs, but if it becomes too pushy about getting attention, such as by nudging, whining, barking, or leaning, pull your hands in, lean away, and look away. Walk away if your puppy is too difficult to ignore. Once the puppy stops soliciting attention for 10 seconds, ask it to sit and give it attention.

### • Don’t move without permission.

Anytime you begin to move from one area of the home to another, ask your puppy to sit and stay for a second or two before you give it a release command to follow you.

### 6) Don’t sit on the floor with your pup.

This tends to get puppies excited, puts family members in a vulnerable position, and makes it more difficult to control the puppy.

### 7) Promote socialization.

Puppies must have frequent, positive social experiences with all types of animals and people during the first three or four months of life to prevent asocial behavior, fear, and biting. And continued exposure to a variety of people and other animals as the puppy grows and develops is an essential part of maintaining good social skills.

### NIPPING BAD PLAY BEHAVIOR IN THE BUD

If your puppy plays inappropriately, here are the right ways to handle it.

- **Distract the bad behavior.** Always have a toy on hand that your puppy can transfer its attention to.
- **Speak up and step out.** If your puppy is biting hard, yell “Ouch!” and stop playing.
- **Interrupt problem behaviors.** A shake can or a water gun will startle puppies and stop the behavior. But don’t use these techniques if a pet has a sensitive temperament or if they seem to make things worse.
- **Set up a dragline.** Both indoors and outdoors during supervised play, put the puppy on a leash that you can quickly grab to stop the behavior.
- **Use head halters.** These halters provide a more natural sense of control than ordinary collars do and limit the chances of biting.
- **Consider muzzles.** In extreme cases, muzzles may be used for short periods to prevent the biting behavior.
- **Give the puppy a time out.** If your puppy won’t stop a bad behavior, put it in a room or in its kennel with toys to keep it busy until it calms down.

### WHAT NOT TO DO

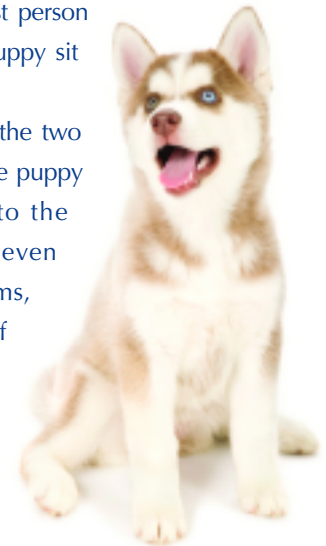
You and your family should never use physical punishment, such as scruff shakes, alpha rollovers, squeezing the puppy to the floor, thumping its nose, or swatting.

## Monkey in the middle: An exercise in obedience

This game not only exercises energetic puppies, it also reinforces the basic commands of “sit” and “come,” enhances name recognition, and teaches a puppy to run up and sit to get attention (instead of jumping up on people). At least two people are needed, and each person should have six to 12 small treats (regular puppy dinner kibble is usually adequate) at hand.

The two people sit opposite each other with about five to six feet in between. The first person calls “Skippy, come” in a high-pitched, upbeat voice. As the puppy approaches, the first person has the puppy sit for a treat. Immediately, the second person calls “Skippy, come” in a high-pitched, upbeat voice and has the puppy sit for a treat. Immediately, the first person calls again and has the puppy sit for a treat, and so on.

The distance between the two people can increase as the puppy becomes accustomed to the game—the people can even move into separate rooms, increasing the strength of the “come” command and the exertion needed to obtain a treat.



Remember, everybody wins when you take the time and effort to teach your new puppy how to play appropriately. You’ll gain a well-behaved pet, and the puppy is more likely to remain a happy, important part of the family.

# The Learn to Earn Program

## Dr Yin's Program for Developing Leadership in Humans and Impulse Control in Dogs

From excessive barking, to jumping to aggression and separation anxiety, one of the common issues is that these dogs tend to lack impulse control and their humans need to find better ways to provide guidance and leadership. Fortunately humans can develop the needed communication skills while training dogs to have self-control and emotional control in Dr Yin's fun, reward-based version of the Learn to Earn Program.

### Become a Leader Your Dog Can Trust

Once owners set guidelines and communicate the rules by consistently rewarding desired behaviors while removing rewards for unwanted behaviors until the desired behaviors are a habit, then the owners are seen by the dog as the leader whom they can trust to guide them. Alternatively, when rules change randomly or the messages are garbled the dog may view the owner the same way you might view an indecisive boss who mumbles.



### Throw Away the Food Bowl



For the fastest training, dogs should earn their meal throughout the day when you are home. That means no food in the food bowl. Instead you'll carry food around with you in a bait bag, your pockets, or have it available in easily accessible containers throughout the house. Then, throughout the day, when you are home, you'll reward appropriate behavior. Now your dog will get 100 rewards for desired behavior instead of a free meal.

### Require the Dog to Say Please By Sitting

In this program we turn the house rules onto their head. Whereas taking things without asking worked before, the only thing that works to get the dog what she wants now is to automatically say please by sitting.



VS



FREE!

100 x REWARDS!

### Use All Motivators to Your Advantage

If on top of that you require her to sit for other resources such as petting, attention, and play, when she wants these things, you'll increase your toolbox of rewards even more. Add to this, removal of all rewards for undesired behavior and now you have a formula for changing the dog's behavior patterns virtually overnight (meaning days to weeks instead of weeks to years).

