

# Puppy Guide



Naperville Area Humane Society

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*A better home. A better life. A better future.*

# ***Congratulations on your new family member!***

In order to provide you with support and set both you and your pet up for success, we have compiled some quick-reference information for you based on our most frequently asked questions!

Of course, we also have an abundance of resources on our website... but if we don't have what you're looking for, we can tell you who does!



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# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Contacts and Resources .....</b>    | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Adjusting to a New Home .....</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Basic Supplies .....</b>            | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Basic Care Requirements .....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Adolescence &amp; Behavior.....</b> | <b>10</b> |



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## Contacts

As an adopter from NAHS, you are officially part of our family! You are always welcome to call or email with any questions.

(630) 420 - 8989

[adopt@naperhumane.org](mailto:adopt@naperhumane.org)

### ASPCA Poison Control

24/7 Emergency Line

(888) 426 - 4435

## Resources

Here are some of our favorite sources of information on everything pet! From **behavior** to **nutrition** to picking out the best **toys**, these sources have it all! Plus, it's all science-backed, verified information to ensure you're getting facts, not fiction.

### Fear Free Happy Homes

[www.fearfreehappyhomes.com](http://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com)



Take a look at the Adopter Resources page on our website!

We have lots of downloadable info sheets and websites to visit for helpful tips, quick references, and more in-depth learning!



# Helping Your Newly Adopted Pet Adjust

Bringing a new pet home is exciting, but can also be a little overwhelming for both of you! We've put together some tips to help those important first few weeks together go as smoothly as possible.

## Be Patient

All newly adopted animals will need time to decompress and fully transition between shelter life and their new home. This decompression period will vary from a few weeks to several months, as each pet is an individual and their learning histories and previous home situations vary widely. Expect a certain amount of shyness at first, as they ease into your home.

## Offer LOTS of treats

You can quickly build trust with your new pet by offering treats for any behavior that you'd like to see more of (such as approaching you, making eye contact, sitting, being quiet, or lying down). Initially, use high-value, meat-based treats, such as cooked chicken, that are highly palatable and easy on the tummy. You can also use their regular food as treats.

## Create a Predictable Schedule

Give your new pet a consistent routine. Feed them in the same place and at the same time every day. Add in enrichment activities at set times each day. Take them for walks at the same time, and take the same route initially. Do not forget to include frequent nap time!

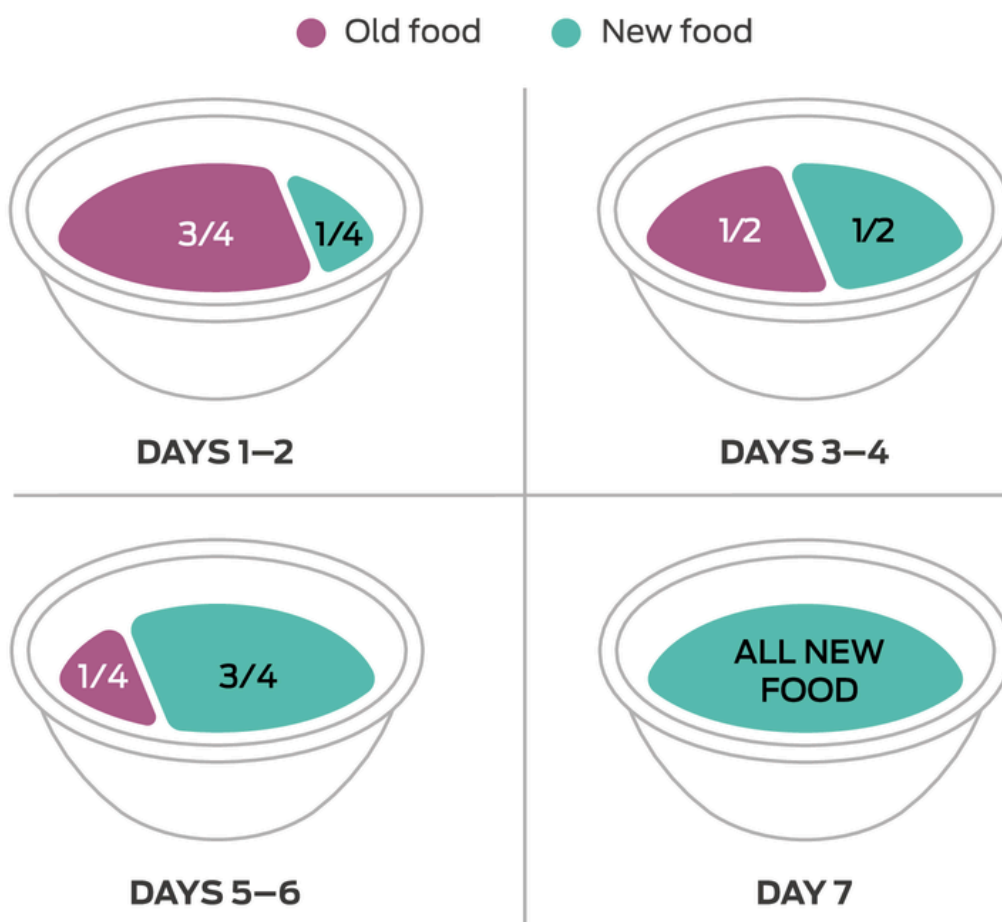
## Allow the Pet to Hide

It may seem counterintuitive, but if your newly adopted pet wants to just hunker down and hide for a while, let them! Never force them to interact with a family member or another pet. You can try gently coaxing them out by tossing treats out and then leaving the area, but if they prefer not to come out, let them be. Forcing them out of a hiding spot will only make them more afraid and teach them that they no longer have a safe space.

## Avoid Punishment

It can take some time for your new pet to adjust to your household expectations. If they do something you don't like, try to resist the urge to yell at or scold them. They may have been punished in the past, and you can inadvertently add to their distrust by scolding them or using any kind of aversive training tools, such as squirt bottles, a tossed bottle of coins, and certain training collars. [Check out our handout](#) on training collars.

# SWITCHING PET FOODS – DOGS



Gradually transitioning onto a new diet will minimize the risk of stomach upset or other issues.

In order not to overfeed – check the feeding guidelines on the new food and the recommended amount for the dog's weight (assuming the pet has a good body condition score).

Gradually replace  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the current food with the  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the new food every 2nd day. After 7 days, the switch over to the new food is complete.

If a pet is susceptible to stomach upset, it may be beneficial to transition over 10 days.

