



## **By Charles R. Heflin**

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# INTRODUCTION



## FOREWORD

The American Eskimo is a beautiful, snowy white Spitz-type dog. It looks like a miniature Samoyed. There are three varieties: the toy, miniature, and standard. That means there is an Eskie for all interests and house sizes. The American Eskimo has a wedge-shaped head with muzzle and skull about the same length. It has erect triangular-shaped ears, and a heavily plumed tail curled over the back. Its neck is well carried and the topline good and level. Good legs and feet allow the Eskie to trot with bold energetic action. The profuse coat is always white, or white with biscuit or cream markings. Their skin is pink or gray. Black is the preferred color of their eyelids, gums, nose, and pads. The coat is heavy around the neck, creating a ruff or mane, especially in males. The breed is slightly longer than it is tall. The coat of the American Eskimo should not curl or wave, the undercoat should be thick and plush with the harsher outer coat growing up through it. No colors other than those described above are allowed. The eyes must not be blue and no Eskie may be shown if it is under 9 inches (23cm) or over 19 inches (48cm). The breed has many admirers and it has withstood the test of time.

The American Eskimo is a charming, affectionate and loving dog. Hardy and playful, they are excellent with children. Highly intelligent and willing to please. Alert and easy to train, the American Eskimo often ranks among the top scorers in obedience trials. Some individuals have a willful streak, but most like to work. Dogs whose

ancestry displays nervousness, hyperactivity or viciousness should not be bred. They are naturally wary of strangers, but once introduced, they become instant friends. Some have been known to not let a stranger enter the home until the owner says it is okay. Eskimos need to be part of the family and engage in nuisance activities when isolated. Handle them gently, but firmly. This breed needs attention and loves to bark. Eskies should be thoroughly socialized when young to avoid potential aggression-related accidents.

## HISTORY

No one knows exactly when and how the American Eskimo originated. However, the American Eskimo is one of the Spitz families of Nordic breeds, and is possibly related to the White German Spitz, Samoyed and White Keeshond. Evidence suggests that "White Spitz" dogs were first brought to the United States by German settlers. A couple named Hall, in 1913, were the first to register the breed with the UKC. Their kennel name was "American Eskimo" which became the name of the breed. The American Eskimo was spread throughout the United States by the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Stout's Pal Pierre was the first dog ever to walk a tight rope. The North American Eskimo Dog Association was formed in 1969, and the studbook was closed. The American Eskimo Dog Club of America formed in 1985 for the purpose of achieving AKC recognition. This goal has now been achieved. As of July 1, 1995, the American Eskimo was formally recognized by the AKC. Some of the American Eskimo's talents are watchdogging, guarding, narcotics detection, agility, competitive obedience, and performing tricks.

## APPERANCE SIZE & WEIGHT

### **Toy:**

9-12 inches (23-30cm) 6-10 pounds (2.4-4.5kg)

### **Miniature:**

over 12 (30cm) up to 15 inches (38cm) 10-20 pounds (4.5-9kg)

### **Standard:**

over 15 inches (38cm) up to 19 inches (48cm) 18-35 pounds (8kg-16kg)

## **Head**

Expression is keen, intelligent, and alert. Eyes are not fully round, but slightly oval. They should be set well apart, and not slanted, prominent or bulging. Tear stain, unless severe, is not to be faulted. Presence of tear stain should not outweigh consideration of type, structure, or temperament. Dark to medium brown is the preferred eye color. Eye rims are black to dark brown. Eyelashes are white. Faults: amber eye color or pink eye rims. Disqualification: blue eyes. Ears should conform to head size and be triangular, slightly blunt-tipped, held erect, set on high yet well apart, and blend softly with the head. Skull is slightly crowned and softly wedge-shaped, with widest breadth between the ears. The stop is well defined, although not abrupt. The muzzle is broad, with length not exceeding the length of the skull, although it may be slightly shorter. Nose pigment is black to dark brown. Lips are thin and tight, black to dark brown in color. Faults: pink nose pigment or pink lip pigment. The jaw should be strong with a full complement of close fitting teeth. The bite is scissors, or pincer.

## **Neck, Topline, Body**

The neck is carried proudly erect, well set on, medium in length, and in a strong, graceful arch. The topline is level. The body of the American Eskimo Dog is strong and compact, but not cobby. The chest is deep and broad with well-sprung ribs. Depth of chest extends approximately to point of elbows. Slight tuck-up of belly just behind the ribs. The back is straight, broad, level, and muscular. The loin is strong and well-muscled. The American Eskimo Dog is neither too long nor too short coupled. The tail is set moderately high and reaches approximately to the point of hock when down. It is carried loosely on the back, although it may be dropped when at rest.

## **Forequarters**

Forequarters are well angulated. The shoulder is firmly set and has adequate muscle but is not overdeveloped. The shoulder blades are well laid back and slant 45° with the horizontal. At the point of shoulder the shoulder blade forms an approximate right angle with the upper arm. The legs are parallel and straight to the pasterns. The pasterns are strong and flexible with a slant of about 20°. Length of leg in proportion to the body. Dewclaws on the front legs may be removed at the owner's discretion; if present, they are not to be faulted. Feet are oval, compact, tightly knit and well padded with hair. Toes are well arched. Pads are black to dark brown, tough and deeply cushioned. Toenails are white.

## **Hindquarters**

Hindquarters are well angulated. The lay of the pelvis is approximately 30° to the horizontal. The upper thighs are well developed. Stifles are well bent. Hock joints are well let down and firm. The rear pasterns are straight. Legs are parallel from the rear and turn neither in nor out. Feet are as described for the front legs. Dewclaws are not present on the hind legs.

## **Coat**

The American Eskimo Dog has a stand-off, double coat consisting of a dense undercoat and a longer coat of guard hair growing through it to form the outer coat. It is straight with no curl or wave. There is a pronounced ruff around the neck which is more noticeable on dogs than bitches. Outer part of the ear should be well covered with short, smooth hair, with longer tufts of hair growing in front of ear openings. Hair on muzzle should be short and smooth. The backs of the front legs should be well feathered, as are the rear legs down to the hock. The tail is covered profusely with long hair. THERE IS TO BE NO TRIMMING OF THE WHISKERS OR BODY COAT AND SUCH TRIMMING WILL BE SEVERELY PENALIZED. The only permissible trimming is to neaten the feet and the backs of the rear pasterns.

## **Color**

Pure white is the preferred color, although white with biscuit cream is permissible. Presence of biscuit cream should not outweigh consideration of type, structure, or temperament. The skin of the American Eskimo Dog is pink or gray. Disqualification: any color other than white or biscuit cream.

## **Gait**

The American Eskimo Dog shall trot, not pace. The gait is agile, bold, well balanced, and frictionless, with good forequarter reach and good hindquarter drive. As speed increases, the American Eskimo Dog will single track with the legs converging toward the center line of gravity while the back remains firm, strong, and level.

## **Temperament**

The American Eskimo Dog is intelligent, alert, and friendly, although slightly conservative. It is never overly shy nor aggressive, and such dogs are to be severely penalized in the show ring. At home it is an excellent watchdog, sounding a warning bark to announce the arrival of any stranger. It is protective of its home and family, although it does not threaten to bite or attack people. The American Eskimo Dog learns new tasks quickly and is eager to please.

# **BEST ENVIRONMENT FOR THE AMERICAN ESKIMO**

## **Living Conditions**

The American Eskimo will do okay in an apartment if it is sufficiently exercised. It is very active indoors and a small yard will be sufficient.

## **Exercise**

The American Eskimo loves to walk and should be well exercised either on a leash or in a safely enclosed yard.

## **Life Expectancy**

About 15 or more years.

# Chapter 1

## First Week Home



When you bring your American Eskimo home, there will need to be some time for adjustment. By following these tips, you can lay the foundation for a long and happy life together and make the transition as easy as possible for everyone involved.

**Plan Ahead:** Make all your purchases ahead of time so you have supplies, food, toys and everything you need ready to go, and have your house ready for your newcomer.

**Make Time:** The best time to bring your newcomer home is at the beginning of a weekend. If possible, add a few vacation days. This gives you time to acquaint your American Eskimo with its new home and begin housetraining and other training.

**Choose a Name:** Agree on a name ahead of time and make sure everyone uses it all the time when talking to your dog. This will help him recognize his name and avoid confusion.

**See the Veterinarian:** As soon as possible after you acquire your American Eskimo, take your new pet to your veterinarian. Bring any

immunization information you may have received when you acquired your pet to your veterinarian to begin a case history for future reference.

**Get Everyone On Board:** Once in his new home, remember that your American Eskimo is adjusting to strange new surroundings and people. Children can become especially excited. Explain to them that their new friend needs time out for naps. Show children how to play nicely.

**Be a Leader:** Simple things like always walking through doors ahead of your dog and eating in your dog's presence before you feed him make you look like a 'pack leader.' This will make it easier for your dog to accept that you (and your family) are in charge.

**Feed Your American Eskimo:** It is best to bring home the pet food that your American Eskimo has been eating to make the transition to a new home as easy as possible. New sights, new environment and all the attention can be very stressful. The only familiar thing may be the food he has been eating. If you plan to switch foods, you can minimize digestive upsets by having enough of the old food available to make the change a gradual one. Place food in the spot where the food dish will be kept to set a routine. If your dog doesn't seem to be eating, try moistening the food with water to make it easier to eat.

**Be Fair:** Never hit your dog. Never scold for something your puppy did a while ago. Your puppy will have no idea what the problem is and will think that you are mad for no reason. Instead, encourage the behavior you want and prevent the ones you do not. It's a much more productive approach. You will learn more about behavior issues and how to address them later in the book.

**Get Out:** Begin socializing your American Eskimo as soon as your veterinarian gives the OK. Take him out and gradually introduce him to new people and other dogs in controlled, safe settings. It is one of the most important things you can do for him. It teaches him to be a good citizen and gives him confidence and social skills.

**Make Introductions:** Introduce your new pet to resident pets in controlled situations – if the resident pet is a dog, perhaps on neutral ground where neither will feel the need to defend territory. Give each pet its own food dish, and give all pets attention to avoid competition.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Avoid bringing home a new pet during busy times such as birthdays and holidays. The noise and confusion may frighten the pet. Family members are generally too busy with the festivities to devote adequate time to help the dog become comfortable in his new home. Do make sure your entire family knows how to act, and agree on commands and rules. Complete cooperation of all family members is ideal. When a pet receives mixed signals, it can become confused and not know what to do. Do have fun. Dogs of all ages love a good time.

## **American Eskimo Supplies**

This is a quick checklist of the items most often needed by new pet owners. You should have these necessities on hand before you bring your dog home.

- **Collar** – a non-tightening collar is perfect for puppies
- **Leash** - two of different lengths, long and short
- **Food and water bowls** - stainless steel or ceramic are best as bacteria can thrive on plastic bowls.
- **Grooming supplies** - including brush, nail clippers, shampoo; ask a groomer or your veterinarian what tools you'll need and how to use them
- **Cleaning supplies** - your puppy or dog may have some accidents at first
- **Dog bed or blanket** - though you may want to hold off on this if your puppy is of a breed known for chewing
- **Crate** - see Crate Training in the training section.
- **A supply of quality dog food (see nutrition)**
- **Chew toys**
- **Dog tags**

There are also some optional supplies you might want to consider. These may be necessities in some cases - for example, a dog house is needed if your dog won't be sleeping inside - but you'll have to decide which of these items fit your lifestyle and budget.

- **Fence**
- **Outside kennel**
- **Dog house**
- **Doggie door**
- **Gates - to block off certain rooms or staircases indoors**
- **Anti-chew spray**
- **Boots (an option for dogs in snowy areas)**
- **Grooming table**

## **More on Dog houses**

American Eskimos can be happy indoors or outdoors, provided their needs are addressed. A mixture suits most dogs well because they are happiest when they are with you, but they enjoy time outside as well.

If you need to leave your dog outside, a doghouse is a good idea.

- Dogs are den animals. They like a small, confined, safe spot for naps and hanging out. Various designs are available or you can build your own.
- Make it big enough for your dog, but not too big because heat escapes in a large space. Buy or build one that will be big enough for your grown dog, but while your puppy is growing, block off the extra space with boxes or a sheet of wood. Keep the occupied space appropriate for your dog's size.
- Insulate against both the heat and the cold. The shelter of a roof and walls will protect your dog from the wind and sun, but use flaps for airflow in the summer and some kind of insulation against the cold air.

- Set or build it off the ground. Raising the doghouse even a few inches will block the cold air rising from the earth and will give added airflow in the hot months. It also helps prevent rotting and keeps water from seeping in.

## Good Toys for a Puppy

One of your puppy's "jobs" is to chew. It may relieve some of the pain of teething, it may be the practice of feeding skills, it may be just something to do, but chewing is a huge part of puppy's first year. Your job is to supply appropriate toys for chewing so he won't choose your shoes.

Squeaky toys, rattling toys, and those with bells are great fun. Most such toys are also destructible, so monitor your puppy if he has moved into a destructive phase. Squeakers and nylon pieces are better in the toy and as part of the toy than in your puppy - so don't let him chew and swallow any pieces.

Toys made of hard rubber are sturdy and come in various shapes and sizes. Insert a biscuit treat or peanut butter into rubber toys with holes, and puppy will be highly entertained. To aid in cleaning puppy's teeth, choose dental toys or chews that are made with bumps and grooves.

Be sure to rotate the toys puppy plays with each week. Otherwise, he may get bored with them and ignore them in favor of something new, like the sheetrock or your sneakers.

## ID Tags and Registration

Nobody wants to think about losing his or her dog. But, unfortunately, dogs do get lost. Be prepared. Buy your dog a collar and some form of identification.

Identification tags are a popular and easy way to identify your pet. There are abundant options in colors, shapes, and sizes to fit your dog's needs and personality.



The problem with tags is that they can fall off or be removed. Two permanent methods are the microchip and the tattoo.

## **Microchips**

Contained in a capsule, the microchip is a small chip coded with your contact information or an ID number. About the size of a grain of rice, it's injected under your pet's skin with a needle, a procedure no more uncomfortable than a regular shot.



Your information is then put into a national database so if your puppy is lost, identification is easy. Lost pets may be taken to the humane society or animal shelter for scanning identification. It's not as easy as reading a tag on a collar, but it cannot be lost. It's safe, effective, and meets international standards. Check with your local animal shelter or veterinarian for costs and more information.

It's important to keep your contact information current. When you move or change phone numbers, update your registration data.

The only drawbacks to these chips are that not every place has the scanner equipment and the chip may move (harmlessly) around your dog's body, making it difficult to scan.

## **Tattoos**

A tattoo contains a number that you register with one of the national databases. It can be put on the dog's inner thigh or earflap. Wait until your dog is fully-grown so the numbers won't grow out of shape. Be sure to tattoo on an area that won't be covered by fur as your dog's coat matures. It's a simple and quick procedure, but check it periodically for fading. Don't forget to register the number and to keep the contact information current.

## Choose a Name

Coming up with a name is never easy. Do you keep a family tradition? Bend to the latest fashion? Honor a hero? Or come up with something wacky and altogether new?

A name can say a lot. Take Fido. The name is a classic "dog" name - but why? The name goes back to the Latin "fides" which meant "trustworthiness" or "protection." It's also the root of words like "fidelity" and "confidante."

Some starting points for this discussion can be historical figures, family members, mythical figures, qualities of the dog (like Spot or Fluffy) characters from books, film, or television or anything else that you might have an interest in.

### **A few suggestions:**

- Keep it simple.
- One to three syllables is usually about right. Time can be of the essence when you're calling your dog; calling out a complicated name can slow things down and simply become tiresome.
- It shouldn't rhyme with your negative words.
- If you say "No" to your dog, you may want to skip names like Flo or Joe as they can sound a bit too close to "No".
- Choose a name you really like.
- You're going to be saying it for up to the next fifteen years, if you're lucky. So take your time and select something you'll enjoy saying for the next decade or more.
- Make it his word.
- Use his name when you speak to your puppy. Reward him with affection and a kibble or two when he hears it and soon he will come running when he hears his special word.

## CHAPTER 2

# 'DOG-PROOFING' YOUR HOME



Before bringing your American Eskimo home, you'll need to 'dog-proof' your house. Here's a simple checklist to make sure your home is safe before letting your dog run free. You'll also want to read our pages on Home Safety and Poisonous Plants to supplement this information.

- Make sure all poisonous household items are securely stored out of reach
- Put household cleaners, laundry detergents, bleach, disinfectants, insecticides, cleaning fluid, fertilizers, mothballs, antifreeze, insect poisons, rat poisons and other items in cabinets or on high shelves. Read about Home Safety.
- Check your plants (see poisonous plants)
- Many plants in and around your house can be harmful to your dog. Did you know that the pits of apricots and peaches, as well as spinach and tomato vines, can make your dog sick and, in large dosages, can even be fatal? Read about Poisonous Plants. For a more complete list of dangerous plants, consult your veterinarian.
- Look at your house from your dog's point of view
- Get down on all fours and look around. Move or remove dangling electric cords, loose nails, plastic bags or other tempting objects that will be in reach.
- Pick up buttons, string, sewing needles, pins and other sharp objects, and anything small enough to swallow

- If your dog swallows any of these objects, they may cause damage to the mouth and internal organs. String and other entangling objects, such as curtain pulls, six-pack holders and the like may cause abrasions or strangulation.
- Keep your toilet lid down
- Dogs are often tempted to play in or drink toilet bowl water. This habit can be very hard to break. It's unsanitary and toilet cleanser may be harmful if swallowed.
- Unplug, remove or cover any electrical cords in your dog's confinement area
- Chewing on these cords can cause severe mouth burns, electrocution and fires.
- Close off balconies, upper porches and high decks
- Puppies in particular are so little that they can slip through openings and fall.
- Buy a book on dog care
- Place a handy reference guide on a shelf in your bedroom, den or kitchen. You never know when you'll need a quick answer.

In the last few days before arrival, give your house a good cleaning and remove breakable items from areas where your dog will be. Also, spend some time preparing yourself or your family. Small children need to know how to act around puppies and dogs.

## Home Safety

To a curious and creative dog, anything can be a potential toy, treat or prize. But there are many things in the home that can be harmful to your pet. Learning to identify and remove those things from your dog's reach is an important part of creating a safe home for your dog.

**Potential Hazard** – Cleaners: Includes household cleaners, bleach, detergents, dryer sheets, soap and more. All of these can have varying levels of toxicity or may burn if touched or consumed.

**What You Can Do:** Keep all cleaners sealed in their bottles. Store the bottles out of reach or in a latched cabinet. Remember, some dogs can open normal cabinets.

**Potential Hazard** – Chemicals: Includes automotive fluids, ESPECIALLY antifreeze (which is highly toxic yet very sweet),

fertilizers, weed killers, moth balls, oven cleaners and more. These are often extremely toxic.

**What You Can Do:** Keep any household or automotive chemicals locked away in cabinets or storage areas. If these chemicals are in the garage, don't leave your dog in the garage unsupervised.

**Potential Hazard** - Foil, Plastic Wrap and Insulation: Materials like these often have tempting food particles or grease on them, but shred quickly and are easily swallowed. Any of these materials can cause serious internal problems, especially insulation, which is often made with fiberglass.

**What You Can Do:** Don't leave foil, wrap, insulation or similar materials lying around the house. If you use foil or wrap in the kitchen, throw it away someplace your dog cannot reach. If installing insulation or doing construction, clean up all scraps.

**Potential Hazard** - Pest Control: Bug traps, rodent traps, foggers, insecticides – even your dog's own flea medicine. All of these are designed to kill or trap and can cause harm to your dog. Insect traps are often sweet, which is an extra temptation.

**What You Can Do:** Store these items in a locked or latched cabinet. If you have to leave insect traps out, make sure they're in places your dog can't get at them.

**Potential Hazard** – Drugs: Whether over the counter or prescription, or even your dog's own prescriptions, drugs can cause serious problems in the case of an overdose. And don't assume that 'mild' drugs are OK – even aspirin can cause serious problems.

**What You Can Do:** Keep all medications in sealed containers away from your dog's reach. NEVER self-medicate your dog. Only give drugs to your dog as instructed by a veterinarian.

**Potential Hazard** – Chocolate: This sweet treat can be toxic even in relatively small amounts. A half-ounce of baking chocolate or less per pound of dog can be toxic.

**What You Can Do:** Don't give your dog chocolate. Keep it out of reach, and don't leave it out where your dog can reach it.

**Potential Hazard** – Plants: Many household plants are bad for dogs and can cause problems ranging from stomach upsets to much more serious consequences. For a list, see our information on Poisonous Plants.

**What You Can Do:** Review the list of poisonous plants and make sure none of those plants are in places where your dog can reach them. Supervise your dog when you introduce a new plant to make sure your dog isn't tempted to take a bite.

**Potential Hazard** – Wires: While they seem like fun toys, wires that carry a current can electrocute a dog if chewed. Even non-connected wires are troublesome – if swallowed, they can cause internal damage.

**What You Can Do:** Keep cords for lamps and other devices as short as possible. If you have to use extension cords, tack them to the baseboard so they're harder to chew.

**Potential Hazard** - Sharp Objects: Knives, forks, paper clips and sharp bits of plastic are among the hazards often found in the house. They can be swallowed and cause unseen harm, or a romping dog could suffer cuts or punctures.

**What You Can Do:** Keep these items away from you dog. If you see your dog chewing such an item, get it out of his mouth immediately.

**Potential Hazard** - Universal Dangers: There are, of course, many other dangers that apply to humans as well as dogs. Falls, carbon monoxide poisoning, lead paint – if it can harm a person, it most likely can harm a dog.

**What You Can Do:** Keep your house as safe as you would for a child. And remember – dogs won't grow up and learn not to do certain things. Keeping a safe home is a lifelong commitment.

## Poisonous Plants

Dogs love to explore. They love to sniff, taste and scratch their environment. Unfortunately, there are some things that are dangerous to dogs. So before your dog comes into your home, take some time to make sure your dog's living areas are free of poisonous plants and poisons of all kinds.

Some poisons are obvious, like chemicals, cleaners, antifreeze and medicines; read about Home Safety for more on these poisons. But some poisons are harder to spot, like houseplants. The plants listed below range from mildly irritating to downright dangerous to a dog. Since the age, breed and size of your dog can change the effect these plants will have, please speak to your veterinarian about any concerns.

**Some of the most common poisonous plants include:**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
Aloe Vera Amaryllis Apple (seeds) Apple Leaf Croton Apricot (pit) Asparagus Fern Autumn Crocus Azalea	Baby's Breath Bird of Paradise Branching Ivy Buckeye Buddhist Pine	Caladium Calla Lily Castor Bean Ceriman Charming Dieffenbachia Cherry (seeds and wilting leaves) Chinese Evergreen Cineraria Clematis Cordatum Corn Plant Cornstalk Plant Croton Cuban Laurel Cutleaf Philodendron Cycads Cyclamen	Daffodil Devil's Ivy Dieffenbachia Dracaena Palm Dragon Tree Dumb Cane
<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
Easter Lily Elaine Elephant Ears Emerald Feather English Ivy Eucalyptus	Fiddle-leaf Fig Florida Beauty Foxglove Fruit Salad Plant	Geranium German Ivy Giant Dumb Cane Glacier Ivy Gold Dust Dracaena Golden Pothos	Hahn's Self-Branching Ivy Heartland Philodendron Hurricane Plant
<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>
Indian Rubber Plant	Janet Craig Dracaena	Kalanchoe	Lacy Tree

	Japanese Show Lily Jerusalem Cherry		Philodendron Lily of the Valley
<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>
Madagascar Dragon Tree Marble Queen Marijuana Mexican Breadfruit Miniature Croton Mistletoe Morning Glory Mother-in-Law's Tongue	Narcissus Needlepoint Ivy Nephytis Nightshade	Oleander Onion Oriental Lily	Peace Lily Peach (wilting leaves and pits) Pencil Cactus Plumosa Fern Poinsettia (low toxicity) Poison Ivy Poison Oak Pothos Precatory Bean Primrose
<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W-Z</b>
Red Emerald Red Princess Red-Margined Dracaena Rhododendron Ribbon Plant	Saddle Leaf Philodendron Sago Palm Satin Pothos Schefflera Silver Pothos Spotted Dumb Cane String of Pearls Striped Dracaena Sweetheart Ivy Swiss Cheese Plant	Taro Vine Tiger Lily Tomato Plant (green fruit, stem and leaves) Tree Philodendron Tropic Snow Dieffenbachia	Weeping Fig  Yew

# Chapter 3

## Vital Visits to the Veterinarian



When should you first take your American Eskimo to the veterinarian? The short answer is, as soon as possible. And it must not end at one visit. Your puppy will need more veterinary care in the first year of life than at any other time. Not only are there concerns of immediate importance, there is a lot your veterinarian can do and recommend that will help keep your puppy healthy even when he is all grown up.

### Choosing a Veterinarian

After yourself, the most important person in your dog's life is a veterinarian. Take your puppy or dog in for a visit as soon as possible after coming home for the first time. Your veterinarian can check for problems you might miss. And if there is a problem, the sooner treatment starts, the better.

#### **When you look for a veterinarian, consider the following:**

- Recommendation of family and friends – often the best indicator of a good veterinarian
- Cleanliness and orderliness of office – a sign of professionalism and good for your dog's health
- Proximity to your home – you want to be able to visit easily if you have questions
- Office hours that fit your schedule – convenience matters; otherwise you might not go

- Rapport between yourself and the veterinarian – you want to be able to communicate openly about concerns

Also identify the nearest animal hospital. You never know when there might be an emergency.

By building a relationship with a veterinarian, you will know that your dog is getting care from someone you trust. And by going to the same veterinarian over time, you will be building a medical history for your pet. Building this relationship will have a positive long-term impact on the quality of care your dog receives throughout life.

## **First Visit**

Ideally, select a veterinarian even before bringing your puppy home. Read more about selecting a veterinarian. Once your puppy is home, the first meeting of veterinarian and puppy should happen as soon as possible - ideally within 24 hours. In addition to a general check up and examination for parasites, you and the veterinarian should work out a specific schedule of visits and vaccinations at that first meeting.

## **First Three Months**

In the first three months of your puppy's life, your veterinarian will probably want to meet every three or four weeks for vaccinations. Read more about vaccinations in the health section of this book. How long this schedule continues varies by location, but going until 16 weeks of age is not unusual.

## **Three to Six Months**

Rabies vaccinations sometimes are regulated by local laws and often begin between three and six months. Between four and six months, your puppy should be checked again for parasites and your veterinarian may recommend heartworm treatment. Also watch for your puppy's permanent teeth to come in.

Spaying or neutering is recommended between four and six months. The procedure is simple, and males usually feel pretty good in a day. Females may take two or three days. This is an important decision.

With the number of unplanned dogs born every year, having your puppy sterilized is the responsible thing to do.

## **Six Months to a Year**

After six months, the veterinarian visits usually taper off. There are boosters at about one year, and these will be repeated on a regular basis, following your veterinarian's recommendation. In general, it is a good idea for adult dogs to make at least one visit a year to maintain the healthy start they got as puppies.

Perhaps the most loving, responsible thing you can do for your pet is to see that he receives timely health care from a qualified veterinarian. His life depends on it.

## **Spaying/Neutering**

Neutering and spaying your household pets is a sound investment in their health and companionship. You are also doing your part to help control the pet population. With the exception of professional breeders equipped to handle the burdens of breeding dogs, owners should get their pets spayed or neutered as soon as their veterinarian recommends.

### **What Is Spaying and Neutering?**

This is the surgical procedure in which the reproductive organs are removed from a female dog (spaying), or the testicles are removed from a male dog (neutering). Although often thought of simply as a way to prevent unplanned litters of puppies, it also has numerous other benefits for dog and owner alike.