### Keep Your Dog Attached to You

Tethering to you teaches your dog that when she doesn't want to pay attention to you, she can't just blow you off and walk away and then get rewarded by something else, such as food that she grabs off a table. That is, tethering her to you helps prevent rewards for undesirable behavior. Plus, if your dog's near it's easier to reward good behaviors as they occur. Otherwise you tend to forget and miss opportunities, which makes the training take weeks or months longer.



### Walk with a Loose Leash

When your dog's attached to you on leash, she should sit and remain seated when you are stationary and then walk by your side on a loose leash (not ahead of you) when you move from place to place.



© 2012 Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS

For additional Low Stress Handling information, posters, flyers, books, and DVDs, please visit our website at <http://DrSophiaYin.com>



**CATTLEDOG PUBLISHING**  
[drsophiayin.com](http://drsophiayin.com)  
 A VETERINARY CORPORATION



Questions@cattledogpublishing.com

(530) 757-2383 — P.O. Box 4516, Davis, CA 95617

Support@lowstresshandling.com

# “Is my dog playing ... or fighting?”



## How to tell the difference between normal play and inappropriate aggression in dogs.

**S**afe, healthy play doesn't just provide dogs with a good source of exercise. It can also aid in social development while building behavioral flexibility and helping the dog learn to get along with others. But rough or traumatic interactions with inappropriate playmates can cause emotional and physical problems. And in some cases, it can lead to aggression. Here's how to tell the difference.

### Normal play

Normal play can include chasing, catching, biting, growling and pouncing, which can also occur in more serious interactions. However, if the dogs are engaging in safe, healthy play, these behaviors are less intense and don't end in injury. For example, a dog may repeatedly pounce high into the air in a nonaggressive manner to get another dog's attention.

Normal play has no winners or losers, so it often includes equalizers, like role reversals and self-handicapping. Role reversals occur when the winner of the game switches roles. For example, the game may start with one dog as the chaser and end with the other dog doing the chasing. Self-handicapping describes when dogs play at the level of the weakest participant or put themselves in a position of disadvantage. You may have seen an older, larger dog self-handicap by lying on its back to allow a puppy to climb on it in play.

Other signals that almost always occur during normal play include the play bow—the dog's front paws are on the ground up to the elbow and its rear is in the air—and the play face, which is an open, soft mouth.

While it's better to be concerned than to tune out, if the above signals are present in both dogs, there is little cause for worry—even if the play looks aggressive or if one dog is much smaller than the other. For example, a Yorkie can play with a boxer if the boxer understands how to self-handicap.

Another telltale sign that play is normal is the willingness of each dog to continue. If one dog is walking away and the other is relentlessly pursuing it, there is reason to be concerned. When one dog disengages, the other dog should as well—even if for a short time.

### Causes for concern

- You don't see role reversals and self-handicapping. Remember that normal play doesn't have winners or losers.
- You witness intense and aggressive play, including grab and shake components.
- You see that at least one of the dogs has its hackles up, which is often a sign of fear or anxiety.
- You notice that one dog is disengaging while the other isn't.

*If you see any of the above signs, interrupt the dogs to give them a break.*

### Your veterinarian can help!

If you're concerned about your dog's play behavior, let your veterinarian know. He or she can refer you to a behavior professional, like a board-certified veterinary behaviorist or a qualified dog trainer, depending on the problem that needs to be addressed.

# How to win the barking dog battle



Try these tips for a more peaceful pooch!

## 1. Identify what could be triggering the barking. Common triggers include:

- Sounds outside (and above, below and beside you if you live in an apartment)
- Dogs or people seen from windows
- Environmental changes such as construction
- Boredom
- Illness or aging changes that cause discomfort, anxiety or confusion
- Separation distress

Tip: Videotaping your dog can help you identify triggers.

## 2. Modify the triggers

- Play white noise or calming music, or turn on the television.

- Apply opaque static window film to block common window watching spots.
- Increase physical and mental exercise (e.g., puzzle feeders, games, training, walks).
- Schedule a time to bring your dog to the clinic for a physical exam and a behavior discussion.
- Consider a dog walker, pet sitter or doggie daycare.

## 3. Stay calm

- Avoid scolding, physical corrections or electric bark collars, which can increase stress and anxiety.
- Teach the dog how to be calm and quiet. A positive-reinforcement-based dog trainer can help.
- Remote training machines that strategically dispense treats can be effective—especially when you're away from home. Ask your veterinarian for recommendations.



# How to handle food guarding

When your dog gets aggressive while he eats, it can be detrimental to you and the ones around you. Help build trust to alleviate the negativity surrounding dinner time.

*By Sarah Wooten, DVM*

## What is food guarding?

When a dog becomes very defensive while eating food, chewing on a bone or toy, or eating a treat, we call it food guarding. It can also be called food aggression, resource aggression or resource guarding. While the exact cause of food guarding has not been determined, one theory suggests that puppies fed from a communal bowl predisposes dogs to developing food guarding behavior.

Signs of food guarding range from very mild, such as growling or running away with the food, to severe cases where biting occurs. Many pet parents elect to not treat mild food guarding and instead make sure the dog is left alone while eating, or they use a door, baby gate or kennel to separate the dog from people or other pets during meal time.