The Purina Institute aims to help put nutrition at the forefront of pet health discussions by providing user-friendly, science-based information that helps pets live longer, healthier lives.

# ***New Dog Supply List***

## ***BARE NECESSITIES***

- appropriately-sized crate
- sturdy 6 ft leash
- collar with ID and rabies tags
- poop bags
- dry and/or wet food

## ***GROOMING***

- brushes and steel comb
- dog-safe shampoo
- nail trimmers or nail grinder
- dog-safe ear cleaning solution
- toothbrush and dog toothpaste

## ***BASIC SUPPLIES***

- well-fitted “Y-shape” harness
- 15+ ft leash (or called a “long line”)
- rubber and/or other safe toys
- dog-safe treats
- enrichment items
- dog bed and/or blankets
- baby gates
- bowls or other enrichment feeding mechanisms

## ***ENRICHMENT ITEMS***

- slow-feeder or puzzle bowls
- snuffle and lick mats
- puzzle food toys
- “hide ‘n’ seek” toys
- KONG classic, similar toys

## ***RUBBER TOYS***

Select toys that are:

- made from all-natural rubber
- dent-able with your nail

Bonus if they are freezer and dishwasher safe!

Some of the most popular brands of rubber toys include:

- KONG
- West Paw
- Playology
- SodaPup
- Starmark
- Monster K9
- ChuckIt!

**Some dogs like toys more than others!  
Dogs are individuals and preferences  
for types of toys will vary.**

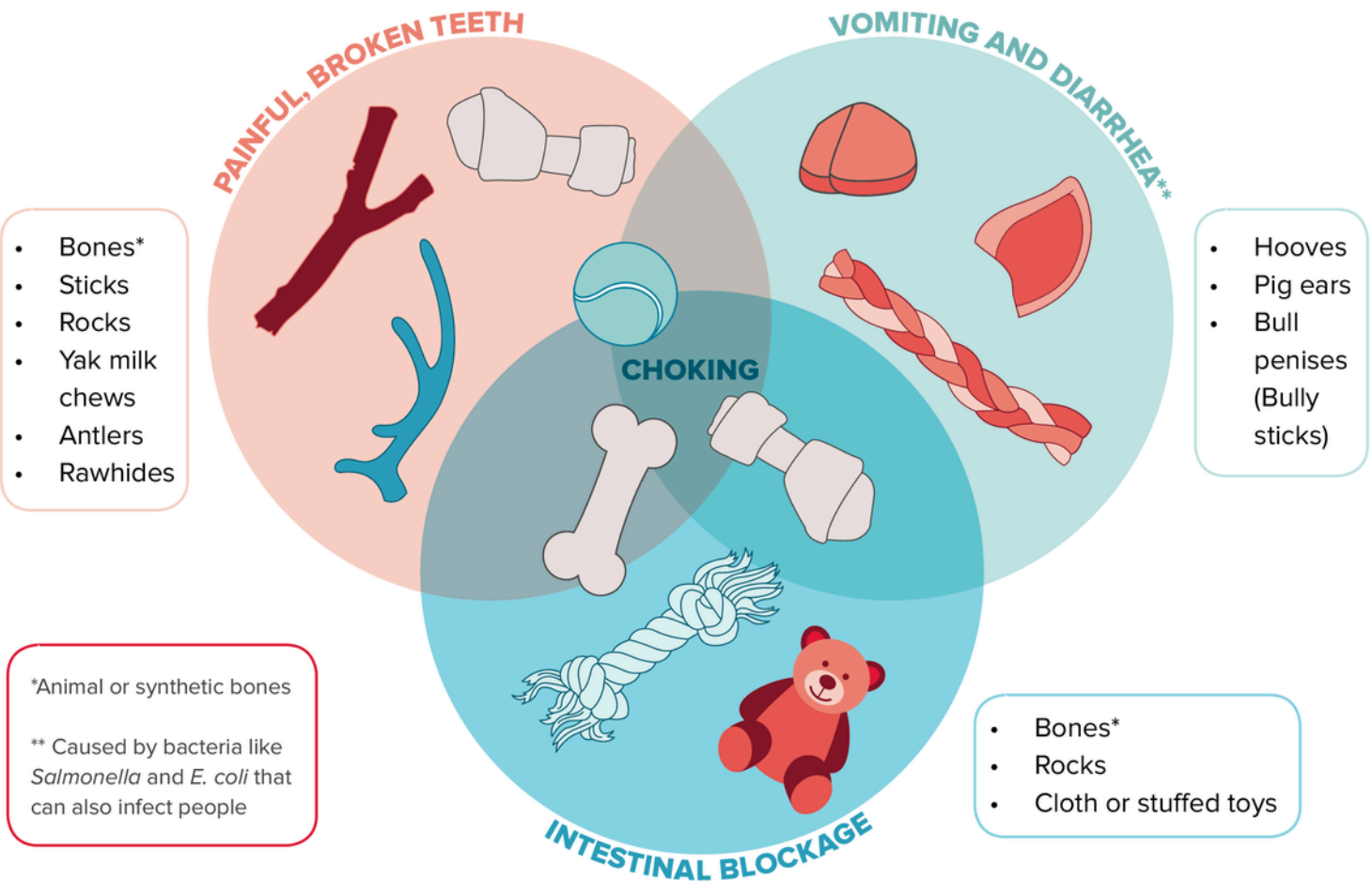
## ***ITEMS TO AVOID***

- shock, pinch, choke, “stim,” prong, and other aversive collars
- electric fences, e-collars, electric crates
- retractable and “slip” leashes



# (DON'T) *chew on this*

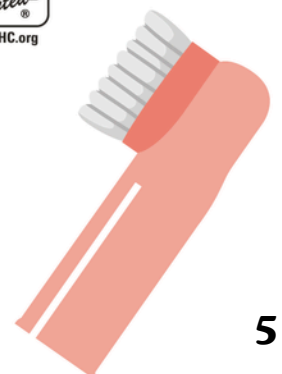
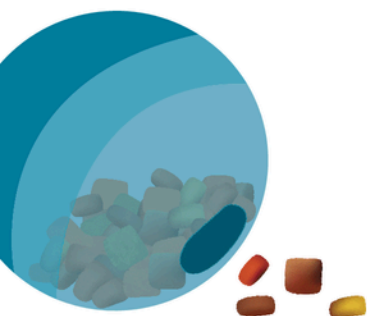
Not all pet dental products are created equal, and some can even damage your pet's teeth or worse. Here are some common products and the possible problems they can cause.