### **Benefits of Spaying and Neutering**

In addition to preventing unplanned litters, which can be a burden on owners and communities, this basic procedure can:

- Eliminate the risk of ovarian and uterine cancer in females and testicular cancer in males
- Reduce the risk of mammary gland cancer in females
- Make males less likely to roam, which can lead to lost dogs.
- Make males less aggressive and more affectionate.

## **Fact and Fiction about Spaying And Neutering**

There are many misconceptions about spaying and neutering. Some are misconceptions based on the real effects of the procedure, but others have no real basis in proven fact.

**Fiction:** Female dogs are more content after having a litter, or should have one litter before being spayed.

There is no evidence of this. But waiting to spay can lessen the protective effect that spaying has on your female dog and because spaying reduces the risk of mammary tumors, it is important to spay as soon as your veterinarian suggests.

**Fiction:** Spaying and neutering makes dogs fat.

Spaying or neutering does NOT make a dog fat. However, the procedure can reduce the amount of energy a dog needs, so should monitor your pet's body condition after the procedure and reduce your feeding amount as needed.

**Fiction:** Spaying or neutering makes dogs lazy and/or changes their personality.

Neutering a male dog can make him less aggressive, but as a rule that is a benefit. In terms of playfulness or activity, these patterns change as a dog gets older whether or not it is spayed or neutered. Don't mistake maturing for a change in personality.

**Fiction:** Spaying and neutering are dangerous procedures.

While this is a surgical procedure and carries some small degree of risk, it is also a very common, well-practiced procedure. Your veterinarian can tell you what risks are present.

You will almost always find that the benefits greatly outweigh the risks.

# CHAPTER 4

## Understanding American Eskimos



Your American Eskimo is a pack animal, and he still follows the call of the wild. Your family is your dog's pack. Who will be the leader and who will be the follower?

There are some ways to set yourself and your family up as top dog. You want to earn your American Eskimo's respect. That can mean being firm, but always fair. Read more about [Becoming a Pack Leader](#).

Dogs do feel fear, but it's not useful for your American Eskimo to fear you. Never hit your American Eskimo.

Dogs don't have the ability to link cause and effect abstractly; that is, remember a past action and link it to your present reaction. Never scold for something your dog did a while ago. Your dog will have no idea what the problem is and will think that you are mad for no reason. Only correct your dog when caught in the act.

Because American Eskimos are pack animals, they crave your attention and approval. Use this to your advantage when teaching your dog. You will learn more about [Training Basics](#) later in this book.

Take the time to teach your American Eskimo what you want. A puppy arrives in our world, often having just been born two or three months earlier. We should not expect him to understand anything but to love us. We get to teach him the rest - using persistence, patience and affection to shape him into the companions that we want and he is capable of becoming.

## **Your American Eskimo's Senses**

When you notice the way your American Eskimo reacts in situations, remember that dogs live in a world that looks, smells and sounds quite a bit different than ours. You might think a situation seems quiet and safe, but your dog may sense something you do not that causes agitation - a sound too high-pitched for you to hear or the scent of another animal you can't detect.

Dogs can see with less light, detect motion, and see flickering light better than humans, but the clarity of their distance vision is typically poorer. The popular theory that dogs only see shades of gray may not be true. Some theories suggest they see blues and yellows but can't see reds and greens as humans do.

A dog's hearing is more sensitive than yours. They hear higher pitches and lower volumes. Dogs are able to register sounds of 35,000 vibrations per second compared with 20,000 per second in humans. This sensitive hearing can alert you to visitors or danger, but it also means you should take care with loud noises, and be patient when your dog howls at a train whistle or siren.

A American Eskimo's sense of smell is much more acute than a human's - tens of thousands of times more acute by some estimations.

We'll never fully understand what their world looks like, smells like or sounds like, just as dogs will never even be able to understand how different our world is. But we both understand one thing: affection. Kindness crosses all barriers and lessens all differences.

## **Dog Intelligence**

Intelligence can be measured several ways: how well or how quickly your dog can understand your meaning, figure out ways around obstacles or recognize people and things. But intelligence should not be confused with being a good companion. Smart does not always

equal trainable. A smart dog might very well understand you but still choose to do something else.

The important quality of a companion dog is that he wants to please you. After all, most basic training involves conditioning your dog to listen to a command, but doesn't require that your dog 'understand' the command in the way a person does.

Some signs of intelligence are easy to spot. For example, watch how your dog uses his paws. Using paws to reach for or retrieve a ball that has rolled under a couch is one sign of intelligence.

One popular test is to show your dog a new toy, then set it on the floor and cover it with a towel. Dogs of above-average intelligence will make the connection between the towel and the toy and look for their toy. Other dogs will think the toy simply disappeared and never look for it.

Evidence of memory can be seen in how your dog greets people he has met before. A dog with a stronger memory will not need to go back through the introduction process and will become comfortable with the visitor quickly.

Wherever your dog falls on the intelligence scale, remember that intelligence is developed through practice, just as it can be in humans. The more involved your dog is in your life, the more time you spend training and working with your dog, the more intelligent he's likely to be.

And regardless of intelligence, the important thing to know is that your dog wants to please you. Unless you really need or want a dog that can figure out how to open the refrigerator, intelligence can be overrated. For most families, the qualities to look for are gentle, tolerant and devoted - those are what make a family dog one-in-a-million.

## **Evolution as Pets**

Dogs are descendants of wolves. Some have speculated about whether it is possible that wolves, coyotes, and jackals interbred (genetic testing has ruled this unlikely), but wherever the raw material came from, the primary mastermind behind all the breeds of modern dogs is the human race.

Over time, as our lives changed, we selected and trained dogs to do new jobs. When we were hunters, we developed dogs to hunt with us. When we started keeping domesticated livestock, we needed dogs to herd and guard them. When we started to stockpile grain, we needed dogs to kill the vermin that grain attracted.

Always willing and amazingly genetically malleable, dogs have slowly been developed into hundreds of unique breeds world-wide ranging from under 4 pounds to over 200, from under 6 inches tall to over three feet. Dogs today display an incredible diversity of size, shape, color, or coat-type.

In behavior, the modern dog is still a pack animal just like the wolf. People may have enhanced certain aspects like retrieving, speed, and hunting skills, but they still respond to the pack in their assigned place. The pack mentality makes the dog well adapted for human society. The human owner takes the place of the pack leader and the dog fits in as the family leads.

For this reason, dogs take naturally to our lead when it is given to them. Puppies are capable of learning as early as four weeks of age. Pick up where your puppy's mother left off and you are well on your way to a rewarding, lifelong relationship with your dog, just as humans and dogs have had for thousands of years.

## **How Dogs Perceive You**

Your American Eskimo is a social animal. That's what makes him such a fabulous companion. He willingly incorporates your family and world into his social system. And his social system is quite a bit simpler than ours. It breaks down into two general categories: everyone is either someone to follow or someone who follows.

There are some simple ways to put you and your family in the "someone to follow" position:

- Walk through doors first.
- When you get home, you and your family should eat in your dog's presence before setting out the dog food. Among dogs, the most important dogs always eat first.
- Have your dog respond to you before you respond to him. For example, before you put out the food, give the 'come' command; before a pat on the head, give the 'sit' command; before a toy is

- offered, give the 'down' command. This gives you daily practice calling the shots and him daily practice responding accordingly.
- Use tone of voice to communicate. A higher-than-normal pitch is exciting and playful and perfect for praise. A normal tone – direct and confident – is your command tone. A lowered voice your dog hears as a warning, like a growl. With practice, your dog can learn to understand your mood through your tone of voice.

Remember, never hit or yell at your dog. Focus on preventing or distracting from problem behaviors, not on correcting them. Replace unwanted behaviors with something you like – if your dog chews, give him a food dispensing toy to work on or a good chew toy. That way you both win: he gets to chew, you get a house in one piece and peace in your house.

## **BECOMING THE PACK LEADER**

There is no equality in dogdom. You're either ahead or behind your dog in line and that is decided by how you interact with your dog. Being a good leader means being calm, kind and consistent. Here are a few suggestions:

Teach your American Eskimo to control his mouth. If he mouths or nips you, react with a startling "No biting!" This will teach him that you are not another puppy and he needs to treat you differently.

- Have him 'sit' or 'down' before you give him anything he wants, from petting to tossing a toy. When he responds to you before you respond to him, he will start to look to you to set the rules, while at the same time getting in daily training practice.
- Practice submission exercises daily. These include holding him in your arms or on his side and speaking to him gently until he stops squirming. When he stops, release him, praise and give him a kibble of food. Gently handle his ears, mouth and paws so he learns to accept this. These exercises are easy with most dogs but if your dog really struggles or gets upset, seek assistance from a qualified dog professional.
- Use tone of voice to communicate. A higher than normal pitch is exciting and playful and perfect for praise. A normal tone - direct and confident – is your command tone. A lowered voice your dog hears as a warning, like a growl. With practice, your puppy can learn to understand your mood through your tone of voice.

- When you get home, you and your family should eat in your dog's presence before setting out the dog food. Among dogs, the most important dogs always eat first.
- Walk through doors first.

**Remember:** Pack leaders NEVER share their food with other dogs. If you follow all of the steps above and then give your dog table scraps and bites of your sandwich you are sending mixed signals to your dog.

If you do these things consistently, you can elevate yourself in your dog's eyes, which can make all the difference in training.

## TRAINING BASICS

Training is teaching. You're teaching your dog how to be a better canine companion. The key to any successful training – whether it's sit, fetch, or housetraining – lies in a few basic tools. Make these the foundation of all your training.

### **Your American Eskimo's Motivation**

Dogs are pack animals, and they are happy to follow the pack's leader. As a rule, as long as your dog sees you as a leader, your dog's biggest motivation is to make you happy. Make it clear that you're happy (through tone of voice, petting, praise, etc.) when your dog does well. Your dog will do what it thinks you want just for that.

If your dog needs a bit more than that, that's okay, too. Using a kibble of his food to reward a job well done or a toss of his favorite toy can help some dogs learn faster and respond more consistently.

### **Being a Leader**

Act like a leader and your dog will treat you like one. See our information on being a pack leader for things you can do to set yourself up as 'top dog.'

### **When to Start**

Start training the moment your dog walks into your home. Start showing him how to please you right away and you'll have a grateful dog thanking you for it. And don't believe that old dogs can't learn new

tricks. Dogs can learn tricks and new games well into adulthood. But if your old dog that has been well-mannered all his life starts to have problems, see your veterinarian before you blame the dog. You do not want to scold your pet for things he can no longer help.

### **Consistency**

The only way your dog will ever learn is if there is a clear and consistent connection between your dog's actions and your reaction. When you teach sit, offer a reward such as a favorite toy or a kibble of food or praise every time your dog does it right. If you don't want your dog on the furniture, say "No" and guide him off every time he climbs up. Then praise him every time he gets four on the floor. Make it very clear. Otherwise, your dog will become confused. If you're not consistent, you're dog won't be either.

### **Treats**

Don't give any free rides when it comes to treats. Make your dog earn every one of them, even if it's just "sit." To help control caloric intake, many nutritionists recommend that you use a piece of dog food as a reward as often as possible.

When training, you want to work away from giving a food reward every time. Start gradually replacing the treat with praise. Once your puppy has learned a command, give the treat every other time, then every third time, always praising lavishly. Pretty soon, your puppy will work for praise - and the very occasional treat.

### **Correction**

Dogs are not spiteful. If your dog is doing something wrong, it may well have gotten the idea that it was OK. You have to teach your dog otherwise. First, catch him in the act - dogs can't connect a punishment to an action hours or even minutes ago. Never hit your dog. Instead, when you see your dog doing something wrong, say, "No" in a sharp tone. When your dog stops, praise him and give him something else to do like 'sit' or 'come.' Praise him abundantly for responding.

**Remember**, training does not have to be harsh. There are many different training methods available these days, so seek one that makes sense to you and helps your dog learn. There's almost always another way to teach your dog something. If the method you're using isn't working, find another method before you get frustrated.

## Preventative Training

Preventative training teaches your dog what not to do in a very simple way: **by not letting it happen!**

### Principles of Preventative Training

The idea is simple. If you never leave your dog unsupervised where he can cause trouble, he will learn which activities are allowed and which are forbidden much more quickly than if he's allowed to make mistakes.

If your dog is left unsupervised often and does unwanted things, he believes these things are OK because he enjoys doing them and no one is there to say anything different. You cannot correct a dog after the fact – dogs can't connect a punishment with something they did hours, minutes or even seconds ago. Until you catch your dog in the act, the unwanted behavior is reinforced every time he repeats it.

### Practicing Preventative Training

First off, plan to spend a lot of time with your dog for the first several weeks or even months after you bring your dog home. Make sure you have a crate for your dog.

- Confine your dog to the room you're in and litter it generously with chew toys.
- If your dog starts heading toward trouble, distract him with an appropriate toy and praise him when he takes it.
- If your dog is already into trouble, interrupt him with a firm 'No!' then when the dog stops, offer a toy and praise him for interest in it.
- Or give an obedience command and praise your dog for obeying.
- When you can't be around, keep your dog confined in his crate, a pen or in a small, dog-proof area. (Read about Crate Training for more information)

It's that simple. And it's extremely effective because:

- It sets you up immediately as pack leader.
- It doesn't allow bad habits to start, so you don't need to un-train them later.
- It quickly builds a strong bond between you and your dog.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Do use the right tone of voice to communicate: higher pitched for praise; matter-of-fact for commands; lower, growling tones to show displeasure. Don't hit your dog. Dogs and puppies do not understand being hit or grabbed. They will only learn they cannot trust you and learn to fear you, making them even harder to train. Do praise your dog warmly and often for doing the right thing. This will help your dog to make the right choices in the future and besides, it's fun!

## **Schedules for Your Dog**

Because dogs are creatures of habit, schedules are very important. You need to schedule when to feed, water, exercise and take your dog outdoors to eliminate.

### **Why Schedule?**

For one thing, schedules make your dog happy. Knowing what will happen and when it will happen gives your dog a sense of security. Also, schedules make it easier to train and control your dog. Housetraining in particular is generally easier with a schedule, supervision and encouragement.

### **Scheduling Food and Water**

Feed your dog at the same time every day, whether you feed your dog once a day or more often. After 15 minutes, take away any uneaten food. Water should always be available.

If you know when your dog ate and drank you will have a pretty good idea when he will need to go outside. You will also be training his

digestive system as well, which will help take some of the guesswork out of housetraining. Read more about Housetraining.

### **Scheduling Elimination**

Remember preventive training - it's always best to think ahead. Take your dog outside when you think he might have to eliminate, rather than wait too long and run the risk of an accident indoors. The more times your dog eliminates outdoors where you want him to, the slimmer the chance for him to have an accident indoors. The clearer the picture to the dog, the quicker he will catch on to what you want. Dogs really want to please you and you can show them how to do it.

Always accompany your new dog outdoors. That way, you can take him to a pre-selected area in your yard to eliminate, therefore doing away with the habit of smelling the whole yard to find the desired area. You will also be assured that your dog has eliminated before bringing him indoors, and you can praise him.

### **Elimination Schedules for Puppies**

Puppies need to go out frequently. At eight weeks old, a trip outside every two to three hours during the day is suggested. By four months that can be about every four to five hours. Most puppies can make it through the night by four months of age or a bit older. By nine months or so, most dogs can get by on three or four trips outside a day, though more are always appreciated. As your dog gets into its senior years, these trips will need to be increased again.

### **Scheduling Exercise and Play**

Exercise is important for all dogs. Many adult dogs are either overweight or likely to get that way due to diet and lack of an exercise program. Lack of exercise can cause dogs to exhibit destructive chewing behavior because they become bored or are trying to burn off excess energy. Taking your dog for a 15-20 minute walk can help socialize him, give you a chance to bond while doing something together, and is a great way for you to get some exercise, too.

# CHAPTER 5

## START TRAINING



### Housetraining / Housebreaking

When you bring your American Eskimo home, you should move to establish a routine as soon as possible. The faster you get things on track, the fewer mistakes you'll have to clean up. Although there are different strategies and ways of housetraining a puppy or dog, the following instructions are a good way to teach your American Eskimo to eliminate outdoors.

Housetraining a American Eskimo can take different amounts of time. But by applying schedules, setting boundaries for where elimination is acceptable, a verbal command, praise and crate training, you should see progress fast. If you do not see progress, consult your veterinarian or a behaviorist as this could indicate a mental condition.

Establish an elimination spot outside. That takes the guesswork out of the trip. Ideally, housetraining should be done in conjunction with crate training. Read about Crate Training later in this chapter.

#### **Points to remember during housetraining:**

- When you think your dog is due to go to the bathroom, or if your dog exhibits signs like sniffing an area or (once better trained) whining or going to the door, clip a leash to his collar and take him to the spot.

- Pick a phrase like "Go potty" or "Hurry up," then say it calmly whenever your pup is going. Praise your puppy after he is finished. Over time, he will come to link those words with those actions and you'll have a dog that goes on command.
- Go inside for food and water. About 15 to 30 minutes later, go back out again.
- During the housetraining period, keep your dog in sight. If he should start to do something in front of you, interrupt him and take him outdoors quickly. Praise him for completing the job outside.
- Through repetition, your dog will learn that there is one place where elimination is appropriate, and when he needs to go he will alert you.
- Maintain a regular feeding, drinking and elimination schedule.

## **When Your Dog Makes a Mistake**

Every American Eskimo will make mistakes when first being housetrained. Watch these mistakes and see if you can spot a cause. Mistakes are a sign that your puppy or dog does not know what is acceptable and so you, as teacher, must find the source of confusion and fix it.

- Too much freedom too quickly is the most common error. If your dog has an accident or two, back up and slow down the training.
- Providing a crate that is too big for your dog encourages him to eliminate in one end and sleep in the other. Also, if you place food and water in the crate, he'll fill up on both and be forced to relieve himself.
- It does no good to drag him off to the site of a mishap and punish him. A dog is unable to connect punishment with a past mistake and will believe you are angry for no reason, possibly leading to fear and confusion on your dog's part.
- Changing your American Eskimo's diet can cause digestive problems that might result in an accident. Late night snacks and not enough exercise can also lead to accidents.
- Even well-trained American Eskimos may have accidents. Clean the area with a pet odor neutralizer so your pet won't be tempted to repeat the mistake.
- Watch for territorial marking – spraying urine on objects. That's not a housetraining mistake. Your dog is vying to be leader of

the pack - which is your family. When you see this behavior, step up obedience training.

- Don't rule out a bladder infection. Spaying and neutering can help reduce the risk. Talk to your veterinarian.

Housebreaking is an essential first step in establishing a training routine for your American Eskimo.

Regularity and consistency are the keys to unlock a perfectly housetrained American Eskimo. Regular habits encourage a steady appetite and help to dramatically speed up the housebreaking process. This is done by controlling and regulating the American Eskimo's digestive processes. What goes in on a schedule comes out on a schedule. It's just that easy.

Most veterinarians, dog trainers, and breeders agree that American Eskimos do best on a well-balanced commercial dog food.

It is a fact that the more a dog eats and drinks, the more often he will have to relieve himself.

## **CRATE TRAINING**

Where does your dog prefer to nap? Under a table, desk or coat? Dogs feel secure in a small, enclosed space. It is like a den to them. You can recreate that feel – and develop a healthy training environment – with a crate.

### **The Principle behind Crate Training**

Dogs like small, enclosed spaces because of the security it offers them. Crating is not jailing your dog, and the crate should never be used for punishment. Instead, it draws on your dog's preference for small spaces and allows you an extra measure of control over your dog. If you practice preventative training, your dog will spend time in the crate when you aren't around to set boundaries.

One benefit of a crate is in potty training. Dogs try not to go to the bathroom where they sleep. If you keep your dog in a crate when you're not together during potty training, your dog will try to hold it until you let him out and take him outside. Your job is to keep a reasonable schedule with plenty of chances to play and eliminate.

## **Choosing a Crate**

Choose the right size crate for your American Eskimo. Your dog should have enough room to stand up, turn around and lie down. Anything bigger and he may eliminate in one end and sleep in the other.

Get a crate that is big enough to accommodate your American Eskimo when he is fully grown. You will have to use a divider to block off one end of the crate.

If your American Eskimo is past the chewing stage, make the crate comfortable with a blanket and favorite toys. You want the crate to be a place your dog wants to spend time but you won't want him to spend his time ripping up bedding. Some pups never chew bedding, others do. Never use carpeting or anything in the crate that could be dangerous if swallowed.

## **Practicing Crate Training**

Introduce your American Eskimo to the crate in a low-pressure situation, not when you're about to leave. Leave the door open and let your dog explore.

- Remove all collars before you crate your puppy.
- If your pup is frightened by the noise of a metal crate on a hard floor, put a towel or mat underneath the crate to muffle noise and prevent slipping.
- Toss a treat – ideally a kibble of food – into the crate, then use a simple word like 'kennel' to get your dog to enter.
- Praise your dog and close the door. Open it after a few moments.
- Slowly increase the time your puppy spends in the crate with the door closed.
- Don't open the door because your dog whines. It will only teach him to whine more.
- A general rule for determining how long your puppy can be confined is one hour for every month that your puppy is old, plus one hour. Most three-month old puppies can stay in for four hours.
- Do NOT crate your dog for more than eight hours. It is unfair to leave the dog without a chance to eliminate or exercise any longer than that.

The more confinement your dog has to cope with, the more exercise he needs daily. Crating is a tool that should never be used to avoid training, exercise and spending time with your best buddy.

Maintain a regular schedule of trips outdoors so he can relieve himself. And so the reason for the trip is clear, always take your puppy on a leash to the same place.

## The Housebreaking Routine

Once you decide on a food, stick with it. Your American Eskimo is perfectly content to eat the same thing every single day. American Eskimos also like to eat in the same place and at the same times each day.

### Feeding

Set up a feeding schedule that you can follow based on your lifestyle. Sample schedules are provided later in this section.

Feed the dog by setting down his food and water bowl. Allow him to eat and drink for no longer than 15 – 20 minutes and then remove the food and water. This will teach your dog to eat promptly and not linger around his food and water bowl.

This process will speed up the housebreaking process because dogs will always relieve themselves shortly after feeding. With young puppies there is a very short interval between feeding and eliminating. As your dog matures he will be able to hold things longer and will need to relieve himself less often.

Do not let your dog have unlimited access to food and water during the training period. This will only cause constant and unpredictable elimination.

**Here is a recommended feeding schedule:**

Age of Dog	Number of Feedings	Time of Day
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Weaning to 3 months	4	Morning, Noon, Late Afternoon and Evening
3 to 6 Months	3	Morning, Afternoon and Evening
6 to 12 Months	2	Morning and Late Afternoon or Early Evening
1 Year and Over	1 – 2 (depending on the activity level of your dog)	Morning and Late Afternoon or Early Evening

## **Water**

During the housebreaking period, you should offer your dog a drink of water at specified times based on the schedule you choose. Let him drink as much as he wants, but pick up the bowl after 10 minutes. Limiting your dog's water intake will only occur during the training period. After your dog is housebroken then he will have free access to water at all times.

### **Keep the following points in mind until your dog is housebroken:**

1. Follow a regular feeding schedule.
2. Keep your dog's diet consistent.
3. Allow your dog to eat and drink for 15 – 20 minutes and then remove the dishes until the next scheduled meal.
4. Do not offer treats or table scraps during the training period.

## **The Dog's Den**

The next important aspect of housebreaking is using your dog's natural den-dwelling instincts to teach him bladder and bowel control.

American Eskimos instinctively keep their dens clean. They will not soil the place where they sleep. The best way to teach your dog to control his urges to eliminate is by setting up a cozy den by using a crate with a closing door.

The crate should only be big enough for your dog to stand up and turn around. There should be no extra space or your dog may use one end of the crate as his personal toilet.

Your dog will instinctively hold his bladder or bowels until you let him out. Your dog must never be allowed total freedom in your home until he is completely housebroken. Your dog must learn to stay in his den until it is time to go outside to the potty area. Once he understands what you want him to do, it will only take a short while until the habit is established.

As the housebreaking training progresses and your dog is relieving himself when and where he is supposed to, he can enjoy progressively longer periods of freedom before being confined again. You dog will not require confinement forever, only until he is housebroken.

Remember that crating your dog is not cruel. It is a humane practice that is used and endorsed by many professional trainers, breeders, handlers, dog show exhibitors, groomers and veterinarians.

## **Establish the Pattern**

Training your dog to relieve himself in the area that you designate is easy when you establish a pattern. Dogs are creatures of habit; they like to eat, sleep and relieve themselves on a regular schedule.

A puppy will relieve himself many times during the day, especially if he is very young. You must be prepared to take him out:

- Immediately after he wakes up in the morning.
- 15 to 20 minutes after every meal or drink of water.
- After he wakes up from a nap.
- After extreme excitement or long play periods.
- Before going to bed for the night.

Between these times, stay alert for signs that your dog is looking for a place to relieve himself. Look for actions such as whining, acting

restless, sniffing the floor, or going around in circles. The time period between indicating and actually doing is very short in young puppies but gets longer with age.

## Choose a Schedule that's Right for You

Following are some sample housebreaking schedules that you may follow depending on your situation:

### **SCHEDULE 1:**

For a 4 – 6 month old puppy eating 3 meals a day. Owner at home all day

#### a.m.

7:00	Wake up and go out
7:10	7:30 Free period
7:30	Food and water
8:00	Go out
8:15 – 8:45	Free period
8:45	Confine in crate

NOON                      Go out

#### p.m.

12:00	Food and water
12:20	Go out
12:45 – 1:15	Free period
1:15	Confine in crate
4:45	Go out
5:00	Food and water
5:30	Go out
5:45 – 6:15	Free period
6:15	Confine
7:45	Go out
8:00	Water
8:15	Go out
8:30 – 9:00	Free period
9:00	Confine
11:00	Go out. Confine overnight.

### **SCHEDULE 2:**

For a 4 – 6 month old puppy eating 3 meals a day. Owner working during the day.

a.m.

7:00	Wake up & go out
7:10 – 7:30	Free period
7:30	Food and water
8:00	Go out. Confine but not in the crate all day. Block off a small area in the kitchen or bathroom.

p.m.

6:00	Go out when arriving home
6:10 – 6:30	Free period
6:30	Food and water
7:00	Go out
7:15	Confine
9:00	Small amount of food and water.
9:30	Go out
9:40 – 10:30	Free period
10:30 – 11:00	Go out. Confine overnight

**SCHEDULE 3:**

For a 6 – 12 month old puppy eating 2 meals a day. Owner at home all day.

a.m.

7:00	Wake up. Go out.
7:15 – 8:00	Free period
8:00	Food and water
8:30	Go out
8:45 – 9:30	Free period
9:30	Confine

p.m.

12:15	Go out
12:30	Water
12:45	Go out
1:00 – 1:45	Free period
1:45	Confine
5:45	Go out
6:00	Food and water
6:30	Go out
6:45 – 7:30	Free period

7:30 Confine  
10:30 – 11:00 Go out. Confine for night.

#### **SCHEDULE 4:**

For a 6 – 12 month old puppy eating 2 meals a day. Owner working during day.

##### a.m.

7:00 Wake up. Go out  
7:10 – 7:30 Free period  
7:30 Food and water  
8:00 Go out. Confine in a small blocked off area, not in crate.

##### p.m.

6:00 Go out  
6:15 – 7:00 Free period  
7:00 Food and water  
7:30 Go out  
7:45 – 8:30 Free period  
8:30 Confine  
10:30 – 11:00 Go out. Confine for night

#### **SCHEDULE 5:**

Schedule for a housebroken adult dog eating 1 or 2 meals a day. Owner at home all day.

##### a.m.

7:00 Wake up. Go out.  
8:00 Food. Unlimited water during day.  
8:30 Go out.

##### p.m.

1:00 Go out  
5:30 Food (if dog eats 2 meals a day)  
6:00 Go out  
11:00 Go out. Bedtime. Remove water during night.