## Don't let them bite the hand that feeds

The best way to deal with food guarding is to prevent it in the

first place with a puppy or dog that doesn't yet guard the food bowl. In this scenario, when you bring your new dog home, you should hand feed the first few meals to your dog, making the experience as calm and positive as possible.

The next level of training must consist of building a positive association between people approaching the food bowl and something really good happening, like a treat getting dropped in the bowl. While your dog is eating, casually drop in a tasty treat, like a small piece of cheese or deli meat.

Make sure to do this at least once or twice a meal until your dog seems comfortable and happy to have you around while he eats. If he shows any signs of discomfort or nervousness, stop and try again later. Signs of stress in a food-aggressive dog include food gulping, a stiffened body, raised hackles, growling, snapping, staring, panting or widened eyes.

## Get the help your dog needs

Behaviorists used to tell pet parents that to prevent food guarding, they must take the food bowl away over and over again while a dog's eating and mess with a dog while he's eating to get the dog "used to" being messed with while eating. This practice is outdated, potentially dangerous and no longer recommended. Nobody likes to be messed with while they eat, including dogs!

If the dog bites while food guarding, or if there are children in the home, then the risk of not treating food guarding is too high. Do not attempt to resolve food guarding on your own. If you wish to keep the dog in your home, then it's time to talk with either a certified applied animal behaviorist (CAAB or ACAAB certification), a board-certified veterinary behaviorist (diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists), or a certified professional dog trainer that has experience treating food-related aggression.

## Dog Training Recommendations

Concord Chapel Animal Hospital believes any professional dog training should include owner involvement and be based on positive reinforcement. We do not recommend training programs that use shock collars, prong collars, or any type of negative reinforcement. We also do not recommend away from owner training programs, such as board and train, unless it includes heavy owner involvement to establish the bond between dog and owner reinforcing learned behaviors at home requires.

### **Recommended Training Programs:**

PosiDog Canine Learning Center  
PosiDog.org  
3700 Parkway Lane  
Suites A&B  
Hilliard, OH 43026  
[TRAIN@POSIDOG.ORG](mailto:TRAIN@POSIDOG.ORG)  
614.859.5238

PosiDog offers group classes and private coaching for a variety of different situations, including puppy training.

Pinnacle Pets Play & Stay Training  
PinnaclePets.com  
3491 Farm Bank Way  
Grove City, OH 43140  
[INFO@PINNACLEPETS.COM](mailto:INFO@PINNACLEPETS.COM)  
614.991.5149

Pinnacle Pets offers private lessons with their on-site trainer to work with your pup on learning a variety of new commands, tricks, and eliminating any undesirable behaviors such as jumping, pulling on a leash, barking, etc.

Buckeye Dog Training  
Buckeyedogtraining.com  
614.347.9127

Buckeye Dog Training offers one-on-one appointments that always begin in your dog's home environment. They will work on comprehensive obedience training, overcoming aggression and anxiety issues, and behavior problem diagnosis and resolution.



# Don't let boredom ruin your puppy's brain



Your new puppy likely won't need to fight for food in the wild. That means you'll need some fun, *err*, enrichment at home to keep your canine cutie happy, healthy and out of trouble (from boredom).

**Y**ou've taken the first important step to giving your puppy a happy, healthy life by seeing your veterinarian, but medical and preventive care aren't the only things a new dog needs to thrive. The good news is, veterinary professionals are an excellent resource for ways to keep your puppy physically and mentally healthy.

## Enrichment is fun!

Dog ancestors hunted and foraged. Of course, your puppy is dramatically different in many ways from canine ancestors, because domestic dogs have evolved along with humans, but his puppy brain still needs challenges. We call these challenges "enrichment."

Zoo veterinarians have known for a while now that their animals were much healthier if their environments offered enrichment. You can

see polar bears floating with frozen fish or tigers rolling enormous balls. Our dogs, like these animals in captivity, are born to evade predators and find food, but they have their needs met by us in our homes, so we have to give them other interesting things to focus on.

Some fun ways to create interest are toys and games. Even if it's as simple as hiding treats under blankets or going for a walk outside, anything that makes your pup move and think is good for her. You can hide treats in an empty paper towel roll with the ends twisted (just be prepared to clean up a little mess).

## Food helps!

Some of the most fun enrichment toys for you to buy will dispense food rewards as puppies figure them out. They are novel and interesting and can help slow down your

puppy's eating habits too. There are high-tech toys that launch balls for puppies to chase. There are puzzles that puppies must decipher for a food reward. Activity mats are designed to entertain puppies too, with pockets to explore. Some of the mats have thick threads that dogs have to sniff and search through to find their reward. The more senses your dog engages for each activity, the better!

You can harness your pup's natural curiosity to help her learn and develop normally. Don't forget, anything that helps keeps your puppy entertained and busy—and not trying to figure out what your shoes taste like. Ask your veterinary team what their favorite enrichment items are or be creative to find ways for your puppy to seek you, find you and get active with you at home. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do it together.