## ***But, wait! There's good news!***

Here's how you can choose your pet's dental products wisely:

- Select a chew treat that has received the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) Seal of Approval.
- Offer healthy, crunchy, edible snacks like carrots, green beans, or apple slices.
- Use puzzle toys that require your dog to push or paw for kibble to fall out.





# Basic Daily Care

## FOOD & WATER

- Feed adult dogs at least twice per day, and add a lunch for puppies!
- Feed an AAFCO-compliant food
- Refer to our pet food packet for tips on how to pick dog food!
- Fresh and clean water should be available 24/7

## EXERCISE AND REST

In addition to playtime, walks are great physical exercise for your dog. Dogs love to sniff and it's great for their brains. The length of walk varies per dog, but two 15 minute walks would be a great a place to start. Quality of the walk is always more important than the distance or time spent on the walk! Also, remember to always walk your dog on a leash.

Giving your dog a comfortable place to rest, nap, and wind down during the day is important. Giving puzzle toys, frozen treats, or lick mats are great during these quieter times.

## BRUSHING

For longer or curly-haired dogs, the coat should be brushed daily with a slicker brush, de-matting rake, and/or a stainless steel comb.

## GOING OUT TO POTTY

- Take your dog outside at least 3-4 times a day:
  - First thing in the morning
  - In the afternoon or a few hours after every meal (aim for 1-2 walks)
  - Before bed at night

Remember to always walk your dog on a leash and only let them off leash in an enclosed dog-safe area. Getting them into a regular schedule will also aid in ensuring accidents don't happen!

## ENRICHMENT

Enrichment, or mental exercise, is just as important to your dog's health as physical exercise. Providing toys, training sessions, and other species-appropriate activities like digging, sniffing, and shredding are all good examples. Reference our website for more information and sources!

## DENTAL CARE

Ideally, brushing teeth (dog-safe toothpaste only!) should be done every day as tolerated. Dental chews with a VOHC stamp of approval may also be provided, but are not a complete replacement for brushing.

# Basic Additional Care

## MEDICAL CARE

### Monthly

- Heartworm, Intestinal Parasite, Flea, and Tick preventative medication
- Weight and/or Body Condition Score check

### Yearly

- Wellness Exam
- Rabies, DAPP Vaccinations
  - Lyme, Leptospirosis, Canine Influenza, and BordetellaVaccinations are optional
- Bloodwork, Parasite and Disease Testing, and Urinalysis
- Dental Procedures

## GROOMING

### Baths and Trims

- Bathing with a dog-safe shampoo (conditioner optional) at least once per month
  - More frequently if your dog has environmental allergies or otherwise directed by your veterinarian
- Shaving or trimming longer hair as appropriate for breed and fur type
  - Monthly to every 2 weeks

### Nail Trims

- At least every three weeks or as often as needed to keep the nail from touching the ground

### Hygiene

- Cleaning ears, wiping face/eyes, and other hygiene tasks should be done monthly or more frequently with environmental allergies or veterinarian direction



If possible, finding a Fear Free Certified veterinarian (and groomer!) can help make your dog's experience with these tasks so much more positive. Refer to our website or the Fear Free website to locate a certified professional near you!

If your veterinarian and groomer says they “were not able” to do or finish something, this is actually a good sign! This means they are respecting your dog's emotions, boundaries, and tolerance of handling.



Certified groomers will be able to complete many, if not all, of the grooming tasks listed above. Feel free to do these yourself, but only if you and your dog are confident and comfortable!

# ***PUPPY VACCINE AND PARASITE PREVENTION TIMELINE***

*The two core vaccinations for puppies are...*

## ***DHPPL***

**Distemper**      **Parainfluenza**  
**Hepatitis**      **Leptospirosis**  
**Parvovirus**

The DHPPL vaccine is a combination vaccine that covers some of the most common preventable viral diseases in dogs.

Puppies receive this vaccine

*once every TWO  
WEEKS between the  
ages of 8 to 16 weeks*

**then yearly after  
the last booster!**

## ***RABIES***

The Rabies vaccine is a vaccine that protects against the fatal rabies virus. Because of the extremely high fatality of the disease and transmissibility to humans and other animals, having a Rabies vaccine documented with your county is mandated by law in Illinois.

Puppies receive this vaccine

*ONCE every year  
or  
ONCE every 3 years*

**depending on the  
vaccine type!**

**It is important that your puppy completes their series of DHPPL vaccines up until 16 weeks old before being exposed to unvaccinated animals, new environments, or the outdoors for more than eliminating waste.**

**Other “non-core” vaccinations like Bordetella, Lyme, and Influenza may be available depending on your veterinarian and location!**

## **PARASITE PREVENTION**

**Puppies should receive preventative medication for fleas, ticks, and intestinal parasites monthly once they are old enough. These preventative medications require an examination from your veterinarian and a prescription. However, once your puppy is an adult at a stable weight, you can order up to 6 months or a year’s supply at once! You can also order it to auto-ship on some sites!**


# Helpful tips to help protect your pet and family.

- + Pick up and dispose of your pet's stool regularly.
- + Wash your hands after exposure to your pet's urine, stool, soil (gardening), and sandboxes.
- + Cover sandboxes and play areas to prevent wild-life and strays from contaminating these areas.
- + Remind children not to put dirt or dirty hands in their mouths.
- + Check your pet and your family for ticks regularly. If you find a tick, remove it right away.

## What are parasites and why do they matter?

- + Parasites are organisms that survive by feeding on animals and sometimes people.
- + Parasites can live in a dog's or cat's blood, organs, or on their skin.
- + They can also spread diseases that can threaten the health of your pet and family.
- + Exposure to infection is possible wherever ticks, mosquitoes, and other blood-sucking insects are found.
- + Intestinal parasites can easily be contracted through contaminated dirt or sometimes through other parasites like fleas.
- + Prevention may not be 100% effective.
- + It's important to have your pet tested regularly as recommended by your veterinarian.