#### **SCHEDULE 6:**

Schedule for a housebroken adult dog eating 1 or 2 meals a day. Owner at home all day.

##### a.m.

7:00 Wake up. Go out.  
7:30 Food. Unlimited water during the day.

8:00                      Go out. When owner leaves, confine dog if necessary  
(not in crate)

p.m.

6:00                      Go out

6:30 – 7:00              Food (if dog eats 2 meals a day)

7:30 – 7:45              Go out

11:00                      Go out. Bedtime. Remove water during the night.

## **When Accidents Happen**

During the training period, and for a short time afterward, your dog may have an occasional accident indoors. It is your responsibility to clean the mistake immediately and ensure that you completely deodorize the spot. This will remove any lingering scent.

If you clean but forget to deodorize, your dog will still be able to smell the urine and fecal odors, and he will return to the same spot and repeat the error again and again. Deodorizing will ensure that this does not happen.

Housetraining accidents can be frustrating but finding a mistake in the house can mean more than that your dog simply isn't housetrained. Before you blame your dog, look at all the possible reasons.

### **Why dogs have accidents**

Once you find the cause of a dog's accidents, a solution often becomes evident. Common causes include:

- A medical condition such as a urinary tract infection or parasites. If your dog urinates small amounts frequently, suspect a urinary tract infection and contact your veterinarian.
- Territorial marking. If your dog is lifting his leg in the house, he may be marking his territory. This is a behavior training issue, not a housetraining issue.
- Anxiety or fear caused by being alone or some outside event like construction or loud noises.
- Confusion about what is expected, which means the dog is not actually housetrained.

## **Solving the problem**

Step one to resolving this problem is finding the cause and your first stop is the veterinarian. Once a medical condition is ruled out, then these basic steps should help get you back on track.

- Schedule food, water and exercise.
- This will help make the digestive system more predictable.
- Consider crate training.
- Try to catch him in the act and distract him by saying "Ahhh" or "No" in a serious tone. This should stop him in mid-stream. Then take him outside to finish the job.
- Always praise your dog and offer a kibble of food as a treat for relieving himself where and when you want. This will strengthen and reinforce good habits.
- Clean up accidents with a good odor remover so no lingering smell attracts him back to that spot.

Make sure your dog isn't left alone too long. If you work, either come home midday, hire a walker, or leave your pup in a small area on papers (Don't put papers inside a crate).

If your dog is having accidents the moment he or she is left alone, please seek the help of a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional, as this may be a sign of separation anxiety.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Do get puppies outside at least six times a day, adult dogs at least four. Don't punish your dog after the fact – you'll just give your dog another source of fear, which could lead to more accidents. Do go out with him to praise and reward him for going outside. Don't rub your dog's nose in the mess - this will scare him. Do control where and when your dog goes to the bathroom by using a crate, regular routine and close supervision.

## **In Conclusion...**

Here are the basic housebreaking rules to remember:

1. Dogs are easy to train because they are pack animals with strong instincts to follow their leader. Learn to understand your dog's inherited behavioral instincts and work with them.

2. Don't expect to completely housebreak a puppy that is under 16 weeks of age. Younger puppies do not have complete muscle control over their bladder and bowel movements yet.
3. Feed your dog a nutritious diet on a consistent schedule and he will eliminate on a consistent schedule.
4. Do not feed your dog treats or table scraps during the training period.
5. Until your dog is housebroken, the best way to teach him to control his body functions is to create a den and confine him to it until it's time to go out or during free periods. Supervise your dog at all times when he is out of his den to watch for signs that he has to go.
6. During training take your dog to his toilet first thing each morning, after every meal or drink of water, after naps, after play periods or excitement, and before bedtime.
7. In between, stay alert for signs such as whining, acting restless, sniffing the floor, or going around in circles. As soon as you notice these things, rush him to the toilet area.
8. Praise your dog every time he relieves himself in the correct place.
9. Use praise, not food, as a reward for housebreaking.
10. Clean up promptly after your dog.
11. Never physically punish your dog for mistakes.
12. Always keep your dog clean and well groomed.
13. Follow a strict timetable. The more vigilant you are the faster and more successful housebreaking will be.

## **Litter Training: A Housetraining Alternative**

There are different approaches to housetraining. An innovative approach involves dog litter. Using litter, a puppy or dog (up to 35 pounds) can easily be trained to eliminate in one spot indoors, reducing the need for trips outside in the middle of the night or messes that are found when you get home from work. It also is a good option for apartment dwellers.

### **Step 1: Setting Up**

- Choose a location for the liter pan, preferably in a confined area that is located near family activity, such as the kitchen, utility

room or foyer. You can also use a child gate to keep your pup confined in a common area near the family.

- Always place your dog's bed, food and water in the confined area as far away from the litter pan as possible.
- The litter pan should contain approximately 1 inch of litter.
- Always fill the pan when your puppy is not around, so that the sound is not confused with kibble hitting his dish.

## **Step 2: boundaries or confinement**

If using a crate, find the best place to put it and the pan, preferably a confined area that is centrally located near family activity such as the kitchen, utility room or foyer. Your pup needs to be a part of household activity in an area that is not too large, because too much freedom too quickly could be overwhelming, and that could result in unreliable pan usage. Another alternative is using a child's gate to keep your pup confined in a common area, but not isolated from the family.

Always place your pup's bed, food and water as far away from the litter pan as possible. Most dogs do not want to eliminate near their sleeping or eating-places.

Once your puppy is completely housetrained, you may (and should) gradually give him more freedom within your home.

- Dogs are den animals. A den is used in the wild to raise pups, sleep and eat. Mom will begin pushing pups outside of the den to eliminate as soon as they have use of their motor skills (around 4 weeks of age.) Given a choice, dogs have a natural desire to keep the area in which they sleep and eat clean. You can simulate this natural den when you use a crate.
- Why use a crate when you are litter training? It's simple. Crating, when incorporated with regularly scheduled visits for elimination to the litter pan, will help teach your puppy where he is supposed to eliminate and when.
- In the next section, you will learn how to use your puppy's crate to help you introduce him to the dog litter. The crate and litter pan work together to help define boundaries for your puppy, helping him understand what behavior is appropriate in what areas.
- Training your puppy to use the dog litter will involve the three tools described in the previous section - praise, a regular schedule and a crate - to set boundaries for what your pup can

do and when. In particular, crate training and litter training at the same time is strongly recommended.

- Crating or confining your puppy to a specific location within your home will give you the opportunity to know when he has to eliminate. This method simply takes the "guess" work out of when your pup will have to eliminate. When we refer to a confined area, we mean a small area within your home in which to place the pup's litter pan, bed, toys, and water dish. This area needs to be small while training to avoid confusion to your pup. If the area is too large, it does not simulate a den environment, as he will have too many choices too early in his training and his behavior will not be reliable.
- You may want to consider erecting fencing or gates for containment purposes during initial training. Fencing needs to be high enough so that your puppy cannot jump or climb over the sides. For your pet's safety, always use higher rather than lower fencing if in doubt. Fencing needs to be very stable so as not to scare your pup. Show dog enthusiasts raising litters of puppies often use a portable pen called an "exercise pen." Baby gates will usually work just fine for pets too.
- Crate schedules are used during the housetraining phase. Eventually, with your puppy's reliable behavior, you may choose to leave his crate open and give him the option of resting inside or not. A typical schedule might begin with always making a trip to the pan prior to being crated, then to the pan on the hour, every 2 - 4 hours thereafter (or as your pup's behavior dictates). Until your pup can stay in the crate that long reliably, please do not crate any longer than necessary.
- An appropriate sized crate will allow your puppy ample room to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably. Anything smaller would be cruel and anything larger will defeat the purpose of the crate, as he may soil in one end and lie in the other.
- Puppies can remain crated comfortably for the number of hours equal to their age in months plus one, up to eight hours. Therefore, a 2-month-old puppy should be able to stay in for three hours. But this does not imply that an eight-month-old pup can be crated for nine hours. By this age, he should be reliable with his housetraining, but if not, you will have to solicit help from a friend or neighbor while training. Please never crate an older puppy for more than eight hours. (If your puppy cannot control his bladder or bowel for more than one hour or so, consult your veterinarian immediately to rule out a medical condition.)

- Always make sure your pet has appropriate toys within his immediate confined environment or crate. Switch them every so often to prevent boredom. We also recommend you take your dog for daily walks outdoors for fresh air and give him an opportunity to socialize with other pets and people. Exercise should be a part of every dog's daily routine.

### **Step 3: establishing a routine**

Creating routines for your puppy is another step that will be key to success. By scheduling times for food, water and exercise, you'll be training your pup's digestive system to be more predictable. You can take the guesswork out of knowing when your pup will need to eliminate by knowing when your pup last ate or drank. Try to ensure that all members of your household follow the same routine to avoid confusion for your puppy. Consistency is important.

- Food Feed at the same time each day. Allow only 10-20 minutes for your pup to eat.
- Then take the food away.
- Water Make fresh water available with every feeding period, throughout the day and after exercise. Until your pup is completely trained, we recommend removing the water 2-3 hours before bedtime. Never place water in your puppy's crate unless it's during feeding time.
- Exercise - It is important to share regularly scheduled, quality time exercising your pup, regardless of housetraining. Until your pup is fully trained, have him eliminate before exercising or going out for daily walks. All exercise outside of the pup's crate or confined area must be strictly supervised, and should be conducted 2-3 hours before bedtime.

### **Step 4: using the pan**

- During the first two weeks of training, guide your pup to the litter pan after crating, eating, sleeping and/or rigorous play.
- Place your puppy in the pan and provide positive encouragement such as, "Go potty!" When he does eliminate, praise him and reward him with a treat. If he hops out before eliminating,

repeat the process. Allow him to investigate the pan and choose a spot to eliminate. Be patient—in due time, he'll recognize the pan as the proper place to eliminate.

- You may want to place a small amount of your pup's urine or solid waste in the pan prior to introducing him to it. This may help him understand what the pan is used for.
- Keep close watch on your puppy at all times. If you ever see him eliminating outside the pan, simply distract him by saying "Ahhh!" so he stops. Place him in the pan to finish.

### **Praise, don't punish**

- Praise is one of the best ways to get your dog to do what you want. Your dog constantly wants your approval, even when he does something you don't want him to do. Withholding praise when your dog is bad and lavishing praise when your dog is good is more effective than using punishment. If you use punishment when training him to use the litter, your dog may associate punishment with the litter pan, making it almost impossible to get him comfortable using it.
- If you catch your dog doing something you don't want him to do, turn it into an opportunity for praise. Make a loud, startling noise such as "Ahh!" to get your dog to stop what he's doing. Next, give your puppy a command and praise him when he complies. This applies to the litter pan, too. If your dog is eliminating outside the pan, startle him, then put him in the pan and praise him when he eliminates inside it.
- Be consistent with your praise and treats (when starting out) and your dog will get the right idea.

## **Transitioning your puppy from newspaper, pads or other elimination product**

- The same basic rules apply, but you'll want to place your current elimination substrate material (i.e. newspaper or pad) in the dog litter pan on top of the dog litter prior to introduction.
- Puppies generally have a very keen sense of smell and feel. Once your puppy is conditioned to the dog litter "smell", we can begin to gradually introduce the "feel" of the dog litter under foot (or paw).
- Expose the dog litter from beneath the newspaper or pad. For optimal acceptance we recommend exposing only part of the dog

litter at any one time. We recommend doing so over two day increments, unless your pet's behavior dictates that he may need additional time before moving forward. As previously recommended, be prepared to distract unwanted chewing behavior of the dog litter and redirect this behavior to an appropriate behavior if necessary.

## **Transitioning dogs trained to eliminate outdoors**

The same basic rules apply as with a new puppy, but an important technique to incorporate when teaching any "new" behavior, is the KIS technique—when translated means; "Keep It Simple." You will have more success and avoid confusing your dog if you minimize the changes within his immediate environment and introduce the training program gradually. If your dog already goes in a designated place in the yard every time, skip to step 3.

### **Step 1: setting boundaries**

- Choose a specific location outdoors (approximately 4' x 4' is just right) where you can take your dog to eliminate. If your dog is not acclimated to eliminating on a short leash, teach him prior to beginning the following schedule.
- Teaching a dog to eliminate in a specific location helps him to learn to "target" his behavior.
- Keeping him on a short leash simulates normal dog elimination behavior, because once he finds the right location to eliminate in, it's typically no more than 3' x 3' in size.

### **Step 2: recognizing the location**

- Repeat your verbal command (such as "Go potty!") several times as you allow the dog to circle in his 4' x 4' area.
- When he begins to sniff the ground or circle, praise him and when he eliminates, praise and offer him a treat. Always keep this area clean. Dogs have a keen sense of smell and need only to smell this area briefly in order to identify this as the appropriate place to eliminate.

### **Step 3: introducing the pan**

- Once your pup is reliably using the right area, put the litter pan in the designated area and place your current elimination material (sod or wood chips) in the dog litter pan. Don't confuse your pup by moving the pan around in front of him.
- Always be prepared by having the pup's pan in place before he arrives. If your dog is confused, place him in the pan and give your command. You may also want to place a small amount of your pup's urine or solid waste in the pan prior to introducing him to it.

#### **Step 4: introducing the litter**

- When your dog is reliably using the pan, place a small amount of litter over the preferred surface to allow your dog to get used to the litter gradually. Once your dog is reliably using the pan with a combination of old surface and litter, you can replace it with litter, covering at least 1" of the entire bottom, or to the fill line mark.
- Again, you may want to place a small amount of your pup's urine or solid waste in the pan, and be ready to put your dog in the pan and give your command.

#### **Step 5: moving inside**

- Your pup should be using the pan with the litter reliably before you start to move the pan towards its final destination inside. The key to a successful move at this stage of the training is gradual movement of the litter pan. Move the pan from one location to another only as quickly as your dog dictates within his pan reliability. For example, if your dog is doing very well, you might be able to move the pan towards the house a little bit every time you take him outdoors to eliminate. If you move the pan from one location to another too quickly, you may confuse your dog and his training may be compromised.
- At this stage of training, you could confuse him if you try to move him indoors too quickly. Make sure your dog is eliminating with 100% reliability in his litter pan before you try bringing the system inside your home.
- You may want to try placing the pan on your porch or right outside of the back door first. Allow your dog to continue to eliminate here as an opportunity to strengthen his behavior before the next step.
- Select an area for the pan just inside of the doorway you have been exiting. Once inside, success has been achieved. You may move the litter pan around indoors just as you did from the yard to the house.

Remember that gradual location changes are best suited in an effort to maintain the training you have achieved with your dog at this stage.

## **Transitioning your dog from newspaper, pads or other elimination product**

### **Setting up:**

- You will want to begin by placing your dog's current elimination substrate material (i.e. newspaper or pad) in the dog litter pan to allow your dog to get used to going in and out of the pan.
- When your dog is consistently using the pan, then place a thin layer of litter under the current substrate. This will allow your dog to get conditioned to the smell of the dog litter.
- Once your dog is conditioned to the dog litter "smell", you can begin exposing the litter from beneath the newspaper or pad.
- Every two days, expose a little more of the litter until he is completely transitioned.
- Some dogs need more time than others to get used to the litter. Let your dog dictate how fast or slow the transition takes.

## **Puppy School**

Puppy training is a valuable long-term investment. It serves many purposes: It teaches your puppy specific commands and also teaches him how to learn; it teaches you how to teach; it teaches your puppy to be comfortable with other people and other dogs. All in all, it's one of the best investments you can make in your puppy's future behavior.

To choose a good trainer or training facility, check with your veterinarian and friends for recommendations and then visit. Know the trainer or facility before you lay down any cash.

### **A simple checklist:**

- You're the pack leader, so start early. If your puppy needs extra work, consult a trainer. Time invested in training your pup will pay off in companionship for the rest of your dog's life.

- Whether choosing a private individual or a franchise, don't gauge quality by price. A competent, experienced trainer may be very reasonable in price.
- Trust your initial impression of the trainer. It probably is valid.
- Check your puppy's tail; it should be wagging. Is your puppy comfortable? Does he like the trainer?
- Check out the training course and methodology. What and how do they teach? Do they cover everything you want your puppy to learn?
- Check experience and credentials. Is this a summer job for someone or a lifetime passion?
- Is the trainer patient? Different puppies learn at different rates. Some are shy while others are bold. They may need different methods to succeed.
- Observe a class. Both people and dogs should be relaxed and having a good time - smiles and wagging tails all round.

## **Socialization**

Socialization is an ongoing process throughout your American Eskimo's life, but the most critical period is before six months of age. Quite literally, socialization means making your dog sociable.

Socializing your American Eskimo means providing quality time. Give him lots of attention and affection. Pet him and call him by his chosen name. Introduce him to your neighbors and "service people" such as the mail carrier and others who come to your home regularly. Show children how to pet him.

Socializing your American Eskimo to other dogs is important, but this does not mean letting him run free in the neighborhood. Give your dog the opportunity for safe, controlled interaction with dogs whose owners you know and be sure the dogs are immunized. For a puppy, this

includes introducing him in happy ways to all sorts of people, places and things. Here are a few things you can do:

- Go to training classes.
- Visit dog-loving friends.
- Take your puppy on errands with you in temperate weather. (As always, never leave your dog in the car in warm weather. It can become unbearably hot quickly.)
- Invite people over to your house.

Socialization isn't about forcing your American Eskimo into scary situations but rather about creating pleasant associations with new events and faces. Things to keep in mind:

- What a puppy learns early in life stays with him for life.
- Between one month and three months old, a puppy gets almost all of his adult sensory, motor and learning abilities.
- The more loving interaction you have with your pet, the better.
- Include a little work in your play times and a lot of play in your work times. Make learning fun!
- As soon as your veterinarian says it is safe, introduce him to the sights and sounds of his world. Make this fun by praising him and giving him a kibble when he explores his world.

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **OBEDIENCE TRAINING**



Obedience training is vital in order to produce a well behaved and obedient American Eskimo. Without imparting this basic education your American Eskimo will not adapt and adjust to living in human society.

Your role as the dog's owner is to ensure that your American Eskimo receives this training, either by you personally, or a professional trainer.

Do not neglect this vital training. It ensures that you and your dog will have a healthy and productive life together. Neglect this training and you can end up in big trouble.

### **Walking on a Leash**

Dogs need to be comfortable walking on a leash. From a practical standpoint, a leash means control and safety. But it also means quality time together for you and your dog.

#### **Why Leash Train?**

There are many reasons why you want your dog to be comfortable being on a leash with you on the other end.

- It keeps your dog from taking off during a walk.
- It allows you to control your dog when excited or agitated.
- It's a tool you can use in other training, be it potty training, learning to 'come' or other lessons.
- In many urban areas, leashes are required in public areas.
- It allows you to bring your dog with you, whenever you can.

## How to Leash Train

The first step is a collar. All dogs need to be comfortable wearing a collar, so put a non-tightening one on as soon as your puppy or dog comes home. Don't let your dog's displeasure dissuade you unless it's too tight or causing skin issues. If you leave it on, he'll get used to it. Be sure to remove all collars if you crate your puppy. Then:

- Attach the leash and let your dog drag it around the house under your supervision.
- Guide your dog to your designated potty area with the leash during potty training. If your puppy resists, use a toy or a piece of kibble or two to lure him along.
- Make sure to give him slack and praise him warmly when he heads in the right direction. That more than anything will signal that he made a good choice.
- Get your dog used to walking on your left side by simply guiding him there each and every time you go outside together. Praise and reward him any time he shows up in that position.
- Encourage your dog to focus on you when you go for walks by using plenty of encouragement. Give commands and communicate. Make it fun! Dogs generally love fun.

You'll also want to start teaching the 'heel' command when you start taking walks. In short, start with your dog on your left, then start walking. When your dog drifts away or tries to pull away, say, 'heel' and turn to the right. Your dog is now behind you and will run to catch up. You may need to reel your dog in while giving the command to reinforce its meaning. Read about Obedience Commands for more on heeling. This is a behavior many people struggle with. Finding a good local training class can help you learn how to handle your dog and teach him this basic but useful behavior.

Once your dog is housebroken & is getting used to the leash you can move into basic obedience commands. Basic obedience is vital to establishing a well mannered pet.

## **The ATTENTION Command**

Attention is the first order of training that your American Eskimo MUST learn first. If you can't first command your dog's attention then any type of training will be futile.

Choose a word that you will always use from this point forward as the attention command.

Here are some examples:

- Look
- Watch Me
- Attention
- Ready

Attention training consists of 2 phases. The first phase will be holding your American Eskimo's attention in the sit position with distractions. The second phase will be holding your dog's attention while moving.

## **The Release Command**

Choose a command that you will use to release your dog's attention. Choose a word now and stick with it from this point forward.

Here are some examples:

- Release
- All done
- That's All
- Free Dog

This is your command that will allow your dog to relax out of the Attention Command.

## **Attention with Distractions**

Now that you have chosen your command words for both Attention & Release, it is time to memorize the training phase.

**Step 1:**

Put your dog on his leash and collar and lead him to your left side in and place him in a sitting position. Fill your right pocket or hand with small bits of tasty treats. Hold your left hand at your waist.

Say your dog's name first and then say the attention command. When your dog looks up at your left hand in any way, say "YES," and then feed him a small treat from your right hand.

If he is still looking up at you, praise him and then release with the release command.

If he looks away then say his name again or wiggle the fingers of your left hand. When he looks at your left hand, say "Yes" and use the release command. Immediately feed him a treat and then move with the dog out of position.

Practice these steps every day as many times as possible. Be sure to keep each training session short. Do not try to make your dog hold his attention for more than a few seconds on each attempt.

As soon as your American Eskimo begins to touch your left hand when he hears the attention command, move on to the next step of this training phase.

**REMEMBER:** Each time the release command is given you should move out of position. This will speed up this phase of the training process.

**Step 2:**

Begin waiting longer and longer before you say "Yes" and give him a treat for looking where he is supposed to look.

If he looks away, gently tap the top of his head or wiggle the fingers of your left hand to draw his attention back to your left hand and waist.

Once your dog is able to hold his attention for over 30 seconds, it is time to move into adding distractions.

**Step 3: Adding distractions**

At first, during this step, go back to only a few seconds of attention while adding a small distraction such as someone walking by. Help your dog by encouraging him with your voice. Wiggle the lead a bit or

tap his head to get his attention back on your hand. Again, expect only a few seconds of attention when distractions begin and work your way up to longer attention periods.

**REMEMBER:** Use treats correctly. If they are used as a bribe, your dog will never do the exercise unless he sees a treat. Keep the treats in your right hand while commanding attention at your left hand.

When your dog is able to hold his attention with distractions for more than 45 seconds it is time to move on to Attention While Moving.

## Attention While Moving (Heeling)

You begin this exercise in the same way that you began the last routine. Have your dog get into the attention position at your left side. Then take 1 or 2 steps forward while commanding "HEEL". Immediately give the release command after the dog stays with you for 1 or 2 steps and then reward him with a treat.

Heel will be your command for your dog to remain at your side while you are in motion.

If your dog looks away, make a negative sound like "ahhh" and start over again. Do not reward a treat unless your dog remains looking up at you in the attention position while you are in motion.

**REMEMBER:** Use your left hand to keep your dog's attention. Wiggle your fingers

Steadily increase the number of steps you take while your dog holds his attention. When you can walk at least 12 steps, while holding your dog's attention it is time to add some light distractions. Just as you did with the stationary position, reduce the number of steps when you add distractions.

## The Sit and Stay Command

### Step 1:

Hold a tasty treat in your right hand. With your dog on lead at your left side, hold your left hand at his nose and slowly move your hand

backward and behind his head. His nose should follow and his rear will sit to the ground.

**Step 2:**

As your dog sits say "Yes" and feed him the treat from your right hand.

You can practice the sit command with your dog during the day. From this point forward have your dog sit before setting down his food. Take a couple of pieces of food and command "sit". When your dog sits, set the food down.

If your dog does not sit on the first command, do not repeat the command again. Instead, help him to understand. Using the collar, pull up gently on the leash and lightly touch your dog's rear at the base of the tail. Praise him when he sits, but do not give him a treat because you had to help him. The "yes" and treats should not be given unless the dog sits automatically or if he sits on the first command.

**REMEMBER:** If your dog is given a treat after being helped, he will not see the advantage of doing things on the first command on his own. Save the marker word "yes" and the treat for those times when he complies on his own and correctly.

## STAY

Once your dog is sitting quickly and correctly on the first command you can begin teaching the stay command. As with any exercise, begin gradually and work up to distance and length of time for this exercise.

**Step 1:**

Place your dog at your left side and do the sit command. Reward him for sitting. Swing your left hand down in front of his face with your fingers pointed straight down at the ground. Now give the command "stay".

**Step 2:**

Do not step away from your dog yet because it is too soon to expect distance because he does not yet understand the stay command. If he tries to get up or lay down, gently but firmly lift him by the collar back into the sit position without repeating the sit command. Repeat "stay" and resume standing next to him.

**Step 3:**

When about 30 seconds have passed, release your dog with the release command. Say "YES" and reward him with a treat and lavish praise.

**Step 4:**

Practice steps 1 – 3 three times in a row; this will give your dog short successful repetitions of the stay exercise. Once you have a solid sit-stay for up to one minute with him standing at your side, begin stepping away from him for brief moments.

**Step 5:**

As with all exercises, gradually increase the time you expect the dog to hold the position. Add distractions when the time frame is solid, but decrease the time when you add distractions. Always turn and face him when you leave him on stay.

## The Down Command

Down means to lie down. Have a treat ready, and your American Eskimo in a sitting position. Let your American Eskimo sniff the treat, but don't let him have it yet. Lower the treat to the ground, and as you do, your American Eskimo should be lowering as well. Eventually, he should be lying down. As your American Eskimo gets close to lying down, say the command "down" and repeat it until your American Eskimo is lying on the ground and enjoying his treat. As always, give your American Eskimo lots of praise for lying down.

Practice the down command frequently until you can move your hand down toward the floor and the dog will begin to lie down. This command could take days or weeks before it is understood. Be very patient with your dog during this time.

## Down-Stay

Once your dog is lying down on the first command and without any help, teach the stay exercise as discussed previously.

## **Stand**

This exercise is a little harder for the dog to grasp, but with frequent practice, it will result in a more manageable dog. The stand command is helpful when bathing or grooming or being examined by the vet.

Start your dog in the sit position on your left side as before. Turn slightly toward him, and place your right hand in front of his nose. You can use a treat to lure him but remember, don't feed him the lure. Slowly move your hand straight out and away from your dog's nose and say "Stand". As soon as he stand up say the "Yes" marker and feed him the treat. Release immediately with the release command and praise him lavishly.

Practice the stand command daily until your dog begins to stand on his own on the first command.

## **Stand-Stay**

Once your dog is willingly standing up add the stay command. Use the same techniques as discussed before.

## **The Come Command**

Invite a friend or family member to help you with this one. Plan to practice this command in a secure area, such as a fenced in yard. Have your helper stand about 10 feet away from you with your American Eskimo on a leash. In a controlled, firm voice say the command: "come". Show your American Eskimo the treat in your hand if you have to entice him. Allow your helper to let go of the leash if your American Eskimo starts to run toward you. When your American Eskimo comes to you, give him the treat and praise him with petting and joyful verbal praise.

## **The Off Command**

This command is used when you want your dog off of your furniture, friends, a fence, etc. Sit down in a chair or on your couch. Have your American Eskimo place his paws in your lap. Pet and praise your

American Eskimo, then give the command, "off". If your American Eskimo doesn't get off of you, stand up while repeating the command, "off".