## Fruits and Veggies for Pets

**GOOD - Raw, Cooked, Frozen - to use as a treat substitute**

★ = Our Favorites



★ Bananas



★ Green Beans



★ Apple Slices



Berries



Tomatoes



Zucchini



★ Carrots



Cucumbers



Broccoli



Oranges



Sweet Potatoes (baked)



Celery



Pears



Bell Peppers



Asparagus



Cauliflower



Canned Pumpkin



Melon

## **BAD - DO NOT GIVE**



Onions



Chives



Garlic



Grapes



Raisins



Cherry Pits



Hot Peppers



Corn Cobs



Leeks

# Grain Free Diets and Heart Disease in Dogs and Cats

## What Does “Grain Free” Mean?

Grain-free” means that the product does not include grains such as rice, corn, or wheat. Therefore, the source of carbohydrates are peas, legumes, potatoes, and/or lentils.

## Why Are Grain Free Diets Currently So Popular?

Pet food companies are most likely developing grain free diets in response to human dietary trends. Over the past 10 years, many people in the United States have embraced gluten free diets for weight loss or health-related reasons such as celiac disease. Celiac disease is an immune mediated disease caused by an intolerance to gluten. Gluten is the protein in grains like wheat, barley, and rye that is left over after all the starch is removed. Gluten free diets are essential to keep people with celiac disease healthy.

Celiac disease in dogs is incredibly rare and has not been documented in cats as of November 2019. Unless your dog has a known gluten sensitivity, there is no need to avoid it in their diet.

## Can Grain Free Diets Cause Disease in Cats and Dogs?

Grain-free diets have been linked to a heart disease called dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) in dogs. DCM is a primary disease of the heart muscle (cardio = heart; myo = muscle; pathy = disease) in which the heart muscle becomes weak and loses its ability to contract normally. Pets with DCM can accumulate fluid in their lungs or abdomen. This accumulation of fluid is called congestive heart failure.

Grain free diets and their possible association with dilated cardiomyopathy are continuously being researched. There are currently many theories concerning the link between DCM and grain free diets. So far, there are no definitive answers. Therefore, grain free diets are not advised unless specifically recommended by your veterinarian.

## Are all “limited ingredient” or “grain free” diets at fault?

Some dogs are prescribed diets to diagnose and treat allergies (skin or gastrointestinal diseases). Such diets might include a limited number of uncommon ingredients, such as salmon, kangaroo, potatoes, peas, etc. At this point, no therapeutic diets manufactured by the major pet food manufacturers (Hills, Purina, Royal Canin) have been associated with current cases of DCM.

There is no medical or nutritional indication for “grain free,” although some veterinary therapeutic diets recommended to diagnose and treat allergies are also grain free. They are chosen for their novel ingredients, not because they are grain free. Grain free is simply a marketing category, and there is no specific benefit.

## What should I do if my dog eats a grain-free, legume based diet?

1. Check the ingredient label. If peas or lentils are the main ingredients (or primary carbohydrate source), consider changing to a diet that contains grains.
2. If you are reluctant to change the diet, consult your veterinarian about a cardiac ultrasound (echocardiogram) to see if your dog has evidence of DCM. If your dog is found to be affected, switch to a grain-based commercial diet.
3. If you have a dog breed that is “at risk” for dietary-related DCM (American Cocker Spaniel, Golden Retriever, Newfoundland, Dalmatian) and eating an implicated diet, your veterinarian should check whole blood and plasma levels for an amino acid called taurine. If those levels are low, your veterinarian will recommend a cardiac ultrasound, diet change, and taurine supplementation.

## Do Cats Develop Dilated Cardiomyopathy from Grain Free Diets?

A few cat cases have been reported to the FDA, but the numbers are too small to say anything definitive. At this time, grain free diet related DCM appears to be primarily a dog problem.

### Veterinarypartner.com

Diets and Heart Disease in Dogs and Cats [Mark Rishniw, BVSc, Ph.D., DACVIM \(SA-IM\), DACVIM \(CA\)](#) Date Published: 03/05/2019

Alternative Diets for Dogs and Cats [Savanna Bruce, Veterinary Student Class of 2024](#) Date Published: 07/27/2021

Dilated Cardiomyopathy in Dogs and Cats [Robert Prošek, DVM, MS, DACVIM, ECVIM-CA](#) Date Reviewed/Revised: 03/06/2019

rice” that signal tapeworm infection or if your pet has diarrhea, bloody feces, weight loss, excessive coughing, or a dull coat, or is dragging (scooting) their rear end on the ground more than usual.

To test for intestinal parasites, your veterinarian may ask you to bring in a fresh stool sample, or may collect a small sample straight from your pet’s rear end. A portion of the sample will be prepared and examined under a microscope for the presence of worm eggs and single-celled parasites. Your veterinarian also may recommend an antigen test that detects certain parasite proteins in feces, or a test that detects parasite DNA. Giardia infection is harder to detect than other infections, and several stool samples may need to be tested before the parasite is found.

#### HOW CAN INTESTINAL PARASITES BE TREATED AND PREVENTED?

If worm eggs or tapeworm segments are found in your pet’s stool sample, this means your pet is infected with adult worms. Your veterinarian will recommend a deworming program to eliminate the parasites. Unfortunately, dewormers and other parasite preventive products don’t work on single-cell intestinal parasites like coccidia and *Giardia*. If these parasites are found and are making your pet sick, your veterinarian may recommend other medications to treat the infection.