| Causes of infection   | Infectious diseases   | Most common signs of infection   | Disease progression if not treated   | Diagnostics   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <br><b>Exposure to contaminated soil or stool</b> that contains eggs or worm larvae, <b>transmission from mother</b> to offspring during pregnancy, or <b>ingestion of infected fleas</b> can lead to worm infections. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hookworm</li><li>• Roundworm</li><li>• Whipworm</li><li>• Flea tapeworm</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diarrhea</li><li>• Loose stool or blood in stool</li><li>• Pale gums</li><li>• Poor hair quality</li><li>• Poor health</li><li>• Pot-bellied appearance</li><li>• Vomiting</li><li>• Or may not show any signs</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure to grow/thrive</li><li>• Severe anemia</li><li>• Weight loss</li><li>• Death</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stool sample and tests, including the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fecal antigen testing</li><li>• Fecal ova and parasites testing</li></ul></li></ul>   |
| <br><b>Infected mosquitoes</b> spread worm larvae from infected animals to your pet.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heartworm</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mild cough</li><li>• Reduced appetite</li><li>• Reluctance to move or exercise</li><li>• Weight loss</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heart failure</li><li>• Lung disease</li><li>• Death</li></ul>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blood tests:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comprehensive vector-borne diseases screen</li><li>• Chemistry profile</li><li>• Complete blood count</li></ul></li><li>• A urine test</li><li>• Other (depending on initial findings and clinical signs)</li></ul> |

|  |  |   |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <br><b>Infected ticks</b> carry bacteria and bite your pet, spreading infection. Ticks spread many diseases. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i> (Lyme)</li><li>• <i>Ehrlichia</i> spp.</li><li>• <i>Anaplasma</i> spp.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bloody nose</li><li>• Fever</li><li>• Lack of energy</li><li>• Lameness</li><li>• Loss of appetite</li><li>• Painful joints</li><li>• Pale gums</li><li>• Or may not show any signs</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Autoimmune diseases</li><li>• Bleeding complications</li><li>• Chronic joint pain</li><li>• Damaged joints</li><li>• Death</li><li>• Kidney disease</li><li>• Low platelet count</li><li>• Low white blood cell count</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blood tests:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comprehensive vector-borne diseases screen</li><li>• Chemistry profile</li><li>• Complete blood count</li></ul></li><li>• A urine test</li><li>• Other (depending on initial findings and clinical signs)</li></ul> |
|--|--|---|---|---|

## Ask your veterinarian about:



**Fecal antigen testing:**  
finds intestinal parasite infections that other types of testing may miss.



**Blood tests, including a comprehensive vector-borne disease screen:**  
testing your dog's blood reveals diseases spread by ticks and mosquitoes.



**Effective treatments and prevention:**  
your veterinarian will recommend the best approach for your dog or cat.





# ADOLESCENCE IN DOGS: THE TERRIBLE TEENS

Believe it or not, our domestic dogs, just like humans, go through very set developmental periods in early life, including a period known as “adolescence”. In dogs, this begins at the time of sexual maturity, **around 5-6 months of age and can last up until 2-3 years of age** – so, a long time!

During adolescence, the dog’s brain undergoes a complete “re-model” and **transforms from a puppy brain into an adult brain**. Due to these changes in the brain, emotions can be very difficult to manage during this time which may contribute to an **amplification in unwanted behaviours**.



Many dog parents notice that their once cute and cuddly pups suddenly find it **more difficult to listen and learn** appropriate behaviours. Of course, brain changes are not the only changes to occur during adolescence.

Hormonal changes play an important role in behaviour during this time as well as physical changes. “Growing pains” for example, may need serious consideration, especially in large breed dogs as we know that **pain can considerably affect behaviour**.

The good news is that there are many things we can do to help our dogs through this time of change. **Awareness and empathy are great starting points** as we help our pups navigate their teenage years.

In addition, we can utilize and focus on the **3 C's during this time** to help preserve the human-animal bond and move safely through this time of change:



### Calm

We can teach our dogs calm behaviours and **help them deal with frustration when it arises**.



### Confidence

We can teach new experiences safely and without fear and give our dogs **the tools to make good choices** in new situations.



### Connection

Adolescence is a great time to strengthen the relationship with your dog. This will **teach your dog that you “have their back”** and are their point of safety and security.

If you are struggling with your “teenage” dog and their behaviour, contact your Veterinary Behaviourist for treatment advice.





## WHY DO OUR PUPPIES BITE?

“Puppy Biting” is a **very common behaviour that many pet parents struggle with.** In the majority of cases, this is a normal behaviour for the puppy during it’s development, although often undesirable for pet parents.

Read on to learn some great strategies for dealing with your puppy’s biting. Should you find these strategies are not successful in reducing your puppy’s behaviour, please seek the help of your veterinarian or a Veterinary Behaviourist to determine if there are other underlying causes that need to be addressed.



## SO, WHAT CAUSES PUPPIES TO BITE AND MOUTH?



### 1. Exploration

Mouthing and biting are ways that puppies explore their environment. **They begin mouthing by 3 weeks of age.**



### 2. Teething

It is common for puppies to chew on objects, and sometimes people, while they are teething. Puppies have a full set of **baby teeth by 6-8 weeks** of age and a full set of **adult teeth by 6-8 months** of age.



### 3. Interaction

Puppies may use their mouths and bodies to interact with people and other dogs, for example during play. If interactions become very rough or excited and the **puppy's arousal levels rise**, the biting and mouthing may also increase in intensity.



### 4. Communication

If a puppy is uncomfortable with the type of physical interaction it is receiving, it may bite or mouth to **stop this interaction or prevent it from re-occurring**. Examples of this could include:

- being touched on certain areas of their body
- being touched too roughly or erratically
- being lifted or carried
- being touched too often



### 5. Learned Behaviours

Your puppy may have learned that when it bites or mouths, it has received attention – whether positive or negative, so it is motivated to bite or mouth again to **receive attention again**.





# Strategies for treatment

## 1. PROVIDE APPROPRIATE OUTLETS FOR ORAL PLAY AND BEHAVIOUR

- Provide lots of different toys for your puppy to chew on. Toys that deliver a tasty reward are even better as your puppy will learn that chewing the toy is much more rewarding than chewing on people. Great examples of this are stuffed Kongs, Licki Mats or other similar food puzzle toys.
- Consider using feeding time as opportunities for oral activity by placing food inside activity

toys or food puzzle toys. Make sure that the puzzle is easy enough for your puppy to solve to prevent frustration.

## 2. REVIEW SLEEP AND CALM BEHAVIOURS

- Puppies need a lot of sleep – **around 14 to 16 hours per day**. If they do not get enough sleep, they will likely be more irritable and arousal levels will rise (just like with all of us!), causing them to bite and mouth more.
- Make sure that your puppy has a safe, comfortable sleeping place where they are not disturbed by anyone while sleeping.
- Teach your puppy to be calm from a very young age. Whenever your puppy is calm, whisper “good dog” to them without disturbing them. You can also drop a treat between their paws, but without looking at them or making a big deal about it. We want them to stay calm and be rewarded for the calm behaviour.