## **The Don't Touch Command**

You don't want your American Eskimo to touch certain things in your house, and you certainly don't want to be constantly hiding your shoes and socks! This command will help with that. With your American Eskimo beside you, place a treat on the floor (make sure you have another in your pocket, or cupped in your other hand). Place your hand in front of the treat and say the command, "don't touch" in a slow and firm manner. Keep repeating the command. After a minute or so, take the treat off of the floor and praise your American Eskimo with the other treat you have, never the one you are practicing with. Practice this several times a day, and you will notice that you won't need to keep your hand so close to it. Eventually, you could leave a treat anywhere, and your American Eskimo won't touch it without your okay.

## **Tone of Your Voice**

### **A. Command Tone**

The tone of your voice when using a command should be firm and low.

### **B. Corrective Tone**

Your corrective tone should be stern, a little deeper in tone and guttural (hoarse, raspy).

### **C. Praise Tone**

With the praise tone your voice should sound soft, sweet and higher pitched.

## **Conclusion**

This concludes the section on basic obedience commands. A well mannered dog **MUST** be controlled and as a responsible American Eskimo owner you must impart this very basic training.

# CHAPTER 7

## Training to Correct Bad or Unwanted Behavior



### Chewing

Chewing is normal for American Eskimos, but it can cause problems when your shoes, books or furniture are the targets. Correcting problem chewing is often simply a matter of preventing unwanted chewing while encouraging your dog to chew appropriate dog toys. If chewing only happens when left alone, try confinement (see Crate Training), and speak to a qualified dog trainer or behaviorist as this may be a sign of Separation Anxiety or Boredom.

#### Why Dogs Chew

Chewing is usually a healthy, normal thing to do when it isn't destructive. Dogs chew for many reasons:

- To release pent-up energy.
- Stress.
- Teething, which generally occurs between three and six months of age.
- Because the simply finds chewing enjoyable.

Keep in mind that some behavior that looks like chewing or biting is actually exploratory 'mouthing.' Dogs learn about an object's feel and texture with their mouths in the way people learn those things by feeling with their hands.

#### Correcting Inappropriate Chewing

Buy appropriate chew toys. Then, when you see your dog chewing something inappropriate:

- Say "no" or "eh" in a low voice. (It's a sound similar to a mother's growl, which your puppy will take as a sign of disapproval)
- If your dog stops to look at you, praise and give your puppy a preferred chew toy. Do not use old shoes, socks or gloves, as that will actually train your dog to chew your things.
- Praise your dog whenever you see him chewing a dog toy. This teaches your dog that it is not chewing that is wrong – just chewing the wrong things.
- Make sure puppies have chew toys available at all times, especially when teething.
- When possible, put items your dog likes to chew away or out of reach. If you can't, keep your dog out of the area with gates or by closing doors.
- When you aren't home, confine your dog in a safe area or crate your dog.
- Increase his exercise and his training.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Do provide lots of good, solid dog toys for chewing. Do prevent problems by supervising your dog closely and exercising him often. Do stay calm. If you catch your dog chewing something other than a dog toy do as suggested above. Don't blame the dog for being a dog – give him toys to chew, reward him for chewing those, and prevent access to other items.

## **Boredom**

Although dogs are creatures of habit, they still crave exercise – both physical and mental. If you don't provide it for them, they can get bored and start to entertain themselves – often by doing things you don't like.

When American Eskimos are bored they may:

- Dig
- Chew
- Run away

- Bark or otherwise try to get your attention
- Harass the cat, annoy you, “lose” the ball under the couch repeatedly, lick/chew themselves, etc.

### **What to do about it**

If you suspect your dog may be suffering from boredom, whether or not problem behaviors are present, you may want to:

- Make a list of simple “tricks” to teach your dog, and try to teach a new trick every few weeks.
- Keep a well-stocked box of dog toys (out of view) to provide diversion when it is needed. Rotate toys every few days, keeping 3-4 out at all times.
- Introduce food-dispensing toys to your dogs.
- Make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise. Simply hanging around in the back yard may not be enough. Do things with your dog such as take long walks or play fetch.
- Interact with your dog and offer praise and a kibble of food for good behavior. See how many good behaviors you can reward in a day.
- When possible, take your dog along when visiting friends or running errands.

### **Remember...**

Your American Eskimo's lifestyle influences his behavior. Regular walks or play periods with your dog and praise for tricks will make your dog's life fun and stimulating. A happy dog is less likely to develop annoying behavior problems.

## **Separation Anxiety**

Separation anxiety is defined as your dog being greatly distressed whenever you leave, every time you leave. Scratching at the door, chewing things up, housetraining mistakes, barking hysterically and generally being extremely upset are a few of the signs. Most dogs want to be with their humans as much as possible. Dogs that haven't been taught how to stay alone calmly may exhibit unwanted behaviors. Gradually adjusting dogs to being alone is the best approach.

### **Preventing Separation Anxiety**

It's good for your dog or puppy to be comfortable when home alone. You can help him learn this if you take a little time and use these simple steps.

- Start by introducing your dog to his crate. (See Crate Training.)
- Crate him for short periods while you are present. Gradually increase the time crated. Reward quiet behavior with calm praise and perhaps a treat such as a piece of dog food (a healthier option than most treats).
- Start leaving your puppy alone – start with just a few minutes at a time, if possible.
- Gradually increase the time spent alone.
- Limit your attention when you are home so it isn't such a shock when you leave.
- Reward your dog with a piece of food and attention when he lies quietly away from you.
- Most dogs don't need to be crated forever, but don't rush freedom. Most dogs aren't ready to be given unsupervised freedom in your home until they are a year-and-a-half or older.
- For those of you who work, consider hiring a walker or neighbor to give your dog a midday break. Keeping your schedule similar on weekends as on workdays can help make things easier for your dog.
- Exercise - and plenty of it - helps dogs who must be alone long hours.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Do make leaving and arriving uneventful. If you make leaving a big production – lots of hugs and goodbyes or asking if he'll miss you – your dog will assume it's a big deal. When you return, don't go directly to his crate and make a fuss except if your dog is a young pup or has been left for many hours. In those cases, take him right out as he may really need to relieve himself and making him wait can lead to a wet crate. If you can, wait until your dog is calm and quiet, then casually go greet him and praise him for being calm and quiet. Always give your puppy an opportunity to eliminate prior to crating him and provide him with an appropriate chew toy.

### **Signs of Serious Separation Anxiety**

Most dogs, especially puppies, may whine or cry a little when left alone. True separation anxiety is defined as destructive or disruptive behavior, including tearing up the room, constant barking and whining, or housetraining mistakes every time you leave – often starting

immediately after you leave. For cases where the strategy above doesn't work, you may want to consult a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional.

## Whining

In the middle of the night, at the dinner table, at the door – whining is annoying. Learn what whining means and how to correct it.

### Why Dogs Whine

People often try to comfort whining dogs. But in reality, the dog is often demanding something – and when you give it, you've just taught him that whining works!

Whining can mean many things, but it almost always means the dog wants something:

- A dog whining when you are sitting down to eat is probably saying, 'Give me your food.'
- A dog whining at the back door or bedroom door is probably saying, 'I want to come in.'
- A dog whining in his kennel or crate at night is probably saying, 'I want out now!'
- A housetrained dog whining while inside may be saying, 'I need to go outside!'

### What To Do

What you want to do is establish when whining is OK (rarely) and when it is not okay (most of the time). When your dog understands that, he's less likely to whine. As always, the following tips are more effective the sooner you do them:

- If your dog is whining to go out and go to the bathroom, be sure to comply. Go out, take care of business, and come back in with no play.
- In all other cases of whining, be strong. Don't give in.
- When your dog whines, give him something productive to do like 'sit' or 'down' - have him do several commands in a row and then praise him calmly.

- Try to notice the sweet sounds of silence and praise your dog then. If he gets attention for being quiet, he should start weaning off the whining.
- Make your dog's crate a comfortable den so your dog will like time there. Make it cozy and include toys. Crate him for short periods, often, so he learns to accept it calmly.
- If your dog suddenly starts whining "out of the blue," take him to the veterinarian. He may be in pain.

### **What NOT To Do**

Don't give in! Every time your dog gets what he wants when he whines, you teach him that whining works. Like people, dogs do what works so he'll whine more and longer next time. Do it enough times and your dog will view whining as the best way to get what he wants. Also, avoid giving in after holding out for a long time. If your dog or new puppy whines when left alone for the night, and you let him whine for three hours and then give in, your dog will think that whining for three hours is the best way to get your attention (which is what your pup wanted in the first place.)

## **Outside Marking**

When your dog stops for a quick 'potty break' at every tree, bush and streetlight, what you're seeing is marking behavior. Depending on where you live and your dog, this may be behavior you want to stop.

### **Why Dogs Mark**

Dogs "mark" to establish territory. Male dogs lift their legs to mark, usually selecting upright 'targets.' Each dog has a unique smell that the other dogs' sensitive noses can identify. So these marks act as a personal calling card, telling other dogs he has spoken for this territory.

### **Why Correct Marking Behavior?**

There are two good reasons to put a stop to marking:

- Dogs who mark frequently often have an attitude problem. Getting control of the marking often helps you get control over other problems as well.
- If you live in an area with a lot of dogs, marking can lead to conflict. When dogs who have claimed the same area meet on the street, each dog can try to drive off the "intruder."

## **How to Correct Marking**

In the best of all worlds, don't let your dog start. But if you have, the sooner you retrain your dog, the easier it will be.

- First, neuter your male dog. Doing so early usually prevents problem leg lifting and, done at any age, will help to minimize this behavior.
- Encourage your dog to eliminate in one spot in your yard before you start your walk. Do this by walking back and forth in that area. When he urinates, praise him then go for a larger stroll. This rewards quick emptying with exploration.
- If your dog tries to mark during your walk, keep walking while saying, "Let's go, Heel!" in a happy tone of voice. If you keep moving and praise him for coming with you, you can prevent persistent lifting entirely.
- If your dog is lifting his leg in the house, please seek the assistance of a qualified dog trainer or behaviorist.

## **Jumping Up**

Jumping on people can be bothersome, embarrassing and, at times, even dangerous. Like many behaviors, jumping can be corrected – ideally the sooner the better.

### **Why Dogs Jump**

Dogs jump up on people because they're excited, they've been encouraged to do so or, in some rare cases, because they are being less than friendly.

### **How to Correct Jumping Behavior**

As with most behavior problems, preventing/redirecting the unwanted behavior while encouraging better behavior is an effective plan.

Practice "sit". Have your dog sit for everything he enjoys in life from food to petting, from opening a door to throwing a toy. Soon your dog will learn to associate sitting with everything good and this will give him something else to do other than jump.

Don't reward jumping. If you pet, hug or respond excitedly when he jumps, he'll think you like it. When your dog jumps, step forward toward your dog and say 'Off!' in a low tone. ('Off' is the preferred command since 'Down' is usually used for lie down.)

If he puts four on the floor, praise him calmly. Now direct him to 'sit' and calmly praise him again. A food reward would be good as well. If he does not respond, try luring him off you with a treat – preferably a piece of his food, – and into a sit. Practicing this can quickly give him an acceptable way to greet you.

### **For Your Guests**

Consistency is the key to training a dog. Stand next to your guest and practice your greeting routine with your dog. Practice with dog-loving friends who understand that training takes time. If this isn't possible with some guests, then prevent the issue entirely by confining your dog when your guests arrive. You can always bring him out later, on lead, when things are calmer.

## **Fearfulness**

The world can be a scary place to a dog, but it needn't be. Here are some common fears and things you can do – and things you shouldn't do.

### **What to Do**

Act the way you want your dog to act. So if you want him to be happy and calm, act happy and calm. No matter what the source of the fear, do NOT try to comfort your dog through snuggling, petting, or saying it's OK. It may seem like the most natural thing in the world, but your tone of voice and body language are actually telling your dog that there is something to fear. Instead, find fun distractions, like fetch or other games. Create positive experiences and reasons for your dog to feel good. Some pointers about common fears:

### **Fear of Storms**

The Cause: Most often, it's the strange sounds that accompany storms. Howling wind, lashing rain, booming thunder (made worse by the bright flashes of lightning), all these are much louder and scarier to dogs.

The Solution: A small, secure "den" like a crate can be comforting. Try turning on a radio or TV; the noise may take the shock out of the boom of thunder. Or you can try playing with your dog or try a training session – it'll distract your dog and give you plenty of chances to reward your dog, creating a positive experience. If this doesn't calm your dog, please speak to your veterinarian.

## **Fear of Dogs**

**The Cause:** Your dog may see other dogs as a threat.

**The Solution:** The best solution is experience. Bring your dog into contact with other friendly, dog-savvy dogs early and often; a training class is a great way to do this, since its neutral territory and the dogs are under control. Trips to the dog park should be done with caution, as often there are adolescent, excitable dogs there. Some dogs will thrive. Others will be overwhelmed and frightened. Watch your dog and see if he is having fun or is scared. Meeting plenty of friendly dogs should also help make your pet more comfortable. If your dog is barking, lunging or growling at other dogs, seek the guidance of a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional.

## **Fear of People**

**The Cause:** Your dog may see people as a threat, either because your dog has not had enough socialization with enough different people, had frightening experiences with some people or, possibly, has a genetic predisposition to shyness.

**The Solution:** Experience will help. Always allow your dog to approach the person, do not allow the person to reach for your frightened dog. Do not drag your dog up to anyone - ever. Instead, give your dog treats - preferably a kibble of dog food, - when new people are around. As he gets braver, let people toss your dog a piece of food so that meeting new people becomes a good experience. Never, ever, attempt to force a frightened dog to take a treat from or meet a new person. By going slowly, allowing your dog to set the pace and using plenty of food rewards, your dog should learn to enjoy the company of people. If you're not seeing progress, have any concerns, have an aggressive dog or see growling, lunging, or cowering/hiding, please seek the guidance of a qualified dog trainer or behavior professional.

## **Fear of Veterinarians**

**The Cause:** First, establish that the fear IS of the veterinarian, and not people in general. If you do see behaviors at the veterinarian's

office that you don't see otherwise, it could be sensory overload at the smell of so many other animals, or perhaps your dog has bad associations due to shots or other treatment.

**The Solution:** Try to make the experience good in general. Bring a favorite toy for entertainment and include a trip to the park or other positive experiences. Bring food kibbles and ask your veterinarian and the staff to give pieces to your dog before, during and after the visit is complete so your dog has a positive association. Remember: You set the tone. If you're nervous and worried, your dog will be, too. Making sure your dog is used to other animals (for example, by attending a dog training class) can help too.

## Digging

Digging can be annoying. In some cases it can be 'hardwired' into a dog's personality. Other times it's a learned behavior or it can also be a sign that your dog needs something. Watch when and where your dog digs —that will give you clues to why your dog is digging and how to manage, prevent, or control it.

### Why Dogs Dig

Dogs dig for many reasons:

- In summer, lying in a cool hole brings relief from the heat.
- Burying treasure, such as a bone.
- Investigating an interesting smell – in fact, terriers are 'hardwired' to dig up moles and other rodents
- Releasing pent-up energy or alleviating boredom.

### How to Deal With Digging Dogs

If you'd like to stop your dog from digging, there are two ways to approach it: Redirect the behavior to a more desirable place or try to stop it entirely. You may want to try a combination of these ideas:

- In warm weather, make sure your dog has a cool, shady spot to rest and plenty of water – better yet, bring your dog indoors.
- To discourage future digs, bury a little of your dog's waste just below the surface when you fill in the hole. If your dog digs in the same spot, he will find the waste. This often is enough to discourage digging.

- If you catch your dog in the act of inappropriate digging, a sharp 'Leave It!' followed by a command such as 'Come' and praise for compliance will help distract and refocus your dog.
- Make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise and time with you. Being alone in the backyard does not qualify as exercise. Walks, games of fetch, and romps with other dogs will tire your dog out.
- Do not leave your dog outside unattended for long periods - that invites digging. If he must be left outside for a time, be sure to provide plenty of toys.
- To redirect the behavior (something to consider for digging-prone dogs like terriers), you can build a sandbox for your dog. Bury toys just under the surface and reward your dog when he digs in the right area and finds his treasure.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Do give your dog plenty of exercise every day. Do keep him with you as much as possible. Do use commands to direct your dog to behaviors you want then reward him. Don't punish your dog when you find holes. Your dog won't associate the punishment with the crime.

## **Disgusting Dog Habits**

Dogs do a number of things that people find disgusting – but for the most part, these things are more annoying to humans than they are bad for dogs.

### **Disgusting Things Dogs Do**

- Dogs may eat feces – their own or another animal's – out of hunger, boredom, curiosity or, most appalling to us, they appear to just plain like it.
- Dogs lick their crotches during grooming and sniff each other's crotches during normal greeting.
- Dogs like rolling in smelly things – dead fish, garbage, anything they can find.

### **What You Can Do**

These habits, while upsetting to humans, aren't typically dangerous to dogs. Still, in the interest of having a well-mannered pet that is welcome in the house, you can try to control these behaviors or at least learn how to deal with them.

- Try to keep your dog healthy and entertained to alleviate hunger and boredom.
- Pick up waste that is left in the yard every time you take your dog outdoors.
- Coat feces with a bitter flavor to create a negative memory for your dog — your dog will be more likely to avoid it in the future. (Be sure to provide plenty of fresh, clean drinking water so your dog can get some quick relief.)
- Licking is part of a normal grooming routine, but excessive licking could indicate an infection or irritation. If you're not sure, ask your veterinarian.
- A well-trained dog who obeys your command to 'come' can be steered clear of tempting targets to roll in.
- If your dog does get smelly, simply bathe him and try to prevent him from rolling in the future by keeping him on a lead, removing the attractive item, and working hard on his 'leave it' and 'come' commands.

### **Remember**

Do pick up after your dog. Don't leave him off-leash in an area where there are temptations. Do work daily on his basic training so he'll respond reliably. Don't punish a dog for being a dog – he won't understand.

## **Begging**

Dogs beg for food, attention, or other things they want because someone has taught them begging works. We teach dogs to beg by giving them what they want when they do so. The best solution is never to start rewarding begging in the first place, but if it's too late for that, there are ways to correct this behavior.

### **Why dogs beg**

Dogs beg because it works. The dog has learned that whenever it whines, barks, or begs in any way, the human hands out food or attention. You are training your dog to beg every time you:

- Slip a piece of food under the table in response to begging.
- Get up at night to check on a whining dog.
- Do what the dog wants in response to its pleading eyes or insistent whining.

### **Correcting begging behavior**

Dogs seldom repeat behavior that doesn't pay off; so if begging stops paying off, it will stop -- eventually.

- Never feed your dog from the table. In addition to avoiding that perpetual beg, it also supports your position as the leader – for dogs, leaders control the food. If your dog is already begging, consider crating him elsewhere when you eat.
- Feed your puppy away from where you eat so there is no confusion.
- When your dog whines for any reason other than to go outside, just ignore him. If you cannot ignore him, give him other commands like 'come,' 'sit' or 'down' and praise and reward him for those. This will give him something positive to do and reminds him you're the leader in a non-confrontational way.

#### **Do's and don'ts**

The most important thing is consistency. If you surrender to your frustration after your dog has spent half an hour begging, you've simply taught him to beg for at least half an hour. Instead, train your dog to do what you want. Reward your dog when quiet and well behaved and eventually your dog will be quieter and better behaved.

## **Urination**

### **Recognizing Types of Urination**

Nobody likes finding a wet spot but not all wet spots are under your dog's control. Here are a few causes of accidents that every dog lover should know about:

- Dog urinates in the house every time you leave him alone
- This may be a separation issue. If it happens every time and if it happens whether you leave for five minutes or five hours, then speak to a dog trainer or behavior professional. Do not scold your dog for this; it will only make the problem worse.

**Older dog (over ten years old, usually) urinates in the house after years of being housetrained**

This may be a sign of aging or a Canine Cognitive Disorder. Either way, you should go to the veterinarian for a discussion and possibly medication. This is not your old dog's fault – walk him more, love him more, but don't scold.

**Housetrained dog urinates in the house after surgery or when on medication**

This is usually a result of the stress or medications. Be more attentive to when your dog needs to go outside, and perhaps keep him in his crate or confined space a bit more with regular trips to relieve himself. In a few days he typically should be back to normal. If he isn't or if you are concerned, speak to your veterinarian.

**Female dog urinates small amounts frequently, perhaps even in sleep**

If you notice any uncontrollable dribbling of urine, whether in a sleeping area or when awake, you should contact your veterinarian for an exam. This may indicate a problem with lowered estrogen levels, as will sometimes occur in spayed females. Estrogen is important to help keep the muscles in the urinary tract firm and toned, and when these muscles become weak due to a lack of estrogen, the urine may dribble out.

Urine dribbling or involuntary urination (accidents in the house) may also be caused by a urinary tract infection, and blood in the urine may be evident. In either case, your veterinarian will want to get a urine specimen and may prescribe medication to help the situation.

**Male dog urinates in house by lifting his leg, even just after a walk**

This is leg-lifting or marking and has nothing to do with housetraining. This is generally an attitude problem more than anything else. The first step is to neuter your male dog, then speak to a dog trainer or behavior professional about getting this problem under control.

**Dog urinates when you bend over to pet him or when he is nervous**

This may be submissive urination. Young puppies do this with adult dogs as a polite or appeasing gesture and some continue to do this with humans. Scolding will only make the puddles bigger. Instead, try

ignoring your dog when excited or anxious. You might try tossing a kibble off to the side to give him something else to think about.

If you suspect submissive urination, take the stress out of coming home. Don't acknowledge your dog until you get in and put your stuff down. Then walk to a tiled area – just in case – kneel and speak gently to your dog. Stroke the chest, rather than reaching over the head. With guests, wait to introduce your dog until they're in and settled and things are quiet and calm. If this continues, get some professional advice from a dog trainer or behavior professional.

## **Possessiveness**

Many American Eskimos will happily let you take things out of their mouths, others need a little coaching. Owners need some formal education in this area. Knowing how to teach this important canine "skill" can mean the difference between a happy exchange and an unexpected battle.

First off, all toys are yours. You allow your dog to play with your toys when you choose. This may be a familiar concept to your dog as his mother had the same rules. He could play with things but if she wanted them, he stepped back and let her have them. Just keep this pattern going, and things should go smoothly.

Create a play training session. Any time you train, use a non-tightening collar and leash. Give your puppy an uninteresting toy. Don't worry if he picks it up at this point. Walk up and take the toy while you give your dog a piece of kibble. Praise him for being such a good puppy and return the toy. Step away, and then repeat. If the toy isn't that interesting and if you really heap on the praise, soon your dog will be hoping you come and take his toy away.

Once your pup is relaxed and happy when you take the toy, use a slightly more interesting toy. Repeat until it is easy for both of you.

If at any time he doesn't give up the toy, forget the toy, pick up the lead and give him a few commands like come, heel, sit and down. At some point, he'll drop the toy. When he does, praise him warmly as you move him away from it with the lead.

Some dogs have a harder time with this than others. If you ever feel uncomfortable, if your dog is growling at you or if things are getting

worse instead of better, please contact a dog trainer or behavior professional for help.

## **Prevent fence running**

Having a dog racing back and forth behind a fence barking can be scary to people walking by and is a bad habit to allow your dog to develop. If this is happening at your house, stop it. You may want to keep your dog in a different area or go out with your dog and supervise more closely. Call your dog inside if he starts racing and offer praise and a reward when he obeys.

## **Manage barking**

Few things can wear on people's nerves like a barking dog. If your dog is barking outside, bring him inside. If he barks inside and you can't control that, get some professional training advice. Most barking dogs can become quieter with training and changes in management.

## **Keep your dog under control**

A fenced yard is the best way to keep your dog from soiling or digging in a neighbor's yard. If your yard is not fenced, exercise your dog on lead. You might also consider an over-head trolley type tie-out. Use any tie-out judiciously. Dogs that spend too much time on a tie-out can develop unwanted and unwelcome behaviors. Allowing your dog to run loose is dangerous for the dog and annoying for the neighborhood.

# CHAPTER 8

## FUN TRICKS & ADVANCED TRAINING



### Advanced Training - Tricks

Ready to go beyond 'sit' and 'stay?' In this chapter you'll find plenty of activities that you and your American Eskimo will enjoy for years to come.

#### **Before You Start**

Many of these tricks are suitable for American Eskimos. But before you start, make sure your dog is up to the task. All dogs need to be fully mature (at least 18 months old in most cases) and in good physical condition before starting any physically demanding activity. Older or injured American Eskimos should never be subjected to exercise for which they aren't prepared. Before you start rigorous training or any intense exercise program, please consult a veterinarian.

### Teaching Hand Signals

Hand signals are fun to teach and easy for most dogs to understand. All you need to get started are a few pieces of food and a hungry dog.

The first thing to do is get your dog to associate a hand gesture with one of your command words; see below for tips on how you can link a

specific motion to a specific command. From there, getting your dog to react to the hand signal alone is a matter of repetition.

While still using the food reward, gradually eliminate the verbal command. For a while you might use the verbal command and hand gesture together half the time and the hand gesture alone half the time.

Once your dog reliably reacts to the silent hand gesture, when you have the food, gradually remove the piece of food from the equation. Soon your dog will sit, lie down or come with just a motion of your hand.

### **Sit**

Start with your dog standing in front of you. Hold a piece of kibble in your fingers and, starting with your hand at your side, bring it up slowly, folding your arm as if you were going to toss something over the same shoulder. Do this slowly, bringing the kibble past your dog's nose. Say "Sit" at the same time. You're leading his nose upward as you say sit. When he does, praise and give him the kibble.

### **Down**

Start with your dog sitting in front of you. Hold a piece of kibble in your fingers and, with your hand raised above your head, bring it down, keeping your arm straight until it is hanging at your side. Do this slowly, bringing the kibble past your dog's nose as you signal. Say "Down" at the same time. You're leading his nose down as you say down. When he downs, praise and give him the kibble.

### **Come**

Start with your dog in front of you. Hold a piece of kibble in your fingers. Start with your arm held straight out to your side parallel with the ground. Now sweep your arm forward so your hand touches your opposite shoulder. Do this slowly at first, bringing the kibble past your dog's nose as you signal. Say "Come" and back up a few steps at the same time. When he does, praise and give him the kibble.

## **What Treats to Use**

Nowadays, many people use treats in training. Using food as a reward can be a powerful tool, but it can also cause problems. If the treats are

too rich, your dog can develop an upset stomach. Feed too many, and you could be on your way to an overweight dog.

A safe way to use food as treats is to measure your dog's daily allowance of kibble in the morning and dip into that for training treats. This way you can give your dog a food reward for a job well done while not worrying about causing any problems.

When training, you want to work away from giving a food reward every time. Sometimes you will want your dog to sit but you won't have any food. So start gradually replacing the treat with praise. Once your dog has learned a command, give the treat every other time, then every third time.

Make sure your praise is lavish every time, with or without a treat. Pretty soon, your puppy will work for praise - and the occasional snack.

## Fetch

Playing fetch games provides some good exercise for your dog. It also provides a good way to get those toys back so you don't end up getting all the exercise.

- In the beginning, roll the toy away from your dog and let him get it.
- When he picks it up, say, "Fetch!" so he begins to associate the command with the action. Then praise him with an excited voice.
- As he gets older, throw the toy a little further.
- When he brings it back, give lots of praise and let your dog play with the toy for a few minutes so he gains some benefit from his effort of retrieving it.
- If he doesn't bring it back, use a long lead attached to his collar. Gently reel your dog in with the toy and praise him for coming back.
- Pet him, but avoid his head so he doesn't think you're going to immediately take the toy from him.

Care should be taken playing this game vigorously with growing dogs. Avoid playing on slippery surfaces and ask your veterinarian how much fetch is appropriate for your age and breed of dog.

Some dogs enjoy the chase of the toy and retrieving it and want you to throw it again immediately. Others want the toy with less chasing and retrieving.

Once he's had a minute or so to play with the toy, your dog may drop it on his own. If he does, say, "Drop," to reinforce the behavior. If he doesn't drop it on his own, get a light grip on the toy and give the command to drop. Praise him when he lets go of it and throw it again.