Whether or not parasites are found in your pet’s stool sample, your veterinarian will recommend a regular parasite control program to protect your pet year-round. Several monthly heartworm prevention products also protect against intestinal worms and external parasites like fleas (which can carry tapeworms) and can help keep your pet safe. By using them for your pet, you’ll be protecting people as well. This is especially important in households with young children, the elderly, or people with weakened immune systems. Your veterinarian can help you decide which parasite control product and program is best given you and your pet’s unique needs.

You can further protect your pet from intestinal parasites by keeping them away from potential sources, like feces,

puddles, or rodents. For cats, the easiest way to do this is to keep your cat indoors. This also will protect other animals and people by preventing your cat from using gardens, sandboxes, and other sites as litterboxes.

Dog parks pose a particular risk of exposure to intestinal parasites, especially if dog waste isn’t immediately removed, because the parasites can survive for a long time in the environment. The easiest way to lower your dog’s risk when at the park or outside is to keep the dog leashed. You can protect others—no matter where you are—by immediately picking up your dog’s feces and properly disposing of it, and by avoiding dog parks and other public places if you know your dog has diarrhea or intestinal parasites.

People can avoid worm infections by practicing good hygiene and sanitation:

- Discourage children from eating dirt or playing in areas that might be soiled with animal feces.
- Keep sandboxes covered when not in use.
- Always wash your hands after handling soil and after contact with pets, and make sure children do the same.
- Wear shoes when outside to protect feet from any parasite larvae.
- Wash raw vegetables thoroughly.
- Immediately pick up animal feces from your yard, garden, and public areas and properly dispose of it.

**A regular parasite control program can protect your pet year-round.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO KEEP YOUR PET HAPPY AND HEALTHY AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, VISIT:**

American Veterinary Medical Association  
[avma.org/PetOwners](https://avma.org/PetOwners)

# INTESTINAL PARASITES IN CATS AND DOGS

*Brought to you by your veterinarian and the American Veterinary Medical Association*



[avma.org](https://avma.org)

(C) 2022 American Veterinary Medical Association



Most internal parasites in dogs and cats are worms and single-celled organisms that live and reproduce in the intestines. The most common are roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworms, and the single-cell parasites *Coccidia* and *Giardia*.

### ROUNDWORMS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW ARE THEY SPREAD?

Roundworms are common in dogs and cats. They get their name from their tubular bodies. Infected animals pass roundworm eggs in their feces (droppings). Your pet can catch roundworms by swallowing these eggs in feces-contaminated soil or water, and by licking contaminated fur or paws. Once inside the body, the eggs hatch, releasing larvae that move through the lungs and liver and eventually settle in the small intestine. There, they grow to adult worms and mate, producing eggs and continuing the infection cycle. Roundworm infections usually peak during the winter and decrease over the summer.

Puppies and kittens are especially vulnerable to roundworms. Infected female dogs may pass the parasite to their puppies before birth or afterwards through their milk when puppies are nursing. Infected female cats cannot infect their kittens before birth, but can pass on the infection through their milk.

#### What are the health risks to pets and people?

Adult roundworms steal nutrients from the food that pets eat, and can cause poor nutrition and intestinal problems. In young animals, roundworm larvae also can cause serious respiratory problems like pneumonia as the larvae move through the lungs.

Roundworm infections are zoonotic, meaning that they can be transmitted to people. Most human infections come from accidentally swallowing roundworm eggs. Children, especially those who eat dirt, are at particular risk. Unlike

## Roundworm and hookworm infections can be spread to people.

in pets, roundworm larvae in people travel to organs like the liver, lungs, and brain and settle there, never becoming adult worms. Most infected people will have no symptoms. However, those unable to fully fight the infection—such as young children, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems—may develop lung, brain, liver, or eye damage.

### HOOKWORMS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW ARE THEY SPREAD?

Hookworms are also common in dogs, and cats are vulnerable too. They get their name from their hook-like mouthparts. Infected animals pass hookworm eggs in their feces, which then hatch in the environment to release larvae. Your pet can become infected by swallowing larvae in feces-contaminated substances or by eating an infected animal or insect. Direct contact with the larvae also can cause infection if they penetrate your pet's skin. An infected female dog can pass the parasite to her puppies through her milk, but this does not occur in cats. Once an animal is infected, hookworm larvae travel through their body. Larvae that make it to the small intestine attach themselves there, where they grow into adult worms and produce eggs. Unlike roundworms, hookworm infections peak in the summer and fall.

#### What are the health risks to pets and people?

Hookworms are dangerous because the adults actually bite into the intestinal lining of an animal and suck blood. Puppies and kittens are at high risk of infection and developing severe disease. Left untreated, hookworm infections can result in weakness, poor nutrition, and potentially life-threatening blood loss.

Hookworms also can infect people if the larvae are swallowed or penetrate the skin—for example, when someone is walking barefoot on contaminated soil or sand. Swallowed larvae can cause intestinal and other problems in people. Larvae that penetrate the skin can cause severe itching and tunnel-like, red areas.

### WHIPWORMS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW ARE THEY SPREAD?

Whipworms get their name from their whip-like shape. Infection is much more common in dogs than in cats. Infected animals (mostly dogs, foxes, and coyotes) pass whipworm eggs in their feces. Your pet can catch whipworms by swallowing whipworm eggs in feces-contaminated soil and by licking contaminated fur or paws. Infections tend to peak in the winter.