### 3. CALMLY RE-DIRECT BEHAVIOUR

- If your puppy is biting or mouthing, **calmly re-direct them to a chew toy**, food puzzle toy or other favourite toy to distract them from people. The toy has to be more interesting than the person, so **choose something of high value to your puppy**.
- If you are consistent, in time your puppy will learn that playing with and chewing toys is a much better and more rewarding option than biting and mouthing people.

### 4. RESPECT YOUR PUPPY'S COMMUNICATION

- If your puppy is communicating that it is not comfortable with the type or level of physical interaction it is receiving, you should respect this communication and **adjust your handling style**.
- All animals are individuals. Some puppies are very sensitive and may not like their head or back being touched, for example.
- Also remember that your puppy may experience “growing pains” as they get bigger and may not always like being touched.

### 5. SUPERVISE PLAY BETWEEN YOUR PUPPY AND CHILDREN

- Always supervise play between your puppy and your or other children, so play cannot get too rough and excited. Doing this will help **prevent injuries and protect the new relationship** between your puppy and your children.
- I would also recommend supervising interactions between your puppy and other adults as you may know what your puppy likes and dislikes and what distractions work best. It is your responsibility to **protect your puppy in all situations**, especially whilst you are getting to know them and are building a relationship with them.

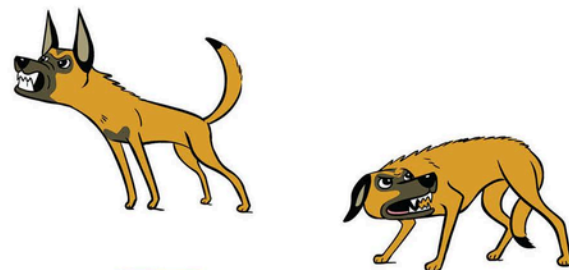
Getting to enjoy a great relationship with your dogs starts when they are puppies. Although these strategies cover a majority of cases and may help you work towards the relationship you aspire, please seek out the help of a Veterinary Behaviourist to help and support you should you have any trouble.



# THE SPECTRUM OF FEAR, ANXIETY & STRESS

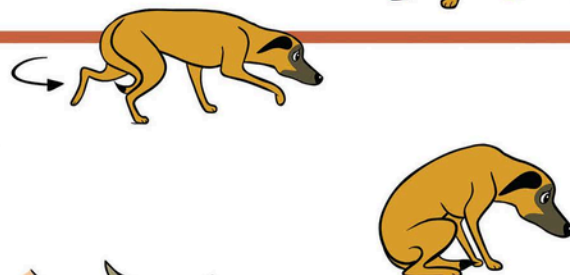
## RED: SEVERE SIGNS - FIGHT/AGGRESSION (FAS 5)

- Offensive aggression: lunging forward, ears forward, tail up, hair may be up on the shoulders, rump, and tail, showing only the front teeth, lip pucker - lips pulled forward, tongue tight and thin, pupils possibly dilated or constricted.
- Defensive aggression: hair may be up on the back and rump, dilated pupils, direct eye contact, showing all teeth including molars, body crouched and retreating, tail tucked, ears back.



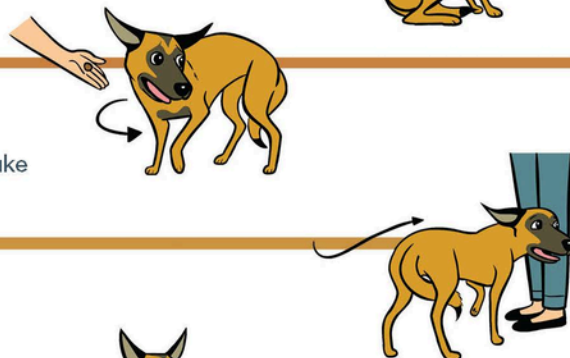
## RED: SEVERE SIGNS - FLIGHT/FREEZE/FRET (FAS 4)

- Flight: ears back, tail tucked, actively trying to escape - slinking away or running, mouth closed or excessive panting - tongue tight instead of loose out of mouth, showing whites of eyes, brow furrowed, pupils dilated.
- Freeze/Fret: tonic immobility, pupils dilated, increased respiratory rate, trembling, tense closed mouth, ears back, tail tucked, body hunched.



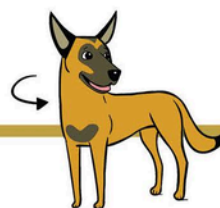
## YELLOW: MODERATE SIGNS (FAS 3)

- Similar to FAS 2 but turning head away, may refuse treats for brief moments or take treats roughly, may be hesitant to interact but not completely avoiding interaction.



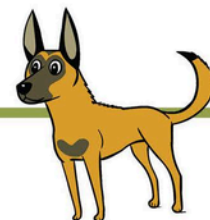
## YELLOW: MODERATE SIGNS (FAS 2)

- Ears slightly back or to the side, tail down but not necessarily completely tucked, furrowed brow, slow movements or unable to settle, fidgeting, attention seeking to owner, panting with a tighter mouth, moderate pupil dilation.



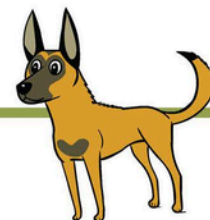
## GREEN: MILD/SUBTLE SIGNS (FAS 1)

- Lip licking, avoids eye contact, turns head away without moving away, lifts paw, partially dilated pupils, slight panting but commissures of lips are relaxed.



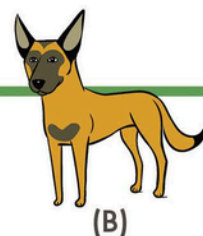
## GREEN: ALERT/EXCITED/ANXIOUS? (FAS 0-1)

- Tail up higher, looking directly, mouth closed, eyes more intense, more pupil dilation, brow tense, hair may be just slightly up on the back and tail, may be expectant and excited or highly aroused.



## GREEN: PERKED/INTERESTED/ANXIOUS? (FAS 0-1)

- Looking directly but not intensely, tail up slightly, mouth open slightly but loose lips, ears perked forward, slight pupil dilation.

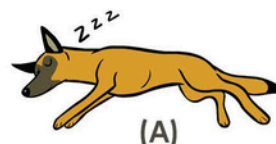


## GREEN: RELAXED (FAS 0)

A: Sleeping.

B: Neutral - ears in neutral position, not perked forward, brow soft, eyes soft, mouth closed but lips relaxed, body loose, tail carriage neutral, pupils normal dilation.