## **FUN TRICKS**

### **Speak**

Practice this when your American Eskimo tends to bark, such as when someone knocks at your door. Have someone stand outside and knock, but before they knock, say "speak". After some practice, your American Eskimo will be able to speak on command.

### **Beg**

Have your American Eskimo in a sitting position, and hold a treat in front of him. Raise the treat so that your American Eskimo is now standing on his hind legs. During this, repeat the word "beg" and your dog will soon understand the command.

### **Paw**

Put your hand out in front of your American Eskimo, and lift his paw. While doing so say "paw". After a while, your dog will give you his paw on command and you can shake hands!

### **Quiet**

Catch your American Eskimo barking. Get in front of him and say quiet, even if your American Eskimo is quiet for only a second, praise him.

# Fun Commands

## **Say Yes**

Hold a treat in front of your American Eskimo's nose while saying "say yes" and moving the treat up and down.

## **Hide Your Eyes**

Gently blow in the direction of your American Eskimo's ear as he lies on the floor. Repeat the word "hide". Hopefully, your dog will cover one or both of his eyes with practice. You can also simply lift his paws and put them over his eyes while saying "hide".

## **Book on Head**

Find a small book for your little American Eskimo, and balance the book on his head. Repeat the command "stay" while you are holding the book, wait a few seconds and then take the book away and praise!

## **Treat on Nose**

Place a treat on your American Eskimo's nose while saying "stay" and holding his muzzle. Let go and then give the command "okay". Your American Eskimo will naturally try to catch it.

## **Sneeze**

Put your hands around your American Eskimo's muzzle and blow into his nostrils. Say "sneeze", and repeat throughout practice. If he makes any kind of snuffle or actually sneezes, praise and reward him.

## **Yawn**

When you see your American Eskimo yawn, say "yawn" and praise him.

## **Bow**

Your American Eskimo should be in a standing position. Kneel in front of him and put a treat in between his paws. Your American Eskimo should look down. Then push the treat back towards his hind legs a little more while saying "bow". Praise him with the treat, and soon he'll be bowing on command!

### **Limp**

While your American Eskimo is on a leash, wrap some of it around one of his front legs then give the "come" command. Your American Eskimo should limp over to you on three legs, and then praise him. Make sure you use the word "limp" while practicing!

### **Play Dead**

Give the command "down" so your American Eskimo is in the lying position. Then push him over and rub his belly while saying "play dead".

### **Kiss**

When your American Eskimo is happily licking your face, repeat the word "kiss". Soon, he will understand to lick you when you say kiss!

### **Catch**

Practice by tossing treats in the air. Your American Eskimo will naturally try to catch it after a while, and soon he'll be catching a ball or other items as well.

### **Focus**

Have your American Eskimo come sit in front of you while you kneel down to get face-to-face with him. Hide your hands behind you with a treat and repeat the word "focus" while just looking at each other. Reward your American Eskimo with a treat, after a few seconds. Each time you practice, you should be able to get your American Eskimo to focus for an increasing amount of time.

### **Wave**

After your American Eskimo knows how to shake hands, you can teach him how to wave. Tell your American Eskimo "paw", but don't reach out for it, instead raise your hand higher and don't let your

American Eskimo's paw touch your hand. Repeat the word "wave", and praise him afterwards. He will be confused at first, but will soon understand the wave!

## **Training You Could Use to Your Advantage**

### **Fetching Items (newspapers, slippers, etc.)**

First, you must teach your American Eskimo to fetch something like a ball. Throw the ball, and then give the command "come". You can teach your dog to fetch any item, really. Use the same teaching method for fetching the newspaper or slippers, and soon you'll be sitting back waiting for your American Eskimo to bring you these items.

### **Lights Off**

Put a treat in front of a light switch, and wait for your American Eskimo to jump to reach the treat, making sure he flips the switch in the process. Reward with the treat and praise. Make sure you say "light off" during practice.

### **Prayers**

Use a low table and place a treat in between your American Eskimo's paws on the table. Repeat the words "say prayers" while your dog has his head between his paws. Let your American Eskimo get down while saying "amen", then reward with the treat.

# CHAPTER 9

## EXERCISE & PLAY



American Eskimos typically need 30-45 minutes of exercise a day whether it is a brisk walk, a jog, or chasing a ball. Always have your dog's health evaluated by his veterinarian before you begin an exercise program.

Always check with your veterinarian before starting a new and demanding activity with your dog. Once you get the go ahead - have fun!

### **Some ways to make exercise and play a part of your dog's life:**

- Check with breeders and dog clubs for direction. Ask when the next obedience or agility classes will start and enter your dog just for the fun of it.
- Even if he is already trained, attending a refresher class will give him an opportunity to interact with other dogs and focus some of his energy into an appropriate behavior.
- In the winter, wrap up warm and go for a walk. Even a short walk is preferable to no walk. Find a place with a windbreak and dress appropriately.
- Treadmills are trendy for people and can be fun for dogs. You can teach your dog how to walk on the treadmill. Don't ever leave your dog unattended, don't allow the leash to dangle where it could tangle and, like you, build up his endurance slowly.

- Have your veterinarian instruct you how to detect possible warning signs, which may indicate your dog has exercised too much.

### **Do:**

- Consider your dog's needs and present physical condition. Leisurely walks may be best for an older dog while a young adult dog will have ample energy for a vigorous exercise program. Puppies should not stress their growing bones, joints or muscles through excessive jumping or strenuous exercise. Be sensible about what you ask your dog to do. Hard games of fetch or catching a flying disc burn off a lot of steam, but they also stress a dog's joints to the maximum.
- Go slow! If you have not exercised your dog regularly and decide to launch a regular exercise program, begin with short periods of activity at slow speeds and gradually increase the time, speed and distance.
- Begin walking or running your dog on soft surfaces such as dirt, sand or grass until his pads toughen. Keep your dog's nails trimmed so they won't tear as he runs.
- Keep your dog on a leash; it gives you control when walking or running.
- If you exercise at night, place a reflective collar on your dog, use a bright colored leash and wear white or light-colored clothing so the two of you can be seen.
- Check your dog's feet for the presence of burrs, grass, thorns, rocks or ice and snow, all of which should be removed immediately.
- Check carefully for ticks after exercising outdoors. Read more about ticks.
- Obey local laws about cleaning up after your dog and using a leash. Your police department or animal control department can tell you more about laws in your area.

### **Don't:**

- Exercise your dog immediately before or after he has eaten; a full stomach may cause digestive upsets. Provide only small amounts of water before and directly after exercise.
- Go out in the noonday sun. Running in the heat is dangerous for dogs, Just because a dog is willing to jog with you in 90-degree heat doesn't mean it is safe for him to do so.

- Raise a couch potato. Dogs can live longer, healthier lives if kept lean and fit. If you love your dog, you'll exercise him.

## **Taking Your Dog Running**

Dogs can make terrific running partners as long as you take their physical condition and abilities into account. But keep in mind that your dog will need time to work up to your intensity.

Here are some factors to keep in mind when deciding if your dog can or should run with you. Make sure you check with your veterinarian before heading out, and follow your veterinarian's recommendation.

- Age — If you have a puppy, wait at least until he has completed his first year's shot schedule so he's protected from the environment and other dogs.
- Size — Puppies are growing. They need intervals of training and rest to build stamina and give muscles and joints time to strengthen and rebuild. Check with your veterinarian for specific needs and timeframes.
- Maturity — You'll probably want to make sure your dog is focused enough to stick with you when you run. Puppies play in bursts and everything is a game and interesting. They'll want to sniff and explore rather than get around your intended circuit.
- Training — Your dog needs to understand walking on a lead before he can run. Investing the time in training your dog to heel would be a benefit as dogs should be maintained on a leash at all times. Proper training will make the experience more enjoyable for you and your pet.
- Breed — Although individuals within a breed may vary, some breeds enjoy a good run more than others. Dogs with short muzzles and/or short legs often don't make the best running partners.

If your dog is ready to run and has been cleared by your veterinarian, start out slow. Start with a walk and gradually increase the distance. Then intersperse periods of walking and running over time. Add speed and/or distance gradually, and if your dog starts lagging, slow down.

Watch your dog for warning signs of injury—frequent rest stops, limping, heavy continuous panting following exercise, bowing legs,

yelping when you pick him up or move him. If you see any of these signs, take your pet to your veterinarian for an examination to evaluate the extent of the problem.

### **Other Tips:**

- Never exercise your dog right before or just after he has eaten a meal
- Offer sips of water as an aid for cooling him down rather than free access to water directly after exercise.
- Keep in mind that darker colored dogs will be affected by the heat and humidity faster than you will.
- Dogs that have short muzzles will often tire quicker when heat and humidity are high.
- Make running fun. Talk to your dog and offer praise, and don't run him to exhaustion. You want this to be an activity you can both enjoy.

## **Swimming**

American Eskimos either love or hate the water. Those who love it will enjoy swimming, playing in the shallows, or even splashing around in a plastic pool. Discovering that love may take a little coaxing combined with a gradual introduction to water.

### **Teaching Your American Eskimo to Swim**

Some dogs don't take much training – or any at all. You may only need to show your dog a body of water and in he'll go. If not, though, try going in phases. And remember, rewards and praise work wonders.

- During warm months, provide a small plastic pool with only enough water in it to go up to the last paw pad on your dog's front leg.
- Encourage your dog by stepping into the pool yourself.
- Take a toy into the pool and make a game of it. Cheer him on for braving this new experience.
- As your dog gets more comfortable, add more water an inch or so at a time.
- When you first visit a pond or lake, make sure the water is clean and watch for broken glass and torn metal.
- Only use a non-tightening collar in the water and do not allow your dog to drag his lead. The lead could get tangled on something underwater.

- Wade into the water and play in the shallows with your dog. Be enthusiastic! Bring a toy. Slowly, work your way out until the water is just deeper than your dog can reach and encourage him to come to you. Praise when he reaches you, but watch for scratching claws – he may try to climb on you. If he’s not quite brave enough yet, keep playing in the shallows – give him time. Do not drag him in deeper.
- Continue this, slowly increasing depth. Be ready to gently guide your dog around you, as some dogs will try to climb on you at first. Many dogs panic a bit during their first swim and splash a great deal. Supporting your dog under his belly gently can help them gain confidence.
- If the water is deep or you go out on a boat, put a life vest on your dog.
- If you have a pool and invite your puppy in for a swim, watch his skin for too much chlorine exposure. Rinse his coat thoroughly to prevent dry skin. Never allow your dog around any pool unsupervised until you are sure he knows how to get out on his own.

### **Things to Consider Before Swimming**

Make sure the kind of swimming you want to do is appropriate for your dog. Some American Eskimos like the water more than others, and some are better swimmers.

If you’re just looking to play in the water or introducing a puppy to water for the first time, try following these instructions. But if your dog is clearly terrified or unhappy even after trying to acclimate, you may want to save the water for bath time only.

## **TRAVEL**

If you are planning to travel with your dog, you should start by asking yourself if it makes sense to bring your canine companion. Many dogs love to travel, and many more can tolerate it, but flying your dog across the country just to have him stay in his crate once you get there isn’t fair to either of you.

### **Before You Travel**

If you decide it does make sense to bring your dog along, there are preliminary preparations to make.

- Contact your destination and make sure your dog is welcome where you are staying.
- Go to your veterinarian and make sure all your dog's vaccinations are up to date.
- Ask your veterinarian to make sure your dog is in good enough health to travel.
- See if there are any particular health concerns (i.e. insects, cold, heat) at your destination. Take necessary precautions.

## **Packing For Your Trip**

- Bring health and rabies certificates, which are needed when crossing some borders.
- Bring a recent color photo of your dog to help identify him if lost.
- Pack bowls, leash, toys, crate, medicines and grooming equipment.
- You may want to bring food if traveling by car or if you aren't sure where to get food at your destination. Sudden diet changes can lead to digestive upsets and spoil the trip for you and your pet.
- Make sure your dog is wearing ID tags, and preferably carrying contact info for you at your destination.

## **Traveling By Car**

- It's best to have a crate or car carrier in the back. Don't put it in direct sunlight.
- If your dog is out of the crate, make sure he's buckled up. Special harnesses that connect to the seat belt are available. Don't use a leash – in a sudden stop, this could cause serious injury.
- Don't put your dog in the back of a truck.
- Do not feed your pet for at least three hours before leaving on a trip.
- During stops, provide fresh drinking water for your dog. You may also reward him with a dog snack for being a good traveler.
- Feed your pet shortly after you arrive at your destination or when you have stopped for the day.
- Always put your dog on a leash before letting him out of the car.

- Never leave your pet in a closed car on a hot day. The heat and insufficient air circulation can quickly lead to heat stress and even death.

## **Traveling By Air**

- Try to avoid peak travel periods when delays and stopovers are longer, especially in very hot or very cold weather.
- Plan a trip with as few stops and transfers as possible.
- Make hotel, resort and airline reservations for your pet well in advance.
- Some airlines allow cats and small dogs to travel (generally for an additional charge) with their owner if the carrier fits under the passenger seat. Otherwise, rent or purchase a carrier or crate which meets airline regulations and affix a LIVE ANIMAL sticker. Mark it with your name and address and the name of a person who can be contacted about your pet at your destination if necessary.
- Put a cushion or blanket on the crate floor. Attach a water bowl to the crate door. The bowl should be deep, but not too full of water to avoid spilling.
- On the day of the flight, take your dog for a long walk before leaving for the airport.
- At the end of the trip, pick up your pet promptly.
- Be prepared for your dog to spend time in quarantine at foreign destinations. Ask your travel agent or the consul of the country you plan to visit about quarantines.
- At Your Destination
- At your vacation site, observe all regulations regarding pets. Confine your pet in a carrier or restricted space when leaving it alone. Your consideration will help keep pets welcome as guests.

# CHAPTER 10

## VITAL NUTRITION

### Nutrition for Puppies

The nutritional needs of puppies are greater than at any time in a dog's life other than reproduction. Understanding what your puppy needs will help you make the right dietary choices.

#### What Happens

The puppy stage sets the foundation for a dog's whole life. The length of this period can vary – for large breed dogs (dogs that should weigh 50 lbs or more full grown), the rule of thumb is two years. For all other dogs, one year is the rule.

Either way, a lot of physical development happens in a very short time, including:

- Bones and joints growing to full size
- Muscles developing and growing
- Internal organs growing (this continues even after your dog appears to be full size)
- Immune system developing and learning to protect
- Cognitive development and brain growth

#### Puppy's Nutritional Needs

Supporting that level of development – similar to what a human goes through from birth to 14 years of age – in just one or two years takes the right level of nutrition. This includes:

- Protein – A key building block of muscle, skin, coat, organs and other tissues. During this period of growth, a puppy needs abundant protein
- Calcium and Phosphorus – Necessary ingredients for healthy bones and teeth. They must be present in the correct ratios to grow bones and teeth correctly

- Omega Fatty Acids, including Linoleic acid – Provides complete and balanced nutrition, promotes a healthy immune system and helps keep your puppy's skin and coat healthy

These are not the only needs of a puppy, of course. What your puppy eats will need to supply all of these and more. And how the ingredients are mixed is important as well.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Be sure to follow the feeding guidelines. One of the worst things you can do is allow your puppy to become overweight – it has serious health implications. Don't feed your puppy from the table. People food often adds calories and unneeded fat to a dog's diet, and it can make your puppy into a finicky eater. When you change foods, gradually mix the new food in with the old over two weeks. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you'll make the transition easier on your puppy. Feed at the same times every day; 3 times a day for young puppies, 2 times per day for older puppies, and 1 time per day for adults (this amount can be broken into 2 or more feedings per day.)

## **Nutrition for Adult Dogs**

When a dog reaches full maturity, it enters the maintenance period. The objective of feeding at this time is to maintain a healthy body condition while supplying needed nutrients and energy.

### **Feeding Basics**

Normal healthy dogs that are not pregnant, nursing, or hardworking have relatively low nutritional requirements for maintaining an appropriate body condition. Unlike puppies, that are developing into their adult bodies, adult dogs need to keep the bodies they have healthy and strong.

If your dog doesn't have these conditions, you want to feed a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food in amounts that will keep your dog in ideal body condition. A good body condition is one in which the animal is well proportioned, with an observable waist behind the ribcage, and ribs that can be felt with a slight fat covering over them.

## Tips for Proper Feeding

- Choose a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food.
- Providing a proper diet for an adult dog can be straightforward and simple without the need for supplements of any kind.
- If supplemental meat or table scraps are fed, they should account for no more than 10% of the total diet.
- For dogs with lower caloric needs and/or for dogs that are less active, attention should be paid to the potential for excessive weight gain.
- Often a dog's weight can be reduced simply by eliminating table scraps and treats from the diet and by avoiding high-energy dog foods.
- Feeding recommendations for adult dogs can vary, depending upon the breed, activity, metabolism and owner's preference.
- Whether or not an animal is fed once or twice each day, it should be fed at the same time, and fresh drinking water should always be made available.
- A dog's appetite may vary from day to day and should not be a concern unless the loss of appetite persists or the dog shows signs of illness or weight loss. In these situations, the dog should be examined by a veterinarian.

## Switching Foods

Dogs do not need variety in their diet. In fact, it is best to switch foods as little as possible to avoid creating a finicky eater. But when you do need to change foods, gradually mix the new food in with the old over 7 - 10 days. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you'll make the transition easier on your dog.

## About Fats

Fats are concentrated forms of energy. Compared to protein and carbohydrates, fats contain approximately two and a half times the amount of energy per pound, so adding a little bit of fat adds a lot of

calories. It is also the delivery vehicle for omega fatty acids important to healthy skin and coat.

It's also worth noting that fats taste good. Dog food manufacturers know that it's important for dogs to like their food, so they use fats not only for the energy and fatty acids they deliver, but also to improve palatability. Nutrients in dog food don't do a dog any good unless they are eaten!

Fat also supplies the essential fatty acids required by dogs for maintaining healthy skin and hair-coat and serves as a carrier for fat soluble vitamins. Linoleic acid – one of the fatty acids dogs can get from vegetable oils or animal fat - is considered essential because it cannot be made in the body and is required to be supplied by the diet.

Fat digestion is more complex than that of protein or carbohydrates. Still, healthy dogs and cats can digest fats with great efficiency, approximately 90-95%.

Although fatty acid deficiencies are rare, animals fed diets too low in fat may eventually develop deficiency symptoms including dry, coarse hair and flaky, dry and thickened skin.

In animals fed diets containing more fat than is needed, extra fat is generally stored in the body. If enough fat is accumulated over time, animals will become obese. Animals carrying excessive amounts of weight may be at greater risk for complications with surgery, as well as several disease conditions including some orthopedic diseases and diabetes mellitus.

So while fat is not a bad thing for your dog to eat, you should watch your dog's fat intake. Fortunately, most reputable commercial dog foods are formulated to deliver an appropriate amount of fat for a dog based on its age and lifestyle.

## **About Carbohydrates**

Carbohydrates are sugars, starches and dietary fiber. The primary function of most carbohydrates is to provide energy, while fiber has a number of other functions.

Simple sugars are the smallest sugar molecules and are easily digested and absorbed. By contrast, starches (or 'complex

carbohydrates') are combinations of simple sugars formed into long chains that have to be broken down by additional digestion before they can be used. Dietary fibers are carbohydrates that are not completely digestible.

Basically, the carbohydrates in dog food are supplied by cereal grains which are broken down into simple sugars. While there aren't specific minimum requirements for carbohydrates for dogs, they are useful as a ready source of energy.

When animals consume diets containing more carbohydrates than are needed, the excess energy is stored in the form of glycogen in the liver and muscles and is converted to fat. During periods of fasting, stress, or exercise, glycogen is broken down to glucose and delivered to the bloodstream to provide needed energy.

Carbohydrates may make up 40 to 55% of dry dog food. Most of the carbohydrates in pet foods come from cereal grains, such as corn, wheat, rice and barley.

One carbohydrate-related issue to watch for is diabetes mellitus, a disease of carbohydrate metabolism resulting from too little insulin secretion from the pancreas. Symptoms may include increased thirst, increased appetite, weakness, weight loss and increased urination. Low levels of insulin prevent sugar in the blood from entering muscle and fat cells where it would be used for energy. This leads to an increased use of fat for energy while sugar accumulates in the blood.

Although the use of fat for energy may seem advantageous, it generates by-products the body can't use or easily get rid of. Owners who have a diabetic animal or suspect their pet may be suffering from diabetes should consult their veterinarian.

Carbohydrates that are not completely digested cause (or are associated with) persistent gastrointestinal upset, including gas and/or diarrhea. The most common carbohydrate malabsorption problem is an inability to break down lactose, the sugar found in milk.

# Feed Your Dog to Ideal Body Condition for a Longer Life

What dog owner wouldn't want more healthy years with his pet? A scientific study shows pet owners may have the power of longevity in their own hands.

In the first-ever lifelong canine diet restriction study, Purina researchers have proven that a dog's median life span can be extended by 15 percent – nearly two years for the Labrador Retrievers in this study – by feeding to ideal body condition through diet restriction, according to findings published in the edition of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The 14-year Purina "Life Span" study found that dogs that consumed 25 percent fewer calories than their littermates during their lifetimes maintained a lean or ideal body condition, resulting in a longer life. According to experts, this study provides the most significant data to date on the effects of diet restriction as the ...

- First diet restriction study completed for the entire life span of a larger mammal
- First completed study to document that diet restriction increases survival time in mammals larger than rodents
- First study to achieve these health benefits for dogs with moderate reduction of food intake (25 percent versus the 30 percent to 50 percent typically used in rodent studies)

*"We all know that obesity, whether in humans or canines, is generally bad for health,"* says Dennis Lawler, DVM, Purina scientist and a lead study investigator.

*"What's exciting about this study is that, for the first time in a larger mammal, we have shown scientifically that by simply feeding to maintain ideal body condition throughout a dog's life, we can increase length of life while delaying the visible signs of aging. That's powerful stuff."*

## Study Design – A Lifetime of Information

When the study began, 48 eight-week-old Labrador-Retriever dogs from seven litters were paired within their litters according to gender and body weight and randomly assigned to either a control or restricted-fed group. The control group was allowed to eat an unlimited, or free choice, amount of food during 15-minute daily feedings. Dogs in the restricted, or “lean-fed,” group were fed 75 percent of the amount eaten by their paired littermates.

All dogs were fed the same 100 percent nutritionally complete and balanced diets (puppy, then adult) for the entire period of the study, from eight weeks of age until death – only the quantity was different.

Dogs were weighed weekly as puppies, periodically as adolescents and then weekly as adults. Beginning at six years of age, they were evaluated annually for ideal body condition using the Purina Body Condition System™, a scientifically validated standard used by veterinarians to evaluate body physique in pets to assess weight and health.

Lean or ideal body condition refers to the evaluation of body physique in pets as an indicator of their overall health and well-being, generally falling into three categories: underfed, ideal and overfed. Be sure to read more about Ideal Body Condition and the Purina Body Condition System.

**Underfed:** Ribs are highly visible.

**Ideal Body Condition:** Can feel and see outline of ribs. Dog has a waist when viewed from above. Belly is tucked up when viewed from the side.

**Overfed:** Dog has no waist when viewed from above. Belly is rounded when viewed from the side.

Other health indicators, including body fat mass, lean body mass, bone mass and glucose, glucose and insulin use, and cholesterol and triglyceride levels were measured annually to assess condition and health.

### Study Results ... Living Longer

Study findings revealed that the median life span of the lean-fed dogs was extended by 15 percent or nearly two years. Median life span (the age at which 50 percent of dogs in the group died) was 11.2 years for the control group versus 13 years for the lean-fed dogs.

By age 10, only three lean-fed dogs had died, compared to seven control group dogs. At the end of the twelfth year, 11 lean-fed dogs were alive with only one control dog surviving. Twenty-five percent of the lean-fed group survived to 13.5 years, while none of the control group dogs lived to 13.5 years.

The study showed that the lean-fed dogs maintained a significantly leaner body condition from 6 to 12 years of age than the control group dogs, with mean body condition scores between 4 – 5 (ideal) and 6 - 7 (overfed), respectively. On average, the lean-fed group weighed less, had lower body fat, and after a certain age, experienced a two-year delay in the loss of lean body mass as they aged, compared to the control group dogs.

In addition, according to observations of the researchers, the control dogs exhibited more visible signs of aging, such as graying muzzles, impaired gaits and reduced activity, at an earlier age than the lean-fed dogs.

This study reveals the crucial role ideal body condition plays in health and longevity. However, obesity remains the number one nutritional problem among dogs. Studies have documented that at least 25 percent of dogs in the U.S. may be overweight.

To maximize their dogs' health, dog owners should learn how to recognize the signs of obesity and feed to ideal body condition.

## **The Dangers of a Raw Meat Diet**

Myths about proper diets for our dogs and cats seem always to be with us. Some of these myths may have a grain of truth, but this truth is often greatly exaggerated or misapplied. Other myths are nurtured by misinformation and mistrust.

One myth that could be threatening to our pets' health involves raw meat diets for dogs. The proponents of this belief question the wholesomeness and nutritional value of commercial pet foods. But in

fact there is no scientific substantiation for raw meat diets. Indeed, there are several known drawbacks:

Although meat is a source of protein, it has very low levels of calcium, a mineral our pets require for proper bone and tooth development. Calcium also plays an important role in blood clotting, muscle contraction and transmission of nerve impulses.

But simply supplementing with calcium won't work. Mineral nutrients are interrelated. Calcium and phosphorus have a scientifically established relationship in the formation of bones and teeth, provided a proper balance is maintained. This balance is usually not present in meat. If large quantities of raw meat are fed over time, skeletal problems may develop.

Liver is often thought of as a 'healthy' meat because it has a high level of Vitamin A, a fat-soluble vitamin that is stored by the body. And for humans who eat others things as well, it can be healthy. But when liver is fed to pets in large quantities over a period of time, Vitamin A toxicity can result. This can lead to improper bone development, lameness and bone decalcification.

Raw meat carries the threat of bacteria and parasites, including salmonella. The risk of salmonellosis is always present when pets are fed raw meat diets. Certain species of tapeworm can be found in raw meat and passed on to a pet who ingests the meat.

Raw meat diets do not replicate the diets of dogs in the wild. While it's true that dogs consume muscle meat when they eat wild animals for survival, they also consume the bones, intestinal contents and internal organs, which come closer to providing a complete and balanced diet. Wild dogs are also known to eat grasses and other vegetable matter.

The truth is that good quality pet foods are backed by years of canine nutrition studies. They are the result of scientific studies by researchers in veterinary colleges and animal nutritionists at reputable pet food manufacturers. They are also carefully processed to protect against salmonella or internal parasite infection.

When people eat, they combine meat with vegetables, fruits, breads and other foods to give them the balanced nutrition they need. If we were to eat one particular food consistently, chances are we would become malnourished or develop health problems. No single food or food group can provide all the nutrients we need in proper proportions.

Manufacturers of good quality pet foods follow the same philosophy, incorporating all the nutrients a dog needs during a particular life-stage into nutritionally complete and balanced diets.

## About Omega Fatty Acids

There is an increasing awareness among pet owners that certain fatty acids are beneficial to a dog's health. Along with this awareness comes the question, "Which fatty acids are important and why?"

Although answering this question tends to be technical, it helps increase our knowledge of the role proper nutrition plays in the lives of our pets. Understanding fatty acid nutrition begins with defining nonessential and essential fatty acids. Nonessential fatty acids can be synthesized within the body of a dog and are not required in its diet. Essential fatty acids cannot be synthesized by a pet and must be supplied in its diet.