#### What are the health risks to pets and people?

Adult whipworms thread themselves into the lining of an animal's intestine and eat blood and tissue. Although this may sound serious, whipworms usually do not cause health problems in dogs or cats. Occasionally, severe infections can occur, causing diarrhea, weight loss, blood loss, or even death. The risk of pets spreading whipworms to people is considered low.

### TAPEWORMS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW ARE THEY SPREAD?

Tapeworms get their name from their long, thin, flat appearance, like strips of tape. Dogs and cats become infected with certain types of tapeworms when they swallow fleas or lice infected with tapeworm larvae. This happens most commonly when the dog or cat is grooming. Your pet also can catch certain types of tapeworms by eating infected rodents.

#### What are the health risks to pets and people?

Adult tapeworms live in the small intestine, but rarely cause disease. Infection is usually diagnosed when egg-containing tapeworm segments are seen under the pet's tail, in their feces, or on their bedding. These segments look like flattened grains of rice or cucumber seeds, and could be mistaken for maggots or fly larvae. Only rarely are these types of tapeworms a risk to people.

### OTHER INTESTINAL PARASITES

#### *Coccidia*

*Coccidia* are microscopic, single-celled parasites. Dogs and cats are vulnerable to certain types of *coccidia*, which are broadly known as *Cystoisospora*. Like other intestinal parasites, infected animals pass *coccidia* in their feces. Your pet can become infected by swallowing feces-contaminated soil, food, or water, and by licking contaminated paws or fur. Once swallowed, *coccidia* damage the lining of the intestines and interfere with absorption of nutrients. Infected animals may have loss of appetite, abdominal pain, diarrhea (which may contain blood), dehydration, and weakness. However, these signs don't always occur, and other infected animals may seem healthy.

Puppies and kittens are particularly vulnerable to *coccidia* infection and severe illness because they have no immunity to the parasite. This means that the infection is highly contagious to other puppies and kittens. However, the types of *coccidia* that infect dogs and cats are not known to infect people.



#### *Giardia*

*Giardia* are also single-celled parasites that, if swallowed, can damage the lining of the intestine and reduce nutrient absorption. They too are passed in feces. Your pet can catch *Giardia* through the same routes as *coccidia*. Infected animals may have diarrhea (persistent or on-and-off) and/or greasy (fatty) feces, excess gas, and weight loss, while others may seem healthy. The strains of *Giardia* that infect dogs and cats do not usually infect people.

### HOW ARE INTESTINAL PARASITES DIAGNOSED?

Except for some tapeworm infections, you won't be able to tell your pet has intestinal parasites just by looking at their feces. In fact, pets can look healthy and still have intestinal parasites, and some pets can be infected with multiple types of parasites at the same time. Plus, infections can happen any time of the year.

This is why routine fecal testing is so important—ideally twice a year or more for adult pets, four times a year or more for puppies and kittens, or if your pet is pregnant. See your veterinarian sooner if you notice the “grains of



# Preventing pet poisoning emergencies

## Poisons in plain sight

Many common household items such as plants, foods and chemicals can be harmful to your pet if ingested. Be informed so that you're prepared if you find yourself in a pet poisoning emergency.

### Top 10 toxin calls

received by Pet Poison Helpline

#### Cats

1. Lilies
2. Topical flea and tick medicine for dogs (containing pyrethroids and pyrethrins)
3. Household cleaners
4. Antidepressant medications
5. Mouse and rat poisons
6. Ibuprofen and acetaminophen
7. Glow sticks/glow jewelry
8. Amphetamines such as ADD/ADHD drugs
9. Decongestant medications
10. Essential oils

#### Dogs

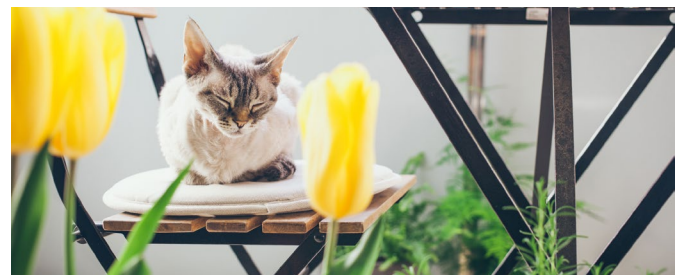
1. Chocolate
2. Mouse and rat poisons
3. Ibuprofen and acetaminophen
4. Xylitol (found in sugar-free gums and candies)
5. Vitamin D (ingested in large amounts)
6. Antidepressant medications
7. Fertilizers
8. Grapes and raisins
9. Decongestant medications
10. Caffeine (pills and drinks)

#### Poisonous plants

Many plants are poisonous to animals, but the following are some of the most common—and some can even be lethal.

- Autumn crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*)
- Azalea & rhododendron
- Cycad/sago palms (*Cycas*, *Macrozamia* and *Zamia* spp.)
- Dieffenbachia
- Lily (*Lilium* and *Hermerocallis* spp.)—cats only
- Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*)
- Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)
- Spring bulbs (e.g. daffodil, hyacinth, tulip, spring crocus)
- Yesterday, today and tomorrow (*Brunfelsia* spp.)
- Yew (*Taxus* spp.)

For a more complete listing of poisonous plants, visit [petpoisonhelpline.com](http://petpoisonhelpline.com).