C: Friendly greeting - slow back and forth tail and butt wag, ears just slightly back, relaxed brow and eyes, may have mouth slightly open with relaxed lips and loose tongue.



(A)

(B)



(C)

# RED AND GREEN LIGHT TRAINING



Consider the following trainer methods and skill sets that separate the best from the rest, including the red light qualities to avoid and the green light qualities to seek out in your efforts to find an emotionally protective, humane dog trainer.



## Red Light Training Methods

Avoid the following harsh methods that motivate the animal to behave using aversive stimuli:

- Leash/collar jerks, pops, or over-tightening
- Physically forcing the animal into place
- Scary noises
- Spraying the dog
- Physical punishment, including slapping, hitting, pinching, shaking, biting, or throwing items at the dog
- Using intimidation or confrontation to gain compliance or dominance/"alpha" status, such as yelling, staring the animal down, or doing alpha rolls or alpha downs (physically pinning the dog down on their back or side)
- Advocating methods that are too dangerous or high risk for guardians to safely use on their own
- Using "mixed" or "balanced" training methods that blend punishment and rewards. This can increase confusion/uncertainty and escalate conflict and anxiety.

**Note:** Just stating that the training uses rewards isn't enough information. Ensure that all training tactics used with the dog are free of fear and force-based methods, rather than a blend or mix of methods.







## Green Light Training Methods

Emotionally protective methods employed by humane trainers may include use of the following:

- Teaching and rewarding desired behavior using positive reinforcement and rewards the animal wants to work for, including treats, food, toys, play, attention, petting, praise, or access to a desired activity or space (*such as going out for a walk or an opportunity to "say hi" to a friend*)
- Managing the situation to make unwanted behavior less likely to occur, using non-invasive and non-confrontational strategies, including management tools like leashes, baby gates, and avoidance of the problem situation
- Advocating rewarding the behaviors you like and want to see more of while ignoring and/or not rewarding unwanted behavior that occurs
- Proactively replacing or redirecting unwanted behavior by guiding the animal to a different reward-worthy behavior or enjoyable activity
- Basing their approach upon a strong, science-based understanding of animal behavior and learning theory
- Setting the animal up for success by adjusting the training scenario/environment as needed for the animal to remain successful
- Implementing training at a pace the animal is comfortable with by building better behavior one success at a time
- Teaching clients to safeguard canine emotional wellbeing and training success by continually attending to and responding appropriately towards dog body language cues. In doing so, clients learn to adjust their approach and the dog's environment to keep their canine calm and content and avoid needlessly exposing their dog to emotionally upsetting or high-stress situations
- Effectively partnering with veterinary professionals to help pets suffering from behavioral issues, such as implementing aspects of a behavior modification plan that's guided by the pet's veterinarian or veterinary behaviorist
- Helping clients meet their dog's individual and species-specific needs in ways that allow the dog freedom to still "be a dog", while doing so in a way that fits realistically into life the dog shares with their human family



# THE DANGERS OF "TRAINING" COLLARS

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**Punishment-Based Collars  
Can Cause More Problems  
Than They Solve**

"Training" collars, like prong collars, electronic collars, and choke chains, offer the allure of a quick fix. These types of aversive collars are designed to reduce undesired behavior by producing an unpleasant sensation, such as a pinch on the neck or a shock, when the animal exhibits the undesired behavior (such as pulling on leash). The idea is that the animal works to avoid the unpleasant sensation and stops exhibiting the unwanted behavior. The trouble is, while you may have temporarily solved the problem (which will likely resume as soon as the collar is taken off), you risk creating other problems, often much worse.

## How they work

These types of aversive collars are designed to reduce undesired behavior by producing an unpleasant sensation, such as a pinch on the neck or a shock, when the animal exhibits the undesired behavior (such as pulling on leash). The idea is that the animal works to avoid the unpleasant sensation and stops exhibiting the unwanted behavior.

## Potential Problems

### Emotional pain

One problem with aversive tools like these is the emotional fallout they can cause. Aversives can lead to mistrust, misunderstanding, and even aggression. A dog trying to interact with other dogs in a friendly manner (often pulling on their leash) will instead be met with pain from the prong collar. They could easily associate the pain with the sight or interaction with another dog, possibly creating aggression towards that dog or even all dogs.

### Physical pain

Aversive collars can cause physical pain. Choke collars put dogs at risk for damage to the esophagus or trachea. Prong collars can scratch or puncture the skin around dogs' necks. Electronic collars can cause damage ranging from redness and irritation to infection and tissue death, depending on the tightness of the collar and duration of wearing. Dogs are resilient animals and can build up resistance to the shock or the pain of a pinch/choke collar, making them ineffective.

### Doesn't teach the dog what to do

Aversive collars focus on stopping behavior, rather than on teaching the animal what to do instead. The dog learns "Ouch, that hurts when I pull! But I don't know what you want me to DO. Should I stop moving altogether and just sit here instead?"

An enjoyable walk can quickly become an anxiety-ridden outing as the more the dog receives a painful sensation, the more he starts to distrust his surroundings. "What caused that pain? Was it moving? Was it walking? Was it that dog that I saw while I was pulling? Was it my owner?"

### Stress

While the dog may outwardly appear to be "doing better" (e.g., pulling less), watch for more subtle signs that he is stressed, such as yawning, lip licking, dilated pupils, blinking, sneezing, turning away, panting rapidly, tucking his tail, laying his ears back, scratching his neck or shoulders, and "drying off" when he is not wet. These are all signs of a stressed dog.



# FEAR FREE PUPPY SOCIALIZATION

## Making Exposure Positive

Use these bingo squares for ideas on how to socialize your puppy. Socialization and exposure are active processes that are most crucial from three to sixteen weeks of age but should continue well beyond this age range. However, it's important to realize that socialization is not simply about exposure—it's about making it fun and positive from the start.