Dogs require one essential fatty acid (linoleic acid), which is classified as an "omega-6" fatty acid based on their molecular structure. It is found primarily in grain and animal fat and is provided at appropriate levels in high-quality pet foods to:

- help regulate the blood flow to body tissues;
- aid in clotting after an injury;
- aid in normal reproduction;
- help a pet's immune system respond to injury and infection;
- help a normal, healthy pet maintain a handsome haircoat and healthy skin.

If linoleic acid is provided at proper levels, dogs can produce all other needed fatty acids.

Another important class of fatty acids are the omega-3 fatty acids. Although structurally similar to omega-6 fatty acids, omega-3 fatty acids are not currently considered essential in companion animal nutrition.

Because of their structural similarities, omega-6 and omega-3 compete for the enzymes which convert these fatty acids into 'metabolites,' which serve as cellular signals important in a variety of biological

processes including immune function, blood clotting and inflammation. Despite the similarities between omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids, their respective metabolites differ in intensity as cellular signals. The omega-6 derived signals are generally more potent than those derived from omega-3 fatty acids.

The potential of omega-3 fatty acids contributing to the health of our pets is promising. A growing body of scientific research suggests that this class of fatty acids may benefit pets during certain life stages or when suffering from certain diseases. These studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids have the potential to help:

- manage severe inflammation associated with certain skin disorders;
- support the proper development of the nervous system and visual acuity;
- aid in the remission and decrease the side effects of lymphoma.

Understanding what omega-6 can do for pets and the potential benefits omega-3 may offer is a bit complicated; however, the bottom line is that at proper levels and in proper balance in pet food diets, these fatty acids provide health benefits to our pets.

## **What About 'Fat-Free' Dog Food?**

Given the popularity of fat-free food for people, many dog owners wonder if the same principle applies to dog food. If it's good for me to eat fat-free foods, they wonder, is there such a thing as fat-free pet food that will offer benefits for my dog?

The answer is no for several reasons. Pet foods are different than human foods in that one pet food supplies all the nutrition the animal receives, whereas people eat a variety of foods. Fat is an essential nutrient and a certain amount of fat in the pet's diet is critical. Eliminating it from pet food would remove it from that animal's diet completely.

But that doesn't mean some dogs can't benefit from losing weight. In fact, a large percentage of dogs in America are overfed, even though their owners don't realize it. Like humans, overweight dogs are at risk for a variety of health conditions.

The best approach is to feed your dog right and provide exercise so that extra pounds don't become an issue. But if your veterinarian says your dog could stand to lose some pounds, you might be recommended a reduced calorie or "lite" food.

**Remember:** One of the best things you can do for your dog is keep him or her in ideal body condition.

## How New Dog Foods Are Developed

Each pet food manufacturer has its own procedure for developing a new product or modifying a current brand. This section describes basic procedures which any manufacturer may utilize in developing a product.

### **The Idea**

This can come from a number of sources. It may be a new manufacturing technique found in the laboratory, a market research department concept or a nutritional improvement. This idea will be tested with consumers to see if customers like the idea and/or would buy the food if it were made.

### **Product Prototype**

From these sessions the most promising ideas are selected for further development. Product prototypes are then produced either by machine or by hand if equipment does not exist for the new type of product. Initially, these can vary in regard to ingredients, nutritional content, color, texture, shape and other physical characteristics.

### **Feeding Tests**

After the prototype selection, a series of studies begins. The number and type of studies conducted depends upon the product being developed and the claims it will carry. For example, claims of "complete and balanced nutrition for maintenance of the adult dog" does not require the reproduction and growth tests needed for claims of "complete and balanced nutrition for all life stages."

### **Palatability:**

Palatability studies determine which food is most acceptable to the dog or cat. This is critical because an animal must eat the product in order to obtain the necessary nutrition. Palatability of the food is influenced

by the formula, ingredient quality and the mouth feel (including the size, texture and shape) of the food.

### **Digestion Studies:**

Digestion testing addresses two important factors in the nutritional value of a food: the amount of nutrients in the product and the availability of those nutrients for the animal's use. The nutrient level together with the digestibility determine the actual amount of the nutrient the dog or cat puts to use. As an example, a dog food that contains 21 percent protein with 85 percent digestibility would provide nearly the same amount of protein to the animal as a diet containing 23 percent protein with a 77.6 percent digestibility.

Nutritional Studies: Various tests determine the calorie content of the food as well as the "Guaranteed Analysis," a declaration of the measurement of the amount of certain important vitamins, minerals, protein, fat, fiber and other nutrients the food contains.

### **Reproduction Studies:**

The purpose of reproduction or breeding studies is to determine if the food has the correct amount and balance of nutrients dogs/cats need during the nutritionally demanding periods of gestation and lactation.

### **Growth Tests:**

Puppies are growing rapidly during their first year of life. This growth requires adequate nutrients and energy to occur normally. The purpose of a growth test, therefore, is to determine whether the food will support the normal growth of puppies after weaning. If the results from both the reproduction and growth studies are positive, the food can be labeled "complete and balanced nutrition for all life stages."

### **Maintenance Tests:**

A maintenance study determines if the food will maintain normal health and body condition in adult dogs. Adult dogs with normal activity do not require as high a level, per pound of body weight, of protein, energy, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients as does a growing puppy or pregnant or lactating bitch. Consequently, if a diet is designed solely for maintenance, the nutrient levels can be lower than in food labeled for all life stages.

### **Product Development**

During the time the animal tests are being conducted, many other activities necessary for product development occurs. New equipment for products and packaging, if needed, are being designed and

developed, at least on a pilot scale. Package size, design, and copy, as well as product name, are being developed.

Only after all of this will a new dog food reach the market. And that's the real test of whether a food meets the needs of dogs and their owners.

## **About Protein**

Protein is an essential nutrient and serves numerous functions in the body, including muscle growth, tissue repair, enzymes, blood, immune functions, hormones and energy.

Proteins are groups of amino acids linked to each other in different quantities and sequences. Each protein has a combination and arrangement of amino acids that is unique. Your dog breaks down these proteins to form free amino acids which are then absorbed into the bloodstream and distributed to all cells of the body, where they are used to build body proteins.

Over twenty amino acids are used in the body. Ten of these must be supplied in the diet for dogs. Nonessential amino acids are those that the body can produce in sufficient amounts from other sources and, thus, do not need to be supplied in the diet.

### **Protein Requirements of Dogs**

A dog's protein requirement depends upon the life stage and activity of the dog. Generally, puppies need more dietary protein than do adult dogs. At the other age extreme, research has shown that geriatric dogs can benefit from a protein level of 25 percent or more.

Animals maintained with inadequate protein reserves are more susceptible to stresses and that may render the animal more susceptible to infections and other maladies.

Research shows that a diet of 25 percent protein with reduced calories from fat is most beneficial for weight loss.

## **Sources**

Proteins are derived from both animal and plant sources. Most proteins contain inadequate amounts of one or more amino acids and shouldn't be the only protein source in a diet. Therefore, it is important to balance out these deficiencies and/or excesses of amino acids when selecting ingredients for use in pet food diets.

For example, soybean meal and corn complement each other perfectly, because the amino acids which are deficient in one are present in the other. Neither meat nor soybean meal is an ideal protein alone, and should be balanced with another complementary source of amino acids.

## **Protein Digestibility**

As important as the quality and amount of protein is its digestibility. A dog's body might not be able to use all the protein present in a food, so it is important that the amount that can be used is enough.

Quality control during pet food processing is important. Protein may be damaged by heat processing, but most reputable pet food manufacturers use proper cooking methods and employ quality control measures to ensure that products are made properly. Because information about protein digestibility cannot be listed on pet food labels, the manufacturer's reputation is important.

## **About Fiber**

Perhaps the awareness of the benefits of fiber in human diets has prompted pet owners to ask about its benefits in pet foods. Once described as "filler" or "bulk," fiber is gaining recognition for the beneficial effect it has on the gastrointestinal system.

Fiber is the portion of carbohydrate in a diet that is difficult for the digestive system to break down and use. Despite its limited digestibility, fiber does have benefits for our pets.

Fiber helps address the concern about the prevalence of obesity in pets. It is important in special diets designed for weight reduction or weight management. Fiber helps reduce caloric intake and provides pets a satisfied feeling of fullness when being fed fewer calories.

However, high-fiber diets alone will not ensure weight loss. Strict portion control is also necessary for a successful weight loss program. Work with your veterinarian to plan a weight reduction program for your pudgy pet.

The value of fiber to help prevent constipation is well known. Fiber absorbs water and lends bulk to the intestinal contents. This stimulates the movement of the intestinal tract and normalizes passage time through the bowel. Fiber sources also contribute to fecal consistency.

Sources of indigestible fiber in pet foods include rice hulls (bran), wheat bran, oat bran, soybean hulls, beet pulp, apple and tomato pomace, peanut hulls, citrus pulp, and cellulose. Pulp is the solid residue that remains after juices are extracted from fruits or vegetables; pomace refers to the pulp of the fruit.

Studies suggest that a moderate increase in dietary fiber may also be helpful in the management of diabetes mellitus. Certain forms of fiber in the diet tend to slow the absorption of sugar from the intestine, which aids in blood sugar control.

In assessing the role of fiber in a pet's diet, the old adage "more is not better" holds true. Excessive dietary fiber is associated with adverse effects such as the production of loose stools, flatulence (or gas), and increased stool volume or density. Reputable pet food manufacturers formulate diets to provide balanced nutrition with proper levels of fiber for a pet's life stage and activity level. Fed in the proper amounts, fiber is a critical component of proper nutrition and good health.

## **About Vitamins**

Like so many of the other nutrients discussed thus far, vitamins work in concert with other vitamins and nutrients to nourish the animal.

Compared to the other groups of nutrients, vitamins are required in the smallest amounts. And unlike minerals, vitamins are complex substances. Vitamins are classified as either fat-soluble (vitamins A, D, E, K) or water-soluble (B-vitamins and vitamin C). Fat-soluble vitamins depend on the presence of dietary fat and normal fat absorption for their uptake and utilization in the body. Water-soluble vitamins simply depend upon the presence of water for absorption.

It is important to provide balanced amounts of vitamins and other nutrients in complete diets. Mineral or vitamin supplements, or supplements of any kind, are not necessary for healthy animals consuming a complete and balanced pet food. In fact, adding supplements to diets that are already complete and balanced may create imbalances with detrimental effects.

### **Vitamin A**

Vitamin A has a number of functions necessary for the health and well-being of animals including a role in normal vision, growth, immune system function and reproduction. The source of vitamin A is beta-carotene, which animals must convert to the actual vitamin for it to become active and function as vitamin A. Too much can cause dangerous conditions in animals, and result in deformed bones, weight loss and more.

### **Vitamin D**

Although vitamin D (cholecalciferol) is considered a vitamin, it is also considered a hormone and is one of three major hormones involved in the regulation of calcium in the body. Its primary functions are to help in the mineralization of bone and to increase the absorption of calcium and phosphorus from the intestine. Vitamin D can be acquired in the diet, or it can be converted in the skin following exposure to ultraviolet radiation from sunlight.

### **Vitamin E**

Vitamin E is used to describe a family of chemical compounds called tocopherols. It is also known for its action as a biological antioxidant, meaning a lack of vitamin E in the diet could result in damage to the wall or membrane of cells throughout the body. Vitamin E works with other nutrients (selenium and cysteine) as an antioxidant to minimize damage to cells from oxidation.

### **Vitamin K**

The most common forms of vitamin K in the diet are called menadione and phylloquinone, which come from green, leafy plants and vegetables. The major function of this vitamin is as a clotting agent within the blood.

### **B-Complex Vitamins**

B-complex vitamins are those vitamins originally identified as B1, B2, B6, B12 and others. Unlike the fat-soluble vitamins, these vitamins are not stored to any extent in the body and are required in small amounts

in the daily diet. Although these nutrients don't provide energy in and of themselves, they are critical in the metabolism of protein, carbohydrates and fat, which results in energy for body processes.

### **Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid)**

This vitamin is also a water-soluble vitamin and has a primary metabolic role in the body of all mammals involving the synthesis or production of collagen. While ascorbic acid is essential in the diet of humans, other primates and guinea pigs, dogs have no dietary requirement for this vitamin.

## **About Minerals**

Minerals perform many different functions in the body such as bone and cartilage formation, enzymatic reactions, maintaining fluid balance, transportation of oxygen in the blood, normal muscle and nerve function, and the production of hormones. When providing minerals, it is important to provide not only the right amount, but also the right balance.

While the function of some minerals can be separated from that of others, it is impossible to adequately nourish an animal without providing all the minerals in their proper proportions because minerals interact in many aspects of body function and maintenance. Supplementation should not be attempted without the supervision of a veterinarian because of the risk of creating a dangerous imbalance.

### **Calcium and Phosphorus**

When we think of calcium in a pet's diet, we usually think of it in relation to strong bones and teeth. This is true. However, calcium is tightly interrelated with phosphorus. A proper ratio of the two minerals is needed to ensure their use by a pet, considered to be 1.0 to 2.0 parts calcium to each 1.0 part phosphorus. Wider ratios may be detrimental to bone calcification, while too much phosphorus could lead to bone abnormalities.

Too little calcium along with low levels of vitamin D may result in rickets, soft bones that bend out of shape under the weight of a pet. But, even though calcium is needed in extra quantities during puppyhood and lactation, it's best to simply feed more of a good quality complete and balanced diet, rather than individual supplements.

### **Sodium and Chloride**

Sodium and chloride serve largely as fluid-regulating minerals to help maintain the balance between fluids inside and outside individual cells of the body. Sodium aids in the transfer of nutrients to cells, the removal of waste material, and the maintenance of water balance among the tissues and organs. Chloride is required for the formation of hydrochloric acid (HCl) in the stomach which helps in the digestion of protein.

### **Potassium and Magnesium**

Potassium is found in high concentrations within cells and is required for proper enzyme, muscle, and nerve functions, as well as helping to maintain fluid balance throughout the body. Magnesium is important as a structural component of both muscle and bone, and it plays a key role in many enzymatic reactions throughout the body.

### **Iron**

Although the bodies of animals contain only about 0.004% iron, it plays a central role in life processes. A small amount of iron combines with a large protein to make hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying compound in red blood cells. Iron is also a component of the enzymes needed for energy utilization and many different oxygen carriers and enzymes.

### **Zinc**

Zinc is important in the production of proteins and a functional immune system. Some enzyme systems are also dependent upon zinc, including enzymes which protect cells from damage caused by oxidation.

### **Manganese**

Manganese is a metallic element used by industry as an alloy in steel to give it toughness. In nutrition, manganese has several essential functions involving protein and carbohydrate metabolism and reproduction. More specifically, manganese is thought to be an activator of enzyme systems involved in the production of energy, fatty acid synthesis, and amino acid metabolism.

### **Copper**

The importance of copper in the body is quite varied because it is involved in collagen and elastic connective tissue formation, the development and maturation of red blood cells, antioxidant functions, as well as providing pigmentation for hair.

## **Selenium**

Although selenium is required in the smallest amount of any of the generally accepted trace elements, it is also the most toxic. Selenium works primarily in conjunction with vitamin E to act as an antioxidant in the body.

## **Iodine**

The only known metabolic role of dietary iodine is in the production of thyroid hormones by the thyroid gland. The primary function of these hormones is to regulate and influence basal metabolic rates of the body (for example, how quickly an animal metabolizes or burns up energy after eating a meal).

# **The Definition of Well-Balanced Dog Food**

Scientific research has shown which nutrients a dog needs to survive and thrive. A balanced dog food is one that provides all the necessary nutrients in the proper quantities and, just as importantly, in the proper ratios to each other.

A pet's nutritional health depends on receiving the correct amounts and proportions of nutrients from the six required groups:

**Water:** All animals depend on water for life processes. Water is found inside and outside cells, and is involved in most biochemical reactions within the body.

**Protein:** Made up of amino acids, protein serves numerous functions in the body, including muscle growth, tissue repair, enzymes, blood, immune functions, hormones, and energy.

**Fat:** A concentrated form of energy, and can also be a source of essential fatty acids required by dogs for maintaining healthy skin and hair-coat. Fat also serves as a carrier for fat soluble vitamins.

**Carbohydrates:** These are sugars, starches and dietary fiber. Some can be readily burned as energy, while fiber has numerous effects in the gastrointestinal tract.

**Minerals:** Inorganic elements with many functions, including bone and cartilage formation, enzymatic reactions, maintaining fluid balance, transportation of oxygen in the blood, normal muscle and nerve function, and the production of hormones.

Vitamins: Vitamins work in concert with other vitamins and nutrients to nourish the animal in various ways. Different vitamins play roles in maintaining the health of different systems in your dog.

With the exception of water, commercial pet foods identified as 100% complete and balanced contain all of these required nutrients per life-stage. These nutrients are also present in the proper proportions.

The other crucial measure of a dog food is energy, measured in calories. Energy in the form of calories provides the driving force in metabolic reactions and allows for the utilization of all other nutrients.

Depending on your dog's age, breed size, environment and activity level, energy needs will vary. While you need to make sure you're giving your dog enough calories, you also don't want to give too many or your dog's body will store the extra energy as fat, which can lead to obesity.

## **The Diet of Wild Dogs**

When most people think about wild dogs, they think of carnivorous predators. In reality, the diet of wild dogs is more varied than that, which is why dogs are best fed on more than meat alone.

Dogs are omnivores, animals that eat animal and plant protein. The misconception that dogs are carnivores and eat only animal flesh probably comes from the fact that dogs in the wild indeed are hunters who feed on their prey - other animals. This prey makes up much of a wild dog's diet.

However, wild dogs routinely consume grasses, berries, roots and other vegetable matter. The gastrointestinal physiology of dogs is fully capable of digesting and absorbing plant protein sources as well as meat protein sources.

In addition, the prey that dogs eat are herbivores who eat only plants. When wild dogs kill and eat their prey (caribou, deer, elk, rabbit, etc.), they consume the intestinal tract first, which contains grasses, leaves and other plants that the prey consumed.

Since dogs are equipped to handle both plant and animal protein, the quality of protein in food, rather than the source, is a primary concern for animal nutritionists. Most commercial dog food diets include both

animal and plant protein to deliver dogs the taste and balanced nutrition they need.

## **Nutrition for Senior Dogs**

When dogs move into their senior years – usually defined as 7 years of age or older – they can often benefit from a diet tailored to their particular life-stage. Here are some ways to tell what your dog needs and how to provide it.

### **Signs of a Senior Dog**

By the most common definition, dogs cross into their senior years when they enter the final 25% of their expected lifespan. Lifespan, in turn, is linked to breed size – in general, the smaller the breed, the longer the lifespan.

However, as a good rule of thumb, you should start looking for the Seven Signs of Senior at about seven years of age. Those signs include:

- Graying muzzle or coat – or other coat conditions that weren't there before
- Slowing down and staying down – less energy, trouble getting up or limping
- Sleeping more – a common side effect of aging
- Changing habits – including play preferences and eating or drinking habits
- Change in weight – some dogs gain weight as they age while others lose
- Bad breath – a sign of dental and gum problems, sometimes exacerbated by age
- Hearing or vision changes – like humans, senses can dull over time

If you see these signs, you should consult your veterinarian. There may be options to treat or reduce the symptoms. Also, these signs could also be related to another issue besides aging that your veterinarian might catch.

### **Feeding a Senior Dog**

If you have a generally healthy dog over seven years of age, your dog may benefit from a properly balanced senior dog food. Older dogs sometimes have different needs than adult dogs, and foods can be tailored to help meet those needs. Consult your veterinarian for more information.

One changing need that should be tracked is reduced activity level, a common sign of aging. Less active animals may have reduced energy requirements. Over-feeding may predispose animals to obesity, which is associated with various physical disorders. For these reasons, it is particularly important to feed older dogs according to their individual needs and to maintain a healthy body condition.

Also note that older dogs may have difficulty chewing as a result of dental issues. In this situation, you may want to moisten dry food to make it more palatable.

## **Nutrition for Pregnant Dogs**

Pregnant and nursing dogs have very different nutritional needs than normal adult dogs. In fact, nursing is the most nutritionally challenging period a dog will ever encounter. There are special considerations for the feeding and care of these dogs.

In general, it is recommended that experienced, well-equipped professional breeders handle the breeding of puppies. Caring for the pregnant dog, birthing the puppies, and raising the puppies to a level at which they can be separated from their mother is a very involved, costly and time-intensive task for which most casual dog owners are ill prepared.

### **Feeding Basics**

- An all life stage puppy food is best.
- For feeding, select a dog food formulated for all life stages, rather than that formulated simply for the maintenance of adult dogs.
- The food should have 1600 digestible calories per pound of food and at least 22 percent protein.
- Unless the dog has a tendency to put on too much weight, give her all the food she wants.

- If she seems to be losing weight, try moistening the food or switching to a more nutritionally dense food.
- Always keep out plenty of fresh water in a clean bowl.

## **Adjustments during Pregnancy**

Canine pregnancies tend to last about nine weeks. For the first six or seven weeks, food intake shouldn't be that much higher than normal.

Between weeks six and seven, the female's weight will increase. At this time, put out 25 percent more food.

In week nine, her appetite may slip or disappear. This is often a sign that the babies will be born in the next day or two. Be sure to consult a book or expert on what behaviors or events to expect and what signs signal trouble.

## **Lactation**

After the puppies are born comes the most nutritionally challenging time of the dog's life: lactation. Expect her diet to steadily increase over the next 20 to 30 days as the puppies grow and nurse more.

By the time the first month is through, the mother may be eating two to four times the amount of food she ate before pregnancy.

Give her all she wants and encourage her to eat by moistening the food.

In the third or fourth week, the puppies will probably start nibbling at her dish, which is a good way to introduce them to solid food.

## **Weaning the Puppies**

Between six and eight weeks, the puppies are typically weaned. The following process is recommended to help stop milk production and make the transition as easy for the mother as possible.

- On weaning day, do not give the mother any food, only water.
- The next day, give her 1/4 of her pre-pregnancy intake; the next day, 1/2; and the next, 3/4.

- By the fifth day she should be back to her normal diet, although you may increase it for females that have lost weight during pregnancy until she gains her weight back.

## **Switching Foods**

At the beginning of the pregnancy and after lactation stops, you may need to switch the food you are giving the mother. When you change foods, gradually mix the new food in with the old over two weeks. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you'll make the transition easier on your dog.

# **Nutrition for Hardworking Dogs**

## **Is Your Dog Hardworking?**

The first step in deciding your dog's diet is to figure out if he truly is a "hardworking dog." If he spends most of the week indoors and then goes out for a vigorous run or long play session on the weekends, a normal diet will probably suffice, with maybe a little extra on exercise days to make up for the calories he'll burn off.

On the other hand, if your dog spends several days a week for the whole hunting season in the woods or in the water, or if your dog pulls a dogsled, dietary adjustments may be in order.

## **Feeding Hardworking Dogs**

- Usually, you will want a nutritionally dense food with 27 percent protein, 1,850 digestible calories per pound and a 12 percent fat recommendation.
- Hardworking dogs often will need to be fed twice a day to keep up body condition. In addition, it is a good idea to keep handfuls of food with you when out in activity to give your dog a "pick-me-up" during the day.
- Some people feed their dogs candy to maintain energy and blood sugar. This can be dangerous because of the canine problems associated with large amounts of chocolate. Talk to your veterinarian if you think you will need to give your dog a special

boost. Your veterinarian can recommend products designed for this need.

- Don't feed immediately before or after hard work. Make sure there is always plenty of water, but regulate it before and after exercise so your dog doesn't get sick. Keep the water cool, but not cold.
- In cold weather, you may need to feed your dog extra just to keep warm. The rule of thumb is 7.5 percent more calories than normal for every drop of 10 degrees from normal.

## **In the Off Season**

One of the challenges for feeding working dogs is what to do in the off-season. There are two schools of thought: feed your dog less of the protein-dense food, which avoids a food transition but can leave your dog feeling hungry when the volume is reduced; or feed your dog the same amount of a less-dense food, which keeps the dog full but can result in finicky eating if the dog prefers one over the other. The best thing to do in either case is make the transition slowly over a 7 - 10 day period.

## **Nutrition for Inactive Dogs**

Dogs that don't get much exercise don't need as many calories as dogs that do. You should pay attention to your dog's energy level, potential reasons your dog's energy level might change and things you can do to keep your less active dog fit.

Inactive dogs are more likely to put on extra pounds since they don't burn as many calories. This puts them at risk for obesity, which carries with it a greater risk for a variety of health ailments.

### **What Is an Inactive Dog?**

There is no precise definition for an inactive dog, but you probably can tell if your dog fits this category. Inactive dogs don't get much exercise and often don't seem to have much interest in exercise - dogs that prefer to sleep, don't run when they go outside or tend to move as little as possible most likely fit this category.

## Why Is a Dog Inactive?

Dogs might be inactive for a variety of reasons:

- Age: As dogs grow older, their energy level tends to drop.
- Illness or Injury: Physical ailments can make it harder to move as much. These might be temporary slowdowns, but adjustments should still be made.
- Overweight: Dogs that are overweight may tend to be less active. This can create a dangerous spiral. The more overweight, the less active, and the less active, the more overweight.

## Feeding an Inactive Dog

If you have an inactive dog, you should try to feed the right amount of calories for your dog's activity level. If your dog is in ideal body condition and isn't gaining weight, you're feeding the right amount. But if your dog has become less active while his feeding has remained the same and he's getting overweight, try these tips:

- First, cut back on treats and snacks. These are generally high in calories and may contribute to weight gain.
- The second step can be to feed less of the animal's regular pet food. Measure the amount of food that's put into the pet's dish to prevent the serving size from increasing over time.
- Third, owners can increase a pet's exercise with additional walks or playtime each day. This helps the pet owner as well as the pet, and has the additional benefit of increasing the amount of time the pet and owner spend together.

Finally, a pet owner could consider switching to a reduced-calorie food. These products are designed to allow an owner to serve a nice-size portion while still reducing the calories the animal eats.

It is always a good idea to consult with a veterinarian before changing a pet's diet. The veterinarian can help tailor program for an individual pet and can track progress and help troubleshoot along the way.

## **OBESITY**

Obesity is the number one nutritional disorder among dogs. Studies suggest that approximately 25 percent of the dogs presented to veterinary clinics are overweight. This extra weight puts pets at risk

for certain health problems. Know how to recognize obesity, what causes it, and how to correct – or better yet, prevent – it.

### **Definition of Obesity**

Dogs that have an accumulation of body fat that puts them 20% or more over ideal body weight are considered obese. These dogs often have fat deposits over the thorax, spine and the base of the tail, as well as the neck and limbs.

Obesity is a major concern because it disposes a dog to certain health problems involving the cardiovascular, respiratory and skeletal systems. And as revealed in a study by Nestlé Purina, dogs fed to a lean body condition may live longer than dogs allowed to eat more freely. Read more about this ground-breaking study.

### **Recognizing Obesity**

Owners are so familiar with the appearance of their dogs that they often fail to recognize obesity unaided. Try these techniques, and if you think your dog may be obese or aren't sure, have your veterinarian take a look.

- **Rib Check:** Place both of your thumbs on your dog's backbone and spread both hands across his rib cage. On an obese dog, you won't be able to feel the ribs through the fat covering, or will only be able to feel them when you exert significant pressure. Actually feeling your dog is important, as the coat of many dogs will make a visual check difficult.
- **Profile Check:** Examine your dog's profile – it's best if you are level with the dog. In an obese dog, the stomach will hang down and there will be no abdominal tuck behind the rib cage.
- **Overhead Check:** Looking at your dog from overhead, see if you can see a waist behind the ribs. An overweight dog will not have a discernible waist.

It's a good idea to learn more about how to rate your dog's body condition.

### **Causes of Obesity**

The simple reason why dogs gain weight to the point that they become obese is because they are consuming more calories than they burn through exercise and metabolism, but the cause of this discrepancy can have different sources.

### **Diet and Exercise**

For dogs who are simply eating more calories than they burn, there are two ways to impact the animal's weight: feed fewer calories, or increase the amount of exercise the pet gets, thus burning more calories.