#### Garden dangers

Be a garden guardian and keep these substances away from pets.

- Baits (rodent, snail and slug)
- Blood meal
- Bone meal
- Fertilizers (rose and other plants)
- Pesticides

## Household toxins

When using common household chemicals such as cleaning solutions, antifreeze and fragrance sprays, make sure there's adequate ventilation and thoroughly wipe up any spills. Also, tightly close bottles and containers, and stow them safely in cabinets that pets can't get into.

## Non-ingested poisons

Poisons aren't always ingested; some can be inhaled or cause chemical burns on the skin.

**Inhaled poisons:** Carbon monoxide, smoke and chemical fumes

**Skin poisons:** Ammonia, lye, drain and toilet cleaners, concentrated tea tree oil

## Toxic table scraps

Though sharing "just a bite" of food with your pet seems harmless, many human foods can be dangerous—even deadly—for dogs and cats.

- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Chocolate
- Fatty foods
- Grapes and raisins
- Macadamia nuts

## Human medications

Never give your pet human medications like ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), naproxen (Aleve®), or combination allergy products with decongestants or "cold and flu" formulations. These drugs can cause liver, kidney and neurological damage to pets.

Keep human drugs in a separate place from your pet's drugs. Accidentally giving human meds to pets is one of the most common pet poisoning emergencies.

## Pet medications

Never give your cat medications meant for a dog. Cats' unique metabolic pathways make them more sensitive to many drugs; giving your cat pain relievers or flea/tick meds made for dogs can be lethal.

# Pet Poison Helpline

If you think your pet may have ingested something harmful, seek immediate veterinary advice:

## 855-289-0358

Available 24/7

Please be advised that a one-time, per-incident consultation fee applies.

### Have the following information ready when calling:

- What your pet ingested and when
- How much your pet ingested (how many pills, milligram strength, etc.)
- Pet's current weight
- Pet's known medical history, including medications

### What to do in an emergency

Stay calm so you can assess the situation and communicate clearly with your veterinarian. Most importantly, don't administer at-home treatment without first seeking veterinary advice.

### Scan the surroundings

- Safely remove any remaining poisonous material from your pet's reach
- Gather the container or substance to bring to the veterinary hospital or describe to Pet Poison Helpline
- Collect a sample if your pet has vomited

### Get help

If your pet is unconscious, convulsing or having difficulty breathing, go immediately to the nearest emergency veterinary hospital. While they are stabilizing your pet, call Pet Poison Helpline at **855-289-0358** for treatment recommendations.

## Be prepared

- ✓ Program your phone with numbers for:
  - Your veterinarian
  - 24-hr emergency veterinarian
  - Pet Poison Helpline (855-289-0358)
- ✓ Save a note in your phone with your pet's weight and current medications
- ✓ Sign up for Nationwide pet insurance coverage

## We're here to help

Nationwide® offers pet insurance coverage for accidents, illnesses and preventive care. Get a fast, no-obligation quote today.

**BestPetInsuranceEver.com**  
**800-672-9259**

**Pet Poison Helpline**  
**855-289-0358**  
**petpoisonhelpline.com**

This educational pamphlet is provided by Nationwide in coordination with Pet Poison Helpline, an animal poison control center based out of Minneapolis, Minn. Driven by our shared passion for pets, our common goal is to provide pet lovers with valuable information on pet health and safety.

Products underwritten by Veterinary Pet Insurance Company (CA), Columbus, OH; National Casualty Company (all other states), Columbus, OH. Agency of Record: DVM Insurance Agency. All are subsidiaries of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. Nationwide, the Nationwide N and Eagle, and Nationwide is on your side are service marks of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. ©2021 Nationwide. All other product names, logos, and brands are the property of their respective owners. ©2021 SafetyCall International, LLC. All Rights Reserved. 21VET8008



A per incident fee applies.

# 6 SUPER SAFETY TIPS *for the dog park*

Make sure everyone has a good time and stays happy and healthy on your next visit.

**1 Visit your veterinarian.** Your dog should be current on vaccinations and flea and intestinal parasite preventives before running around with other dogs at the dog park. Before a dog part visit is also a great time to talk about your dog's temperament and whether he's ready to engage with other pets and people in an off-leash environment.

**2 Know commands.** You need to be able to control your dog if a problematic situation arises. Make sure your dog knows some basic obedience commands—"come," "sit," "stay" and "leave it"—in order to get him out of trouble.

**3 Find the right spot.** You want to find the dog park that's just right for you and your dog. Ideally, it should have:

- > adequate room for dogs to run
- > secure fences
- > a double gate for entry
- > a separate area for small dogs
- > a safe, sheltered area
- > a source of drinking water
- > posted rules of conduct.

If you visit a park and it's too congested or you see overly assertive or aggressive dogs or owners who aren't watching their dogs, keep looking.

**4 Be prepared.** Take these essentials with you:

- > bags for cleaning up messes
- > drinking water, in case the park doesn't have a source
- > toys, unless your dog guards them
- > a leash
- > a cell phone, in case you need assistance

It's also a good idea to take something to break up an aggressive situation between dogs, such as a veterinarian-recommended animal deterrent spray or a compressed-air horn.