Think of these experiences as a behavioral investment, like placing pennies in a piggy bank. When done properly, your investment will result in a friendly and outgoing dog. Positive, proactive socialization involves liberal use of food treats (or, for some dogs, interactive play with a toy/attention/petting) to help form positive associations.



|   |   |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Fun Visit at Veterinary Hospital  | Have visitors to your home  | Take your puppy to a friend's or relative's house                                | Meet at least 5 people using the 'Go-Say-Hi' protocol  | See someone carrying something in hand, such as an umbrella        |
| Play with a minimum of 3 food puzzle toys                                     | Fun Visit at a Grooming Salon or with a Groomer   | See children playing from a distance   | See and/or meet a person in uniform  | Hear construction sounds   |
| Hear and/or see household appliances  | See or hear a motorcycle or trolley   | Go for a ride in a car   | See at least 5 other animals from a distance (duck, geese, birds, squirrels, horses, cattle) | Hear and/or see lawn equipment                                     |
| See or meet an adult dog who is healthy, friendly, and relaxed around puppies | Walk on 3 different safe and sturdy surfaces such as wood, gravel, sand, metal, concrete, rubber, etc | See and/or meet a person with mobility assistance (wheelchair, walker, crutches) | Hear and/or see a large truck, train, or bus from a distance                                 | Explore at least 5 novel objects using the 'Check-It-Out' protocol |
| Walk, play, and/or swim in water  | Be exposed to a recording of fireworks at a low and controlled volume                                 | See and/or meet a cat who is friendly and relaxed around dogs                    | Hear children screaming and crying   | Be exposed to the sound of wind, rain, and thunder                 |



For more information, please visit [www.fearfreehappyhomes.com](http://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com).



# Potty Training Your Puppy

When house training a new puppy, it can be difficult to know where to start. This handout has you covered! Learn everything from which solutions to use and avoid to how large your puppy's area should be to how often they need to go out.

## Outside, right from the start

- Right from the first day, start taking your puppy outdoors to eliminate.
- It's best to avoid indoor potty solutions, such as potty pads and grass patches, or to wean away from these as soon as possible, as they only blur the bathroom a hard-to-break habit of going potty indoors.

## Puppy potty party

- Use gentle, upbeat praise (be careful not to accidentally startle), followed by a tasty treat to reward the puppy EVERY time they go potty outdoors.
- Then further the fun by doing something enjoyable immediately after, like offering off-leash exploration in a fenced space, extending the walk, engaging in play, or, if going back inside, offering supervised freedom in a slightly larger area indoors.

## Confinement is key

- Dogs have an instinctual preference to eliminate away from their nest and to keep their primary dwelling spaces dry and free from eliminations.
- The #1 house training mistake is giving the pup too much space too fast before he or she is fully settled in.
- If pups are given too much space to roam unsupervised, they may simply pick a corner or area far away from their bed as fair game for a potty area.
- Instead of opening up the home all at once, start small and expand the area gradually over time as they learn that eliminating outdoors pays off for them.



## Optional: Put the poo on cue

- 🐾 Teach the pup to go more promptly by adding a cue to the behavior. Initially say the cue, such as right as the dog eliminates, such as when they're in a squat or lifting a leg.
  - 🐾 Then, after a few pairings, start to say the word just before the pup is about to go, such as when they're spinning in a circle, sniffing intensely, just tucking their or saddling up beside a vertical surface.
- Once the word has been paired with the action enough times, it can be used to request the behavior.
- 🐾



## Start small

- During sleeping hours when the pup is taken out less frequently, offer a smaller sleeping space, such as a crate, that's just large enough to allow the pup to easily stand up, turn around, and lie down.
- During waking hours when the pup wants to move around more and is taken out to potty more frequently, a day play area may be a slightly larger gated, fenced, or play-pen area. This should initially be located on a nonabsorbent surface, such as linoleum or tile, and kept free from soft surfaces like carpet, blankets, and rugs, except for the puppy's bed.
- Alternative supervised confinement can include keeping the pup tethered with a harness and leash to their person or to a sturdy, stationary object, like a couch leg.

## Structured bathroom breaks

- Pups need to be taken outside to eliminate immediately every time they wake from sleeping. Do not delay!
- As soon as they wake up, carry the pup or place him or her on a four- to six-foot leash and go swiftly from indoors to their outdoor potty area.
- Once there, calmly walk with your pup on a leash around the elimination area. Remain neutral to divert the pup's attention away from interacting with you until he has eliminated.
- Limit the elimination outing to five minutes. If the puppy fails to eliminate, calmly head back indoors and take the pup back out 15 minutes later to try again.

## How long pups can hold it

- The longest length of time a puppy can reasonably hold it between eliminations is one hour for every month of age, plus one.
- For example, a two-month-old puppy can hold it up to three hours. Or a three-month-old pup can wait up to four hours.
- This general guideline offers an upper limit for sleeping/resting hours.
- Exercise and activity elicits more frequent eliminations and requires the puppy be taken out more often, such as after waking from a nap, playing, eating, or drinking.

## Accidents happen

- If an accident occurs, remain calm and place the puppy in another area so they're not in the middle of the mess as it's cleaned.
- Use a cleaning product that sanitizes and removes not only stains, but also any residual odors, rather than merely masking the scent.
- Unless odor molecules from previous accidents are completely broken down and removed, these scents will prompt more eliminations in this area in the future.



## NEVER punish

- 🐾 Do not punish your puppy for eliminating indoors. Punishment doesn't teach the puppy what to do and is likely to cause the puppy to perceive you as a possible danger.
- 🐾 Using punishment just makes it more likely the pup will choose to eliminate in remote locations next time, because you've shown him or her it's unsafe to eliminate around you.
- 🐾 If you do catch the puppy indoors, such as just starting to squat to pee or poo, use an attention getter, like gentle hand clapping or kissy noises to get the pup's immediate attention without scaring him. Immediately pick up the pup or clip on the leash and redirect the pup outdoors instead where you can reward him afterwards.





# Crate Training in 4 Steps



*If you decide crate training is the right choice for your family, there are 4 steps to get started.*

**1 Choose a crate type.** There are three basic types of crates: wire, plastic and mesh. Which crate is best will depend on your pet. Some dogs feel more comfortable in the darker, den-like feel of the airline crate while other dogs prefer the openness of the wire crate.

**2 Size it right.** Whichever type you choose, the crate should be large enough that the puppy or dog can stand up fully, turn around, and lie down completely on its side.

**3 Introduce your pet to the crate.** A puppy or dog should be introduced to the crate slowly. There are 4 stages to the initiation process.

**Leave the door open.** Start by placing the crate inside a pen with the door open. This allows your pet to explore the crate without having to be locked in it. Put a bed inside the crate and periodically leave toys and treats inside to encourage your puppy or dog to go in.

**Do not close the door at first.** Let the puppy or dog explore in and out at will. When it freely goes into the crate, begin to close the crate door for very short periods of time.

**Use incentives.** When you first start closing the door, give the puppy or dog its meal or some other enrichment such as a stuffed food toy so it learns that good things happen when the door is closed. Initially when you close the door, stay in sight so your pet can see you.