### **Genetic Predisposition**

Certain breeds seem to be more susceptible to obesity than others including beagles, basset hounds, dachshunds and Labrador retrievers. You must watch the weight of dogs of these breeds more closely.

### **Hormonal Disorders**

Conditions which impact hormone balances in pets may contribute to the development of obesity. These include thyroid or pituitary gland dysfunction. Neutering and spaying may also cause changes in metabolism. You must watch the weight of dogs with these conditions more closely.

### **How to Correct Obesity**

If you know or suspect your dog is obese, see your veterinarian before making any significant changes. Your veterinarian will recommend a regimen that includes some or all of the tips below, and will tell you how much your dog can handle and how quickly:

### **Eliminate table scraps and treats**

- Reduce the amount of food you give your dog
- Increase the amount of exercise your dog gets
- Consider switching to a low-calorie pet food.

### **Preventing Obesity**

As always, the best thing you can do for your dog is not let him get obese in the first place. Here are some small steps you can take to control your dog's food intake and calorie expenditure:

- Don't feed table scraps; they are typically high in calories.
- Limit treats. Remember that if you feed your dog treats, they should be low-fat and you must reduce your dog's caloric intake accordingly to accommodate the extra calories.
- Make sure your dog gets exercise regularly, and try to make time for extra.
- Measure servings – don't just eyeball the amount you serve. And don't use an oversized bowl, which makes it easier to overfeed.

- Try feeding two or more smaller meals a day instead of one big meal so your dog feels more satisfied.

Utilize the feeding guides provided on pet food packages. Remember, these guidelines are averages and you may need to adjust your feedings based on your dog's individual body condition.

## **Choosing a Dog Food**

Even before your dog comes home, you should decide on a dog food. It has to be healthy, tasty and it has to fit your lifestyle.

### **Nutritional Claims**

Read the label for nutritional claims.

Look for life stage claims. For example, a puppy food should say it is complete and balanced for "growth" or "all life stages". Foods balanced for "the maintenance of an adult dog" won't give a puppy enough nutrition.

### **Types of Food**

There is a wide variety of commercially produced dog food available in a variety of styles. Choose the one that fits your needs, your dog's needs and your budget.

Dry food is an extremely popular choice for puppy owners. It tastes good, is easy to store, and has more nutrition per pound on a dry matter basis than other types. It also helps keep teeth clean.

Soft and moist food is increasing in popularity. Moist chunks are enjoyable for your dog to eat, meaning he's likely to eat all his food and get all the needed nutrition.

Canned foods are the most palatable for your dog. However, due to their high water content, they contain less nutrition per pound of food, so you will need to feed your dog a higher volume. Also watch for dental issues - soft foods don't scrape the teeth like dry diets.

### **Other Considerations**

Since this is a decision you want to make once and stick with, consider other aspects of the food including:

- Flavor - does your dog seem to enjoy it?
- Availability - can you get your chosen food easily?
- Cost - does it fit comfortably in your monthly budget?
- Reputation - do you know people who have used and recommend the food? Is the manufacturer reputable?
- Special needs - if your dog has specific nutritional needs identified by a veterinarian, does this food meet those needs?

With these guidelines, you can find the food that's right for you and your dog.

## **Pet Food Labels**

Pet food labels provide the pet owner with a great deal of information. But what do they mean? When evaluating potential diets, you may want to know more about what you are reading. Here is a rundown of many of the types of information you may find on a dog food label.

### **Caloric Statement**

Dog food labels may have a statement of the calorie content of the product. Calories are stated in terms of metabolizable kilocalories per kilogram (ME kcal/kg) of food and may also be expressed as calories per unit of household measure such as per cup or per can.

Manufacturers may determine the calorie content of their product through calculations based on laboratory analysis of the product or through feeding trial procedures established by AAFCO (The Association of American Feed Control Officials, an independent body that sets guidelines for the pet food industry.)

### **Additives**

Two types of additives are included in pet food products; those that are nutritional and those that add other benefits.

Nutritional additives include vitamins, minerals, fats and amino acids. They permit the supplementation of a product to increase single nutrient levels without disturbing the levels of other nutrients in the diet.

An animal's body cannot distinguish between vitamins that occur in natural ingredients and those which are produced synthetically. The use of synthetic nutrients helps achieve the high degree of nutritional balance found in good-quality pet foods.

The pet food label lists a number of ingredients which do not necessarily provide nutrient benefits, but which do have a specific purpose in the diet. These types of additives are detailed below:

- Antioxidants - Ingredients such as mixed tocopherols are added to the fats in pet foods at extremely low levels to prevent rancidity and, thus, prevent the unpleasant odor, loss of palatability, and destruction of vitamins that can occur when fats go rancid.
- Chemical Preservatives - Preservatives are used in semi-moist-type pet foods to prevent spoilage. These include such ingredients as propylene glycol, sorbic acid, and potassium sorbate. All ingredients of this type must be approved by the FDA for use and are identified as a preservative.
- Flavoring Agents - Flavorings are a convenient way to make products more appealing to dogs. Some may have complicated chemical names, but others such as garlic and onion are also used as flavoring agents.
- Coloring - Colors are added to some pet foods to help maintain a consistent product appearance because the color of natural ingredients can vary, or to distinguish between flavors in a multi-particle food. Artificial colors used in pet foods are the same as those approved for use in human foods and are approved by the FDA.

## **Feeding Directions**

Information in this section should also include the amount of food recommended, which will be a "rule of thumb" or a starting point. Actual feeding amounts will depend on age, activity, size, environment and body metabolism and is best determined by the owner observing the dog's body condition.

Dog food labeled as complete and balanced for any or all life stages is required to list feeding directions for each life-stage declared on the product label. These directions are expressed in common terms and appear prominently on the label.

## **Guaranteed Analysis**

Look at the levels of calories, protein, fat, and other nutrients in a food declared on the package. You can compare these analyses between foods as long as they are foods of the same type; for example, all canned foods will have less protein per pound or cup than dry food because canned foods contain so much moisture, so in this case you need to compare them by daily feeding amount - you will feed more of the canned food per day. But you can compare dry to dry or canned to canned.

While this comparison might help you select in some circumstances - for example, you may want to feed an overweight dog a food with less calories per cup or a hardworking dog a food with more calories per cup - your best bet is to use the nutritional claims and look for a food that is appropriate for your dog's life stage. More or less of a particular nutrient may be good or it may not - too much calcium can lead to bone problems, for example (read more about these types of nutritional balances in About Minerals).

Certain nutrient guarantees are required on the label of all pet foods. These are:

- % Crude protein (minimum amount)
- % Crude fat (minimum amount)
- % Crude fiber (maximum amount)
- % Moisture (maximum amount)

If the manufacturer desires to list any additional guarantees such as vitamins and minerals, in the units defined by AAFCO, these will be shown after moisture.

The reason for the word crude is that the minimum or maximum amount shown is determined by lab assay and is not the amount actually utilized by the animal. Consequently, figures given in the guaranteed analyses do not necessarily indicate nutritional balance or product quality.

The best way to evaluate potential product performance is through statements on the package (such as Animal feeding tests using Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) procedures substantiate that food provides complete and balanced nutrition for all

life-stages.), by the reputation of the manufacturer, and by past product performance.

## **Ingredient Listing**

All ingredients used in the manufacture of the pet food shall be listed in the ingredient list on the label. The ingredients shall be listed in descending order of predominance by weight. No reference can be given to ingredient quality or grade in the ingredient list. The names of all ingredients must be shown in letters that are the same size, color and type.

## **Treats in a Balanced Diet**

Treats are a popular tool to use in training, and many people like to give their dogs little tidbits of food as a way to show affection. But from a nutritional point of view, treats can be problematic.

Dogs get all of the nutrition they need and all the calories they need from a complete and balanced dog food. Treats that are given in addition to a dog's regular diet add calories, fat and extra nutrients that may not be good for your dog.

### **The Risks of Excessive Treats**

The extra calories contained in dog treats and people food can be a leading issue in giving treats. These extra calories, if not burned off through extra play and exercise, can lead to weight gain and even obesity, which carries with it increased risk of a number of dangerous issues.

In addition to extra calories and fat, people food can also raise a host of additional problems. The wrong food in the wrong doses can result in unexpected consequences. To avoid these, the safest thing to do is never supplement your dog's diet with people food.

### **Responsible Use of Treats**

A safe way to use food as treats is to measure out your dog's daily allowance of kibble in the morning and dip into that for training treats. This way you can give your dog a food reward for a job well done while not worrying about causing any problems.

Of course, it is possible to use manufactured dog treats responsibly. Simply remember that if you feed your dog treats, they should be low fat and you must reduce your dog's caloric intake accordingly to accommodate for the extra calories.

## **People Food**

Owners are often tempted to give their dogs 'people food.' Sometimes it's a bit of food from the owner's plate to appease a begging pet. Sometimes owners home-cook a meal as a treat or an expression of love. Either way, it can be bad for the dog.

The important thing to remember is that dogs are not people. They do not require variety as humans do, and they will happily eat the same food all the time. If you have a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food, your best option is to stick with it. Sure, your dog would love a bite of what you're eating, but giving it will only teach him to be choosy and may lead to other problems if you do it often enough.

### **Before you give your dog 'people food,' consider this:**

- People food can be high in fat and calories - a dog given too many chips or hot dogs will be more susceptible to weight gain, which could lead to obesity.
- Milk is a food and not a substitute for water. As a food, milk is incomplete and does not provide a balanced diet. Large quantities of milk may not be well tolerated. Milk contains lactose, which requires the enzyme lactase for breakdown in the intestinal tract. If the intestinal tract does not contain sufficient lactase, consumption of a high level of lactose can cause diarrhea in some pets.
- Repeatedly adding raw eggs to a dog's diet can cause a deficiency of the vitamin biotin. Raw egg whites contain avidin, an enzyme which ties up biotin, making it unavailable for absorption into the body. Symptoms of biotin deficiency include dermatitis (inflammation of the skin), loss of hair, and poor growth.
- Some raw fish can cause a deficiency of the vitamin thiamine. Symptoms of a thiamine deficiency include anorexia (complete loss of appetite), abnormal posture, weakness, seizures, and even death.
- Table scraps will not provide the balanced diet which dogs require. Ideally, table scraps should not be fed. Owners who do

offer them should never feed more than 10 percent of the animal's daily food intake.

- Although dogs may enjoy meat, it is not a balanced diet. Raw meats may contain parasites, and cooked meats can be high in fat and do not contain a proper balance of nutrients.
- Raw liver, fed daily in large quantities, can cause a Vitamin A toxicity in dogs. This is particularly true if it is fed along with a complete and balanced diet already containing ample Vitamin A.
- Chocolate is toxic to pets in large doses. The theobromine is the culprit, a stimulant that raises the heart rate. Your dog may show signs of an upset stomach including diarrhea and vomiting. If he eats too much, he may have respiratory and heart failure. The darker the chocolate, the worse for your dog. Baking chocolate and semi-sweet will affect him faster and in smaller quantities than milk chocolate. As with many poisons, the size of your dog is a factor - smaller breeds will be affected by smaller quantities.

## Supplements

Some people worry that their dogs aren't getting all the nutrition they need. They may supplement their dogs' diets with people food or with vitamin or mineral supplements similar to those many humans take. But if you're already feeding a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food for the appropriate life-stage, these supplements are unnecessary and could possibly be harmful.

When it comes to providing optimum nutrition for our dogs, reputable pet food manufacturers have done the work for us. Research scientists have formulated commercial diets containing all the nutrients normal, healthy dogs need for a particular life stage. For dogs with certain health conditions, there are special dog foods that are designed to help address those issues. Your veterinarian can help you choose the right food.

### People Food

Supplementing with human food adds calories to a pet's diet, may lead to an obese pet and can unbalance a pet's diet. People food can lead to other issues depending on the food and the amounts in which it is fed. Read more about People Food.

### Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

Vitamin and mineral supplements are best left to the experts. For example, some pet owners believe that additional calcium, and possibly other minerals, should be added to the diets of pregnant and nursing females and growing puppies and kittens.

It is true that more minerals are needed at these times, but they are normally obtained through increased consumption of a high quality nutritionally balanced diet. Adding them out of proportion to other nutrients can create skeletal deformities and other problems. Learn more about the interactions of minerals.

Always talk to your veterinarian if you think supplements may be needed. Your veterinarian can make that call, and if they are needed, will prescribe the right minerals in the right amounts.

## **Refusal to Eat**

Complete refusal to eat can be a sign of a serious problem that will require a veterinarian's attention. But don't rule out that your dog may just be finicky.

### **Distinguishing Between Finicky Eating and Refusal to Eat**

Refusal to eat is when a dog completely stops eating the food put before it or eats small amounts only reluctantly.

Finicky eating is often a result of the food options made available to a dog. The dog still wants to eat, but it only wants to eat certain things. This can occur when a dog's diet is changed unexpectedly, or when a dog gets used to certain foods. One example might be a dog that regularly eats scraps from the table; this dog might eventually refuse dog food because it wants people food.

Finicky eating is a learned behavior and there are certain things you can do to try and address it. Learn more about Finicky Eating.

### **If your Dog Refuses to Eat**

If a dog simply won't or can't eat, no matter what you try, you must see your veterinarian. This is especially true if your dog starts losing

weight. The problem could be anything from sore teeth to serious internal problems, and your veterinarian can diagnose and recommend solutions to the problem.

## **Finicky Eating**

Sometimes it can be hard to get a dog to eat his complete and balanced dog food. This can be a problem, especially if it means your dog is not getting enough nutrition or is getting the wrong nutrition from somewhere else.

### **What Is Finicky Eating?**

As a rule, finicky eating is when a dog will only eat certain things. It is sometimes manifested in a dog who refuses to eat the complete and balanced dog food you offer or doesn't eat enough. Finicky eaters usually do so out of preference, but you should keep in mind that dogs might also refuse to eat because of a medical condition. If you have a dog who has happily eaten his dog food for some time and suddenly stops, read about Refusal to Eat.

Also keep in mind environmental factors. Many pet owners comment that their dogs eat less during hot weather. This is not unusual. Studies show that, as a general rule, dogs need about 7.5 percent fewer calories with each 10 degree rise in temperature.

### **Change in Diet**

One possible cause of finicky eating is a sudden change in diet. Some tips on making diet changes more tolerable:

- Before leaving the breeder, pet store, or Humane Society, find out what type, flavor, and brand of food your dog has been eating. Acquire some of this food.
- If the food your dog has been eating is acceptable to you, continue feeding it.
- If you want to switch your dog to a new food at any time, begin with a day or two of feeding the same food he had before.
- Then mix that food with your chosen brand or flavor for a few days, slowly decreasing the amount of old food and increasing the amount of new. This should take about a week or a little more.

- Do this any time you change foods or your dog may develop gastrointestinal upset.

## **Making Food More Palatable**

If your dog doesn't like the new food, hang in there and try to make it more appealing.

- If you've chosen dry food, add a little water to moisten it.
- If you serve a moist food, warm it a little.
- Allow your dog time to adjust.
- If he still won't eat it, you may want to try a new food. This causes finicky behavior.
- If he won't eat that, have a talk with your veterinarian. You may be experiencing a complete refusal to eat.
- Mix a little wet with the dry to entice. Slowly decrease wet until he's back to only dry.

## **Scheduling and Controlling Diet**

An indulgent family member rather than the pet may be the problem. By feeding human treats and food from the table, your pet's hunger is satisfied with all this people food and it either refuses to eat or nibbles only a few bites of the food it should be eating.

Don't feed your dog people food and if you feed treats, do so sparingly and reduce the amount of complete and balanced dog food you offer to accommodate the extra calories.

Make sure your dog isn't eating somewhere else. The garbage can is a common temptation for dogs. Keep garbage out of reach; not only might it reduce your dog's appetite for dog food, it can cause a host of other problems, including diarrhea.

Scheduling specific feeding times throughout the day is beneficial. Your dog will know when food is coming at will learn to eat at that time.

If none of these tips help, ask your veterinarian to examine your dog for other conditions that may be leading to these eating habits, especially if your dog seems to be unexpectedly losing weight.

## **Weight Gain**

As a symptom, weight gain can point to a few different issues, but the cause is always the same: Your dog is consuming more calories than it is burning. The cause is usually very mundane - overfeeding by the owner - but the effects can be serious. Do not write weight gain off as a harmless issue.

## **Determining Weight Gain**

The truth is, 'weight gain' is not really the issue. Dogs, like people, can and should gain weight at certain times – puppy-hood is the obvious example. As a puppy gets larger and fills out, you are going to see some weight gain.

The real problem to watch for is changes in body condition. It is very important that you learn how to evaluate your dog's body condition and monitor it from puppy-hood on.

## **Risks of Weight Gain**

When extra weight adds up over time, it can lead to obesity, which can result in certain health problems involving the cardiovascular, respiratory and skeletal systems. Learn more about problems associated with Obesity and ways to address them.

If you determine that your dog is overfed, the cause is almost always overfeeding and/or lack of exercise. But there can be root causes, such as injury, illness, aging or changes in metabolism. These conditions might carry their own risks above and beyond weight gain.

## **How to Address Weight Gain**

Since most weight gain comes from too much food or too little exercise, start with these easy steps:

- Follow the guidelines on the Body Condition and Obesity pages, including eliminating table scraps, reducing treats, and reducing the amount you feed.
- If you think you might want to try a reduced calorie food, consult your veterinarian about the best course to take.
- If the weight gain is sudden or there is no clear cause, or if usual weight loss or maintenance practices don't seem to help (for example, if your dog has trouble exercising more), go to your

veterinarian. There may be other conditions that need treatment or analysis.

# CHAPTER 11

## HEALTH

### Canine Health Conditions

Dogs can catch a variety of different health conditions from their environment and from other dogs. Prevention is a big part of staying healthy. But you should also watch for general signs of health conditions and contact your veterinarian when you notice a problem.

#### Watch for Signs

When it comes to identifying and treating problems, trust your veterinarian, not a book or Web site. Specific canine conditions are not easy for owners to recognize since dogs can't tell you exactly what they are feeling and canine conditions differ from the human health conditions most owners know. So the best thing you can do is watch for signs and, if you spot anything amiss, visit your veterinarian.

#### Signs to watch for include:

- Listlessness
- Obvious pain
- Loss of appetite
- Feels cold
- Fever – learn how to take your dog's temperature
- Frequent coughing or sneezing
- Frequent upset stomach
- Frequent loose bowels

These signs might not always indicate a health condition – there might be environmental or other causes – but they are signs that something is wrong. Don't delay in seeing your veterinarian.

#### Fever

A dog's normal body temperature is anywhere from 99.5° to 102.5° degrees Fahrenheit. If your dog has a fever of 104° or a lower fever that lasts longer than 24 hours, see your veterinarian now. But if your dog has a low fever of 103° to 103.5°, you can try home treatment:

- Recheck your dog's temperature every six hours and wait to see how he does.

- Make sure he's comfortable and has plenty of fluids.
- Your dog may not be interested in water, but fluids are important. Try diluted chicken or beef soup stock or ice cubes. The soup stock can be frozen as well.
- Limit your dog's activity and give plenty of attention.
- Check with your veterinarian for any over-the-counter medications that can be used to lower your dog's fever.

## **Body Temperature for Dogs**

The normal body temperature for dogs ranges between 99.5° to 102.5°F. Like humans, dogs need to keep their body temperature as close to normal as possible. Learn to check your dog's temperature if possible when you have concerns and contact your veterinarian if you find any problems.

If you're uncertain you can handle the following procedure, see your veterinarian. But it is possible for the owner to take a pet's temperature, depending upon the disposition of the pet.

## **Taking Your Dog's Temperature**

- Have someone assist you by holding the back end of the pet.
- Use a rectal thermometer; an oral thermometer should never be used to get a rectal temperature.
- First shake the thermometer thoroughly until the column of mercury is about 96°.
- Lubricate the thermometer with petroleum jelly or mineral oil.
- Grasp the pet's tail and lift it.
- With a gentle, twisting motion insert the thermometer until half its length is in the rectum.
- Retain your grip on the thermometer and tail for at least three minutes.
- Remove the thermometer and read the mercury level.
- If the pet's temperature is above 103°F (which is considered to be a fever) or below 99°F consult your veterinarian.

## **Prevention**

Prevention is essential. Puppies get three rounds of shots in their first three or four months of life to guard against conditions like distemper, canine parvovirus, rabies, etc. Check with your veterinarian for recommended prevention and schedules. After the first year, shots are annual.

### **Guard your dog against health conditions by:**

- Monitoring his contact with other dogs. Keep your puppy away from dogs that don't look healthy, from other animal's waste, and from those you know nothing about.
- Monitoring what he eats. Avoid unfamiliar foods. A complete and balanced diet is the best thing for your dog.
- Monitoring his chew toys. Don't allow him to chew up fabric or plastic and swallow it. Avoid sharing chew toys with dogs outside his household.

## **Care for Older Dogs**

Even though your dog may be slowing down, there is no reason the older years can't be some of the best years. With regular veterinary attention, daily care and proper nutrition, your older dog can still experience a long, happy and healthy life.

### **When is a Dog Senior?**

As a rule, larger breed dogs age faster than small breed dogs. So a giant breed might be a senior at 5, and a toy breed not until years later.

### **Signs of Aging**

As a good rule of thumb, you should start looking for the "Seven Signs of Senior" at about seven years of age. Those signs include:

- Graying muzzle or coat – or other coat conditions that weren't there before
- Slowing down and staying down – less energy, trouble getting up or limping
- Sleeping more – a common side effect of aging
- Changing habits – including play preferences and eating or drinking habits
- Change in weight – some dogs gain weight as they age while others lose weight
- Bad breath – a sign of dental and gum problems, sometimes exacerbated by age
- Hearing or vision changes – like humans, senses can dull over time

## **Nutritional Needs**

Senior dogs have changing nutritional needs. They often have reduced activity levels, and so need fewer calories than a healthy, active adult dog. At the same time, older dogs may benefit from ample high-quality protein, easily digested carbohydrates and specially tailored minerals and vitamins. Read more about Nutrition for Senior Dogs.

Talk with your veterinarian about these needs and how the right food can help.

## **Common Problems and Signs**

- If your dog doesn't respond to his name or verbal commands, or suddenly barks for no reason, it could indicate hearing problems.
- Excessive thirst and frequent or uncontrolled urination are often signs of kidney problems or diabetes.
- Inappropriate urination may be a sign of incontinence caused by a hormone imbalance, which is most common in spayed females, or caused by other medical conditions. Your veterinarian should be contacted if you notice incontinence in your dog.
- An older dog is more likely to develop tooth and gum conditions. Because of sore gums or loose teeth, he may let food drop out of his mouth or even refuse to eat.
- Dogs are susceptible to heart conditions. Coughing, difficulty in breathing and tiredness could indicate possible cardiac problems.
- A hazy, bluish cast on your aging dog's eyes is normal and usually does not hinder the vision. However, the hazy, whitish growth of cataracts can lead to blindness. Your veterinarian can help you distinguish the difference.
- Sudden weight loss or unplanned chronic weight loss should be reported to your veterinarian immediately. This could be an indication of a health problem.
- For older dogs, you'll notice that the skin thickens and becomes less pliable. It's a good idea to check for large lumps on or under the skin. This could be a sign of a tumor, cyst or cancer.

As a dog gets older, you'll notice a decrease in energy level. He may become tired more easily and like to nap more often. He can experience stiffness in his leg, hip or shoulder joints. This could just be normal wear and tear, or it could be a result of an old injury or a sign of arthritis. Check with your veterinarian for a professional opinion and appropriate treatment.

## Be a Good Friend to Your Older Dog

There are some specific things you can do to make your older dog's life more comfortable.

- **See the Veterinarian More:** It is more important than ever that your dog receive total health care from your veterinarian. Ask your veterinarian about special geriatric screenings for your dog.
- **Get Exercise:** It may be slower, but walks and play keep your dog in better shape and mentally sharp
- **Control Weight:** Don't let your older dog pack on the pounds. It can lead to problems. Control his diet and make sure he exercises.
- **Maintain Grooming:** Continue to care for his teeth, and brush and clean his coat to keep it at its softest and healthiest.
- **Keep Things Stable:** Older dogs may not like change. Don't move his bed, shift his routine, or force him to adjust to too many new situations.
- **Keep the Environment Comfortable:** A soft, warm place to sleep and protection from the elements will keep your dog happiest and healthiest.
- **Be Patient and Be Present:** Things will take longer and may be more challenging. Make an effort to provide the extra emotional support your dog needs by spending as much time with him as you can.

## THE AGING RATE OF DOGS

Everyone has heard the myth about 'dog years,' which often is described to mean that a dog ages the equivalent of 7 human years for every year of a dog's life – which would mean a 3-year-old dog's age is equivalent to that of a 21-year-old person, a 4-year-old dog's age is equivalent to that of a 28-year-old person, and so on.

The truth is, the relationship is more complex than that. Dogs of different breed sizes age at different rates, and dogs age faster or slower depending on how old they are, as shown in the chart below.

### Why Does It Matter?

There are a number of reasons why owners should be aware of this variable aging rate. Among the most important are:

- Puppies are going through their fastest growth for their first year or even two years. During that entire time, puppies should be fed a complete and balanced puppy food. It may seem strange to call an 18-month-old, 60-pound large breed dog a 'puppy' - but that's what he is.
- Large breed puppies have unique nutritional needs. These needs include the need to manage caloric intake to help a large breed puppy achieve an ideal body condition. Keeping your large breed puppy lean helps keep muscular and skeletal growth rates at an ideal pace.

The rule of thumb is that dogs of breeds that typically weigh 50 pounds or more full grown are large breeds and will be puppies for 2 full years. In terms of selecting food and providing health care, you should treat them as puppies for that time.

Even though large breed dogs take longer to reach full maturity, they also will show signs of growing older sooner than other dogs. Very large dogs can become canine senior citizens as early as 5 years. Owners should treat their dogs accordingly.

### Relative Age of Dogs in Human Years

Pet's Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Mature Weight																					
0-20 lbs	15	23	28	32	36	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	84	88	92	96	
21-50 lbs	15	24	29	34	38	42	47	51	56	60	65	69	74	78	83	87	92	96	101	105	
51-90 lbs	14	22	29	34	40	45	50	55	56	66	72	77	82	88	93	99	104	109	115	120	
over 90 lbs	12	20	28	35	42	49	56	64	71	78	86	93	101	108	115	123					
Growth																					
Senior																					

# First Aid

Accidents happen. When one happens to your dog, you may need to perform some first aid to stabilize or comfort your pet until you can get to professional help. Remember, first aid should not be the only aid your dog receives.

## In An Emergency

In an emergency, keep a level head and get your dog to the veterinarian quickly. Call first. If your doctor's office is not open, call the nearest emergency pet clinic. Keep emergency phone numbers near your telephone.

## Some quick tips on common injuries and issues:

- **General Injuries:** Wrap your dog in a heavy towel or blanket to keep him warm and restrict his movements.
- **Not Breathing:** Unless you have been trained to administer CPR, it is best and safest to seek immediate veterinary care. (If you want to learn pet CPR, ask your veterinarian to recommend a program in your area.)
- **Bleeding:** Apply a pressure bandage (sterile gauze or a handkerchief) to stem or stop bleeding.
- **Burn:** Apply a cold compress or ice to a burn and gently hold it there until you get to the clinic.
- **Poison:** Call your veterinarian or poison control immediately to determine if vomiting should be induced.
- **Choking:** At any sign of choking (drooling, difficulty swallowing, pawing at the mouth, gagging) don't attempt to remove the item.
- **Heatstroke:** Take your dog to a cool spot and sponge him with cold water. Encourage him to drink small amounts of water.
- **Frostbite:** Get your dog in a warm place. Apply warm moist towels to frostbitten areas. Change them until the area becomes flushed. Severe frostbite damages paws and ear tips so see your veterinarian as soon as possible.
- **Fever:** Check your dog's temperature. If it's above 103° degrees, get to your veterinarian for medication or advice. Read about taking your dog's temperature
- **In ALL Cases:** It's worth repeating: Get to your veterinarian. Even small cuts can become big problems due to infection, and there can be internal injuries you can't see and your dog can't tell you about.