**5 Be watchful.** When you first arrive, wait until no other dogs are at the gate. Once it's clear, you can take your dog off the leash and let him run through the gate. Watch your dog, but also keep an eye out for overly excited or aggressive dogs near him. If your dog starts acting fearful or overwhelmed, use a basic command in an upbeat voice to call him back. Also, don't hesitate to call animal control if a dog is acting inappropriately and the owner isn't being attentive.

**6 Know when to intervene.** Playful dogs bounce around, wag their tails and have relaxed postures and facial expressions. Be watchful for signs of aggression—growling, a stiff posture, raised hackles and tail, a closed mouth or a stronger focus. Don't yell if your dog and another dog start growling at each other, because that could trigger a fight. Instead, use a basic command to call your dog back to you and move to another spot. If a fight does break out, don't grab your dog's collar—you could get hurt. Instead, use your deterrent spray, a horn or a water hose to break up the dogs.



# Boarding, Grooming and Daycare

Please contact the facilities for their list of requirements for their services.

Pinnacle Pets Play and Stay -  
Grooming/boarding/daycare  
3491 Farm Bank Way  
Grove City, OH 43123  
(614) 991-5149

Dawg Shoppe - Grooming  
3965 Hoover Road  
Grove City, OH 43123  
(614) 594-2240

Fairy Tails - Grooming  
3903 Broadway  
Grove City, OH 43123  
(614) 875-3647

Alkire Kennels -  
Grooming/boarding/daycare  
6901 Alkire Road  
Galloway, OH 43119  
(614) 870-6228

Camp Bow Wow -  
Grooming/boarding/daycare  
Multiple locations

4 Paws and a Tail - Grooming  
3899 Grove City Road  
Grove City, OH 43123  
(614) 594-2240

The Fur Seasons of Orient -  
Grooming/boarding/daycare  
13493 Scioto-Darby Road  
Orient, OH 43146  
(740) 869-3647

Friends Furever Mobile Pet Salon  
(Stephanie Zag) - Grooming  
44 Henderson Lane  
South Bloomfield, OH 43103  
(614) 256-5628

Remi-Roos Pet Salon - Grooming  
35 East Main Street  
Ashville, OH 43103  
(740) 954-3451

All Paws Retreat - Boarding/Daycare  
154 South Yale Drive  
Columbus, OH 43222  
(614) 429-3969

Pet Palace - Boarding/Daycare  
Multiple locations  
4252 Lyman Drive  
Hilliard, OH 43026  
(614) 529-9400

# Thinking about Pet Insurance?

Pet insurance, like any insurance, is used to manage risk. Advances in veterinary medicine today have led to life-saving techniques for pets. It is important to know that veterinary costs per year can be as low as \$570 for a healthy adult, including heartworm flea prevention, and up to \$50, 000 for catastrophic treatment for a giant breed with ongoing cancer treatments. Insurance policies of different types exist, and it is not a one size fits all. The cost of your policy mainly depends on the size and breed of the pet, your deductible, and the limit of your policy. Keep in mind pet insurance does not work like human health insurance for payment. When you visit a vet payment must be made at the time of service. Your insurance company will reimburse you after the visit. Most clients choose to use a Care Credit account to bridge the gap.

Just an FYI, all pet insurances exclude preexisting conditions which include anything in the pet's veterinary file. A few conditions may be covered if the illness can be completely cured and a waiting period has passed. Waiting periods for coverage vary by the company you choose.

## **What are some good questions to ask pet insurance companies?**

- What policies do you offer? (wellness, accident, and/ or illness)
- What are the limits of the policy? (wellness, accident, and! or illness)
- Are the limits per incident, per body system, per year, or per lifetime? (wellness, accident, and/ or illness)
- What are your deductible options?
- What are your wait periods for coverage once the policy is in force?
- How much history is required to apply for coverage?
- If my pet needs coverage for a disease how far back will you look?
- What increases in policy cost has your company experienced in the last 10 years?
- Are there any reasons this policy will not be renewed, other than nonpayment or lying about when a condition was diagnosed?
- If I want to change my deductible or coverage limit are previously covered conditions now considered pre-existing?

- How are claims handled when there is no diagnosis, either because tests were not performed, or the results are inclusive?
  - Are conditions, after insured, covered the following year at policy renewal?
- 

- Are second opinions and specialists covered?
  - What type of dental coverage do you offer? (wellness, accident, and/or illness)
  - Are pharmaceuticals covered? (medications, RX food, supplements)
  - Are costs associated with behavioral care covered?
  - Is there coverage for Acupuncture, Acupressure, Massage Therapy, and/or Chiropractic?
  - Do you cover the cost of euthanasia and private cremation?
  - What exclusions does this policy have and can you supply a list?
  - Are congenital and/ or hereditary conditions covered?
  - Do you have bilateral exclusions? If so, what are they?
  - If my pet gets cancer or has a recurring issue, after coverage, and is considered cured will you pay for a future occurrence? Before having coverage? After having coverage?
  - If my pet has a foreign body obstruction, will you cover another foreign obstruction? Before having coverage? After having coverage?
- 

- Do you pay the actual cost of charges or usual and customary charges?
- What are your customer service hours?
- What is the average wait time for customer service?
- Do you offer pre-approval for treatment? If yes, how long does that take?
- What is the average wait time for a claim to be processed?
- What is needed to send in a claim?
- What are the ways a claim can be submitted?