**Extend closed-door periods.** Over time, gradually keep the crate door closed for longer periods. When your puppy or dog is comfortable with the door closed for several minutes, you can begin to briefly step out of sight.

**Crates can be a beneficial tool for both you and your pet by:**

- Allowing for a more effective housetraining protocol for puppies
- Keeping puppies from doing undesirable actions while unsupervised
- Giving your pet its own space where it can escape the hubbub of activity in the house or the unwanted attention of certain individuals
- Providing a safe way to travel if you drive with your puppy or dog
- Giving your pet a familiar place if you stay somewhere overnight

**4 Don't crate for too long.** There is no definitive standard on what is too long to crate your pet at one time or the total number of hours per day. Standard housetraining guidelines suggest that puppies be crated for no longer than one hour per month of age plus one. For adult dogs, crating durations for six hours or less are ideal in terms of welfare even though many adult dogs seem to handle crating for eight or more hours.

How long it takes to acclimate your puppy or dog to a crate will depend on your pet and how methodically you implement gradual confinement. If you have difficulty with the training, or your pet shows significant distress in the crate, seek assistance from your veterinarian or behavior consultant.



# Preventing Separation Anxiety

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A dog with separation anxiety shows distress when separated from family members. We don't know exactly what causes separation anxiety; some dogs may be genetically predisposed, or it may be a learned behavior or a combination of both.

## Tips to help prevent separation anxiety

- Meet your dog's physical, social, and exploratory needs each day through routine, scheduled activities such as play, positive reinforcement training, leashed walks, & environmental enrichment.
  - See our DIY Dog Enrichment videos on [fearfreehappyhomes.com](https://fearfreehappyhomes.com) for some ideas.
- Teach your dog independence and to be comfortable being left alone or separated from you by a baby gate or door.
- If you are home with your dog for most of the day, make sure you ignore him sometimes and do not make a constant fuss over him. Constant attention when you are home makes it harder for him when you leave.
- Schedule alone time for your dog each day while you go for a walk, pick up groceries, take a short drive, or take a shower.
- Offer your dog a food puzzle toy when you leave to give him something fun to do. Use caution in multiple pet households as some dogs will fight over a food toy.
- Use calming dog pheromones (such as Adaptil) sprayed onto bedding or in a plug-in diffuser and play calming music such as classical or species-specific music at times throughout the day and when you leave the home.
- Catch your dog being calm and when the dog is ignoring you, reward him with calm and pleasant attention.
- Make your arrivals and departures calm and no big deal. Do not make a big fuss over your dog or be overly emotional when you leave the house or when you first arrive home.

## If you suspect your dog already has separation anxiety

- Clinical signs often fall into one or all of three categories: excessive vocalization, destructive chewing/scratching, or inappropriate elimination.
- Have your dog evaluated by your veterinarian ASAP. Your veterinarian will ask about the history of the behavior and may perform diagnostic tests before making a behavioral diagnosis.
- Video your dog as you prepare to depart from the home and when left home alone or separated from you. This can help your veterinarian.
- For more on how to identify and alleviate separation anxiety, watch our video series on Canine Separation Anxiety on [fearfreehappyhomes.com](https://fearfreehappyhomes.com).

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and  
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# Human and Puppy Play

Dogs and people are social creatures. Engaging in activities that are enjoyed together will enhance the relationship between you and your puppy. These activities may be in the form of interactive playing, training, or walking. Training should be fun for the puppy and incorporate play.

One type of human-puppy play is tug. Tug can be an interactive, energetic, and appropriate game to play with your pup. Teaching a pup to enjoy playing tug with you allows the tug to become a useful tool for motivation and reward. When taught correctly, it allows you to contain and control the pup's excitement level. Tug is a suitable outlet for play mouthing/biting and it teaches the pup how to play appropriately with people.

There are a variety of ways to play tug with dogs. Each dog will have individual preferences for the type of toys they play with, how much tugging they like, and how engaged the person is with the play. Some dogs prefer to retrieve the toy and bring it to you without the tug. Retrieving is another form of appropriate play between people and dogs. It too requires monitoring and controlling the excitement level during the game. Regardless of individual preferences in play the welfare and safety of the dog and person should be at the forefront.

## Helpful hints:

- 🐾 Use a long tug toy to keep the puppy at a distance from your hands and allow you to stand upright while playing.
- 🐾 Have two identical tug toys. When the puppy releases one, pull the other one out and engage him in play.
- 🐾 The puppy may be on leash for control when teaching tug.
- 🐾 A rope or line attached to the tug is sometimes helpful.

## Side note

Teaching a puppy to play tug appropriately will not make him aggressive. Tug can be a physical and mental outlet for energetic dogs. However, do not play tug with dogs that guard objects and/or display aggression with toys. It is not recommended for children to play tug with dogs because the excitement level may be more difficult to control. This should be an adult only game with your dog. There is a risk of accidentally being bitten when playing tug with a dog.

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## The Tug Game

1. You should initiate and end the game. Have special toys that are used for playing tug that are kept out of the reach of the puppy until play time.
2. Give the verbal cue "take it" and present the tug toy. Move the tug toy slightly back and forth to foster interest or chase. Keep the toy at a level that does not require the puppy to leap high in the air to try to get the toy. Generally, at the puppy's head height or below is a good rule of thumb.
3. When the puppy has the toy in his mouth, engage him in a gentle game of tug. Verbally reward his interest in the tug. Motion should be smooth gentle pulls side to side or forward (toward you). Avoid up and down or jerky movements as they can cause injury to the dog. With young dogs, just a soft tug and release will do. For example, you want to tug--- tug--- tug, not TUUUUUUGGGGGG-TUUUUUUGGGGGG. Use caution when a puppy is teething because his mouth will be sensitive.
4. It is OK for the puppy to "win" the toy. Sometimes release the toy and back away from the puppy while encouraging him to bring the toy back to you.
5. To teach the release of the tug toy on cue: Freeze (stop tugging and any toy movement). Give the verbal cue "drop it" and prompt it with a treat directly under your dog's nose. Reward with the treat for dropping the toy. A marker such as a click or other event marker could be used to mark the precise moment of the release. Pick up the toy.
6. Add the cue, "sit" or "down", and reward the behavior with "take it" and presentation of the tug toy. This helps to control the pup's excitement level while working on manners training at the same time.
7. Repeat the above steps. Eventually, you will delay your presentation of the treat after giving the "drop it" cue.
8. When the game is over, let the pup know by saying something such as, "all done," and engaging him in an independent activity such as searching for treats or playing with another toy independent of you. The tug toy should be placed away and out of sight.