## **First Aid Kit**

Having some supplies ready in case of an emergency is a good idea. You won't have to go searching for what you need at a time of crisis. There's no need to replicate a veterinary hospital, but these basic items will come in helpful.

- Antibiotic ointment for cuts and scrapes
- A rectal thermometer – your dog's separate from everyone else's
- Tweezers – to remove thorns, stingers, splinters
- Wrap-style bandages and padding
- A blanket or large towel to wrap your dog

## **Fleas and Ticks**

Fleas and ticks can make your puppy or dog miserable. They live on your dog, enjoying a constant source of food, warmth and protection. The symptoms often include a lot of scratching, red skin and inflamed areas, and you must take both corrective and preventative action.

### **Dangers of Fleas and Ticks**

Flea saliva is an allergen for many dogs. When a flea bites, the saliva irritates a dog's skin, causing him to scratch, bite and chew - which can lead to sores and an infection.

Ticks bite too, sucking blood out through the skin. Not only do they itch, they can carry diseases that may be transmitted to your dog.

In places with cold winters, fleas and ticks are a seasonal problem, with peaks in the summer and fall. In some warm states, it's a year-round battle.

### **What You Can Do**

Controlling fleas and ticks is the goal. To do that, you must understand how fleas and ticks live. The latest research suggests that fleas spend most of their time on your pet, but are constantly shedding their eggs in the house and yard. Ticks live on and off of your dog. This provides a continuous source of re-infestation.

That means you need to treat both your dog and the surrounding environment.

- Treating your dog: Powders, sprays, shampoos and dips are your best weapons. Be careful, though. Read and follow label instructions.
- Veterinarians now have some effective new treatment options for your pet including oral and topical medications.
- Flea collars provide some control. However, some dogs may be allergic to them.
- Treating the inside of your house: Thorough cleaning and vacuuming may do the trick. However, it might also take sprays and foggers.
- Treating the outside: Sprays and foggers. Chemicals for treating the house and yard are available over-the-counter, as well as from veterinarians.

Always check with your veterinarian first. Combinations of more than one flea or tick treatment can sometimes actually be harmful to your dog. Your veterinarian will know how to avoid those combinations.

When all else fails, call a professional exterminator. Your veterinarian can be of help, too. He or she may prescribe small amounts of corticosteroids to provide some relief.

## Limping

If your dog is limping, there is definitely a problem. A close examination may turn up an issue you can deal with immediately, or it may turn up nothing. What you should do depends on what you find.

### **Examination**

Examining your dog may be a two-person job if your dog is trying to get away. You'll want to prevent too much squirming so you can take a good look.

- Closely examine the pad and paw, especially if your dog is walking on three legs and keeping one off the ground.
- Also check the entire leg and joints for swelling, tenderness, burns, cuts or dislocations.
- If your dog is constantly chewing an area, there may be a foreign object like a burr attached. Look for these external irritants.

## **What to Do**

- If you find a cut, burn, swelling, tenderness, dislocation, break or other serious problem, contact your veterinarian immediately for treatment. Read about First Aid for what you should and shouldn't do.
- If you find an easily removed irritant, like a burr something in the fur, remove it carefully.
- For more serious irritants like glass or thorns, you should see your veterinarian to rule out an infection.
- The pads are durable but not indestructible. Salt and snow can cause problems in winter, fertilizer and sand in the summer.
- Keep the pads clean and nails and fur between the toes trimmed to reduce the risk of some foot problems.
- If the pads are cracked, use a moisturizer to soothe them and consider an antibiotic cream to help them heal. Boots may be necessary for a few days of protection.
- If you can't find any visible problem, see your veterinarian. Some problems will only be found by a professional.

## **Administering Medication**

If your dog has been prescribed a medication by your veterinarian and you have to administer it, there are some simple ways to make the medicine go down.

### **For Liquid Medications**

Try offering it on a spoon. Some dogs will lick it right down out of habit.

If that doesn't work, hide the medicine in applesauce or some other food.

### **For resistant dogs, you may have to try a more direct approach:**

- Put the dosage in a non-breakable syringe or dropper; ask your veterinarian to recommend a store where you can purchase one.
- Tip your dog's head back. Use one hand to lift the upper lip on one side of the mouth while holding the top of the muzzle.

- Squeeze the medicine into the pouch formed by the cheek and teeth with the other hand, which also steadies the lower part of the muzzle.
- Once the medicine is in, continue to hold your dog's head back while stroking his throat to encourage him to swallow.

## **For Pills**

Easier is better. See if your dog will simply eat it.

Disguising the pill in food such as a hot dog, cheese, or marshmallow is also an option.

### **Resistant dogs require a firmer technique:**

- Wrap one hand over the top of the muzzle.
- Use the other hand, holding the pill between the thumb and forefinger, to gently but firmly pull down on the lower jaw.
- When your dog's mouth is open, reach in and place the pill as far back on the tongue as you can.
- Hold his mouth shut, tip his head back and stroke his throat to encourage him to swallow.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Don't hurt your dog when forcing him to take medication. Know your own strength. If need be, ask your veterinarian to demonstrate proper technique.

## **Parasites**

Parasites are small animals that live on or in your dog. There are many different types of parasites, some more common than others and some more problematic than others. Your veterinarian can run a full check, but here are some of the more common parasites:

### **Fleas and Ticks**

These insects live on your dog's skin. They or their droppings may appear as small black dots when you look closely through your dog's fur. Treatment involves both making your dog an inhospitable environment, and treating your home and yard to make them flea- and tick-free as well. Read more about Fleas and Ticks.

## **Heartworm**

Heartworms are mosquito-transmitted and can be fatal to your dog. Getting rid of heartworms once a dog has become infected takes powerful drugs and even hospitalization. Thus, it is much better to try to prevent the problem before it arises.

Start with an annual test to see if your dog is already carrying these deadly worms. This test involves having a blood sample taken and analyzed by a veterinarian.

If the test is negative, your veterinarian will recommend a preventive heartworm medication. This may be given either once a month or daily. These medications keep heartworms from maturing.

## **Ear Mites**

Ear mites are tiny parasites that live on the surface of the skin lining in the ear canal. They pierce the skin surface to feed, causing inflammation and discomfort. If left untreated, bacterial infections and loss of hearing may result.

Another risk is that when a dog shakes its head excessively, blood vessels may rupture and soft swellings form on the ear flap. This condition is called a hematoma and immediate treatment by a veterinarian is needed to avoid pain to the dog and possible ear deformity.

Ear mites can be transmitted from one household pet to another. Dogs with long, floppy ears are more prone to ear mite infections.

Checking a pet's ears as part of the grooming routine helps identify ear infections. Look for:

- excessive and persistent scratching around the ears;
- head shaking;
- restless behavior;
- ears that are painful to the touch and the pet may cry out in pain;
- brown material present in the ears;
- a foul-smelling odor.

If you notice these, see your veterinarian and follow the advice and treatment recommended.

Remember, a certain amount of wax is normal. A word of caution: When you clean your pet's ears, use a cotton ball or clean washcloth. Avoid using a cotton-tipped swab, which can push debris into the eardrum and may damage the inner ear.

## **Vaccinations**

All puppies need to be vaccinated against disease according to the schedule provided by your veterinarian. Although only your veterinarian can tell you how many visits are needed and when, expect several in the first year of your dog's life and annual boosters after that.

If you have adopted an adult dog and don't know if its shots are current, see your veterinarian about the best course of action.

Your veterinarian may provide routine vaccinations for canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus, coronavirus, parainfluenza, Bordetella, Lyme disease and rabies. Remember, most vaccines must be given over a period of time and require multiple veterinary visits. So check with your veterinarian and get ready for a happy, rewarding friendship with your pet.

### **Canine Distemper**

A highly contagious viral disease that affects a dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems. It can be spread through the air or by contact with an infected animal, its feces or urine and can be fatal. Because a puppy's natural immunity may wear off before he is vaccinated, reduce risk of exposure by limiting contact with unfamiliar dogs until the vaccination series is completed.

Symptoms include coughing, sneezing, nose and eye discharge, fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea and seizures.

### **Infectious Canine Hepatitis**

This viral disease, also known as adenovirus, is spread by contact with infected animals, their feces, urine or saliva. It affects the liver, kidneys and cells lining the blood vessels.

Symptoms include high fever, thirst, inflammation of nose or mouth, diarrhea, abdominal pain and tenderness, liver damage, loss of appetite, hemorrhage and depression.

### **Leptospirosis**

An extremely contagious bacterial disease that spreads through contact with nasal secretions, urine or saliva of infected animals. Early signs are not apparent, so infection can go undetected. Recovered animals can continue spreading the disease, which can also affect humans.

Leptospirosis may produce inflamed kidneys, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite and listlessness. Liver damage can also occur. Note that early signs of the disease may not be readily apparent.

### **Parvovirus**

This viral infection is a common, deadly viral infection and usually strikes puppies. It is spread by contact with and infected dog's blood, feces or vomit

Symptoms include severe diarrhea, fever, vomiting, loss of appetite and dehydration.

### **Parinfluenza**

A highly infectious virus that can be one of the causes of "kennel cough." It spreads quickly among dogs kept in close quarters and can seriously damage the respiratory system or even result in death.

Symptoms include a dry, hacking cough, loss of appetite, depression and runny nose and eyes.

### **Rabies**

This is an infection of the central nervous system that results in paralysis and death. Rabies is always fatal. It is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Rabies is a serious public health threat, so it is essential to vaccinate your dog. Most states have laws requiring vaccination.

A stage of high excitability includes unprovoked biting and sensitivity to noise. There is also a stage of paralysis, cramps and swallowing difficulties.

### **Coronavirus**

A highly contagious viral infection of the gastrointestinal tract. Again, this disease is spread through contact with infected blood, feces or vomit.

Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, high fever and dehydration.

### **Bordetella**

This is an airborne bacterial infection involved in "kennel cough." Dogs may catch this when exposed to other dogs in kennels, dog shows and field trials.

Symptoms include persistent coughing, sneezing and retching accompanied by nasal discharge. It also increases your dog's susceptibility to other upper respiratory infections.

### **Lyme Disease**

This is a tick-borne disease that affects both dogs and humans.

It can exhibit itself as arthritis with the sudden onset of severe pain and lameness, fever, lethargy, loss of appetite and depression.

Newborn puppies receive disease-fighting antibodies from their mother's milk. These antibodies normally last only six to sixteen weeks, however. After that, your puppy needs vaccinations to help protect him from disease.

## **Weather Issues**

No matter where you live, the weather can pose a danger to your dog at one time or another. Know what the risks are and how to avert them.

### **Hot Weather**

Heat and humidity – and conditions that come with them – can pose a risk to dogs.

- Make sure your dog has shade when outside.
- Supply plenty of cool water in a clean bowl.
- Make your dog rest between periods of exercise.
- Avoid excessive exercise of dogs during hot days or warm, humid nights. The best time to exercise dogs is either early in the morning before sunrise or late in the evening after the sun goes down.
- Watch for muscle weakness, heavy panting, dry skin, rapid heartbeat and/or collapse. It can mean heatstroke. Get to shade,

give small amounts of water, immerse your dog in cool water if possible and get to your veterinarian.

- In some areas, summer means mosquitoes and the risk of heartworm. See your veterinarian for preventative treatment. Read about heartworm and other parasites.
- The problem of fleas and ticks intensifies during summer months. Read about controlling Fleas and Ticks.
- Hot pavement, sticky tar or gravel may cause footpad problems. To remove tar from footpads, rub them with petroleum jelly and then gently wash with mild soap and water and rinse thoroughly.
- Never leave your dog confined in a car or any other poorly ventilated enclosure; it can be fatal to a pet.

## **Cold Weather**

- Remove salt, ice and packed snow from your dog's paws.
- Make sure your dog isn't left "out in the cold." Provide warm shelter or let him inside on cold nights. Your pet's shelter should be insulated, elevated, protected from prevailing winds and watertight.
- Feed your dog extra food if he spends time outside. It takes energy to keep warm.
- If you have an indoor dog, winter may mean less exercise outside, which could mean weight gain. Watch your dog's body condition and adjust feeding amounts as needed.
- If your dog is outside, let him run around. It keeps the blood flowing.
- You may find your indoor pet experiencing dry skin and shedding. This is usually the result of low humidity. Frequent brushing helps remove dead hairs, skin and stimulates oil glands.
- Dampness is a winter danger. Dry your pet if he gets wet and do all you can to keep him dry.
- Keep fireplaces screened and train pets to keep a safe distance; cinders and fumes can cause problems
- If your pet suffers from frostbite, do not rub the skin. Get your dog in a warm place. Apply warm moist towels to frostbitten areas. Change them until the area becomes flushed. Severe frostbite damages paws and ear tips so see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

## **Storms**

Whether it's a winter or summer storm, your pet should not be left outside. Dangers include:

- Flying debris that can strike and injure your pet.
- Excessive cold and wet that leave your dog miserable and weakened.
- Lightning can pose the same risks to dogs that it can to humans.
- Winter winds and snow can lead to frostbite, chapping and hypothermia.
- Dogs have natural coats, but they aren't invincible. If you wouldn't want to stay out in the weather, your dog shouldn't either.

## **Sudden Weight Loss**

Sudden or unexplained weight loss should be reported to your veterinarian immediately. It can be a sign of a number of issues, some relatively easy to correct, and some quite serious. Don't risk overlooking a potentially serious problem.

### **Cause of Weight Loss**

In very broad terms, weight loss occurs when your dog is burning more calories than he is consuming. But why this is happening can vary.

- There might be some internal problem that means your dog isn't utilizing the calories he is eating.
- There may be an internal disorder that redirects calories from vital life functions.
- Your dog may not be eating as much, sometimes due to teeth problems that make eating painful.
- Your dog may suddenly be burning more calories. Cold weather makes a dog's body burn calories for warmth, and dogs that are working hard use more calories too.

### **What to Do**

Unless the cause is extremely obvious (such as you've started running a great deal with your dog, but haven't been offering more food), you should consult with your veterinarian. Sudden and unexplained weight

loss isn't normal, and you should find the cause before the weight loss causes further problems for your dog.

## Allergies

Some scratching is normal for dogs. But excessive scratching – as well as other symptoms – could suggest an allergic reaction. Identifying an allergen can be a complex process requiring time and patience. The reward of successful treatment is providing a more comfortable life for the affected pet.

### What Is An Allergy?

Allergies are hypersensitivity reactions by the body to foreign substances or organisms. Anything that provokes an allergic reaction is called an allergen. Allergens can come from just about anything, and symptoms can include scratching, stomach upsets, sneezes, rashes and other unusual behavior.

Your veterinarian can tell the difference between an allergy and normal canine behavior. If it is an allergy, your veterinarian will need to identify the allergen and then control that allergen or your dog's symptoms as best they can. Common categories of allergens include:

- Inhalant allergies: Allergens that are breathed in, including airborne pollen, dust and mold.
- Contact allergies: These affect a dog's skin upon contact. Among the most common are soaps, insecticides, wool, nylon carpets or grass.
- Flea allergies: An extremely common cause of scratching. The actual allergen is the saliva of the flea, which irritates the skin when the flea bites. Read about Fleas and Ticks.
- Food allergies: Although not common, some dogs react to ingredients in their food. See below for more on food allergies.
- Uncommon allergies, like hormonal hypersensitivity, in which a pet is allergic to its own hormones.

### Treatment

The goal of treatment is to control symptoms and make your pet comfortable. In most cases, this is done by avoiding the allergen.

If the allergen can't be avoided, medications or injections may be in order. Only your veterinarian can tell you the proper course.

## **Food Allergies**

Some pets develop allergies to food, although this is rare, occurring in less than 1 percent of dogs. Food allergies usually appear as skin problems or as gastrointestinal upsets. A variety of health conditions have similar signs; therefore, other causes should be excluded by your veterinarian before the diet is changed.

Identifying the cause of an allergy requires a detailed medical and diet history, a complete physical examination, and eliminating any other potential causes before trying a new diet.

If a dietary ingredient is suspected to be causing a food allergy, dietary restriction is the only way to isolate that ingredient and determine if it's causing a problem. Restricted ingredient diets (or limited ingredient diets) should be fed for at least 2 to 3 months, and once an animal is placed on a special diet, it is important that no rawhide chews, snacks, treats, table scraps, or other pet foods be offered.

If the ingredient to which the animal is allergic can be identified, a more appropriate diet can be recommended. New diets made with "hypoallergenic" protein sources have been developed. Your veterinarian may recommend one of these special diets if a food allergy is diagnosed in your dog.

## **Elbow Calluses**

You may notice that your dog has patches of thickened skin on the elbows. These calluses are not necessarily dangerous, but do require periodic checking.

Elbow calluses are common in dogs and seem to affect large breeds more often than small breeds. They are thought to be the result of pressure when a dog lies on a hard surface.

As a rule, mild calluses are usually not harmful, and may be prevented by providing soft bedding or padding for the dog's resting place, provided the dog is not inclined to chew and swallow bedding material. Choose material that can be replaced or washed frequently for sanitary purposes.

If you notice a callus, keep an eye on it. If it becomes very large or appears to be infected (which will often appear red and may be sensitive to the touch), contact your veterinarian. Treatment may be needed.

# CHAPTER 12

## GROOMING



### Making Grooming Enjoyable

Regular grooming is a healthy habit for your dog. And it can be a fun one, too, if you start early and give your dog plenty of positive things on which to focus.

Regular grooming includes brushing the coat, brushing teeth, bathing, checking the eyes, ears and paws, and examining the skin. But while that might not sound like a list of things your dog wants to do, you can make it enjoyable.

It starts with your attitude. If you treat these activities like a chore and are gruff with your dog, he'll pick up on that. Make it seem exciting and give your dog plenty of praise when he sits still for you. You might also want to give a food reward – ideally a piece of your dog's normal food – for good behavior. And if you start when your dog is a puppy, those positive reinforcements will make grooming easier when he gets older.

Learn how to use the grooming tools your dog needs appropriately. If you don't know how to use them, they can be ineffective or even painful for your dog. Have someone experienced in this assist you.

Here are suggestions, as well as signs for which you should be on the alert while grooming. If you notice any of the signs listed, contact your veterinarian.

- **Brushing:** For many dogs, brushing is an enjoyable experience. It feels good. And it gives you a chance to look for unusual lumps under the skin, rashes, bald spots, sores, or dull or flaky skin. While a few flakes may not require medical attention, you will want to ask your veterinarian about anything you find that's unusual or about which you have questions.
- **Brushing Teeth:** Make it more enjoyable by using special flavored toothpaste made for dogs, and plenty of praise for letting you look at and clean his teeth. Always check for strong breath odor, red or bright pink and swollen gums and excessive tartar on the teeth, which turns teeth yellow or brown.
- **Bathing:** Many dogs enjoy the water. Bring toys and make it fun. Also, use special dog shampoo. Remember not to bathe too often. Read more about Bathing.
- **Checking Eyes, Ears, Paws and Skin:** Make all these part of a routine. Reward your dog for sitting still while you make sure his eyes are clear and free of discharge, his ears don't have a strong odor or sign of infection, his paws don't have cuts or material packed in them and his skin is free of rashes or lumps.

With rewards, praise and a good attitude, you can make grooming something your dog looks forward to, and that makes it easier for dog and owner alike.

## Bathing

There are two major points to consider when bathing your dog: First, how to do it; and second, how often to do it.

### How Often

The answer to the second consideration is 'not too often.' A dog's coat needs its oils to remain soft and silky and to keep from getting brittle or damaged. If you bathe your dog too often (every week, for example), you will strip away those oils.

A good rule of thumb is to only bathe your dog when he is visibly dirty or noticeably smelly. At the same time, you don't want to go too long or a long-haired dog will tend to get tangles and matted hair. So the time between baths will vary from dog to dog and may change from one time of year to another.

### How to Bathe

A few tips:

- Make it fun. Praise your dog often, and start while your dog is young so he gets comfortable with it.
- Select a location based on breed size and time of year. A sink or a washtub works just fine for puppies and small dogs. Big dogs need the bathtub. If it's warm outside, use a child's wading pool or a hose.
- Put a rubber mat in the bottom of your tub. Your dog will feel more secure.
- Before starting, gather all the things you need: shampoo, towels, possibly a bucket. Don't turn your back on a wet dog unless you want to be involved in a chase.
- Make sure the water is lukewarm.
- Apply shampoo that has been formulated specifically for dogs. Use tearless dog shampoo products if possible.
- Avoid getting water or soap in your dog's eyes.
- Wet your dog's head last as that will minimize his desire to shake.
- Rinse well. The flaky, itchy discomfort many dogs experience after a bath comes from inadequate soap removal. This can also be caused by too-frequent bathing.
- Be careful when rinsing that you don't get water in his ears or eyes.
- In the winter, keep your dog inside until dry. A blow dryer, set at warm or cool - not hot - to avoid burning, can speed things along.

Dogs love a good shake to remove excess water. A shake starts at the dog's head, so if you hold his head still, shaking will be limited. Tossing a towel over your dog immediately after the bath is done can prevent too much water on the walls. If you want to avoid getting an unwanted shower entirely, teach your dog to shake on command. This takes a little patience and training, but it's possible. Once you've completed the bath, put your dog in a sit/stay. If he starts to shake, quickly guide him back into his sit. Resume sit/stay and get out of the way. Tell him to shake and praise, praise, praise.

**Also:**

Bathing is a good opportunity to check your dog's skin. Feel all over for lumps or rough areas. Contact your veterinarian if you find any.

## Odor

There are a number of reasons why a dog might be giving off an unpleasant odor. Aside from upsetting you, it can also indicate certain health conditions that may require attention from your veterinarian. Whatever the cause, a closer look at your dog may help you find the problem.

Accumulation of dirt; rolled in something smelly

Always check for obvious causes. If your dog has been a long while without a bath, that might be your culprit. Or if you've been to the beach or in the woods, your dog may have rolled in something. A bath is the best solution.

## Nail Clipping

Nail trimming is one of those dog maintenance tasks that every owner should know about and address. Like fingernails, a dog's toenails keep growing, and untrimmed, they can be uncomfortable for dog and owner alike.

Your veterinarian can give you a good idea of when it's time to trim your dog's nails. In fact, one option is to relegate the task to your veterinarian or groomer; many will take care of nail clipping for a small fee.

Even if you decide to follow the do-it-yourself directions below, you may want to have your veterinarian or groomer show you how to do it the first time.

### **Before You Begin**

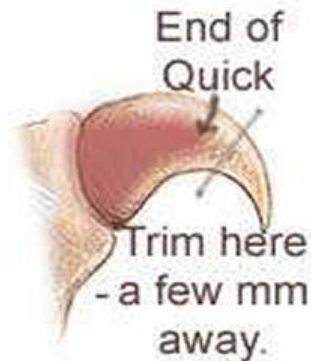
Start preparing your dog or puppy for this part of the grooming routine when you bring him home. Massage his feet and look at his nails, and offer praise when he's still. The experience will reduce his fears of the activity later on.

There are several kinds of nail trimmers available. Have your veterinarian, groomer, or other pet professional recommend an appropriate clipper for your dog's nails.

Buy some styptic powder where you purchase your pet supplies - it's used to stop bleeding should you cut a nail too short.

## Trimming Nails

- Gently hold and squeeze your dog's paw, which will help extend the nail. Find the "quick" by looking for the pink line coming from the base of the nail. The quick is a vein in the nail that feeds the nail bed; this, you do not want to cut.
- Wait until your dog is still before you make a cut.
- Start conservatively. It's better to cut a little twice than cut too much and hit the quick.
- If you cut a nail and it bleeds, immediately apply some styptic powder and a small amount of pressure to the end of the nail.
- On darker nails, it can be a bit more difficult to detect where the quick begins. If your dog has darker nails, make sure you get appropriate instruction before you clip.
- Always praise your dog for holding still



## Keep Nails Shorter Naturally

One side benefit to regular exercise, particularly if you walk on a sidewalk, is that the action of walking keeps the nails trimmed as they brush against the concrete. This doesn't mean that you don't have to worry about nail trimming, but you will be able to go longer between trims.

## Dental issues

Look in your dog's mouth. Teething puppies often have bad breath, but this is usually normal and passes after teething is completed. Discolored teeth, red and swollen gums and an odor that goes beyond the usual "doggie breath" can be signs of a problem. If you notice these, see your veterinarian for a dental checkup and treatment. Your veterinarian can also explain how you can clean your dog's teeth to help avoid future dental problems.

## **Dental Care**

Healthy teeth are extremely important to a dog's well being. They help a dog chew, of course, but they are also the way your dog picks up and carries items. Yet teeth are too often overlooked in grooming. Make your dog's teeth a part of regular care for your dog's health.

### **Puppy Teeth**

Puppies have 28 temporary teeth (called puppy teeth or milk teeth) that start coming in at about 4 weeks of age. They generally fall out between 14 and 30 weeks of age and are replaced by 42 adult teeth. If you have a puppy in this age range, there are some considerations to keep in mind:

- During this time, puppies may eat slightly less and chew more. Hard rubber or rawhide toys made especially for dogs are a good investment to help prevent household damage.
- Even though the puppy teeth don't normally last long enough to see serious problems, start dental care while your puppy is young. Gently reach in his mouth while he's small and rub his gums and teeth so he's used to having someone's fingers in his mouth when he gets older. That will make future dental care much easier.
- Gently rub your dog's teeth with a soft cloth or a toothbrush approved for use with dogs and puppies.
- Buy toothpaste that is specially formulated for dogs. There are pastes flavored with meat and other dog-friendly flavors to make it more enjoyable.
- If puppy teeth linger much longer than 30 weeks, go to your veterinarian. This can cause problems for a dog and these teeth may need to be removed.

### **Dental Health Maintenance**

- Start feeling and checking the inside of your dog's mouth early so he's comfortable with the idea. Use the method described above under Puppy Teeth.
- Buy toothpaste specially formulated for dogs. There are pastes flavored with meat and other dog-friendly flavors to make it more enjoyable.

- Do not use toothpaste formulated for humans. Because pets swallow rather than spit the toothpaste out, this can cause stomach upset.
- Dry, crunchy foods can be helpful in keeping teeth clean by scraping against the teeth, which helps reduce tartar build-up. Still, there is no substitute for regular dental care.
- To ensure your dog's dental health, he will need dental care on a regular basis. Check with your veterinarian about a schedule.

## **Dental Problems**

Problems that start with the teeth can have far-ranging consequences, from mere bad breath to problems eating or even infections that may reach the kidneys or heart.

Common signs of dental problems in dogs include:

- Loss of appetite
- Red, swollen and bleeding gums
- Drooling
- Blood in the saliva
- Yellow-brown tartar at the gum line
- Broken teeth
- Foul breath

The most common problem by far for dogs is the buildup of plaque, which can accumulate and harden to chalky calculus on the teeth. Left unchecked, this may eventually lead to inflammation of the gums, and the teeth may become infected and even fall out. The infection resulting from these conditions may spread to other parts of the body such as the kidneys or the heart.

This is why it is so important to establish regular dental cleanings both at home and at the veterinarian's office. If these problems already exist and have gotten beyond the point of a simple cleaning, visit your veterinarian.

Some other common problems associated with the above signs include broken teeth, foreign bodies (such as porcupine quills or small, sharp objects), and certain systemic illnesses. Your veterinarian is best equipped to diagnose and treat these conditions.

## **Ear infections**

Ear infections can be the cause of an offensive odor, especially among long-eared and floppy-eared dogs. The inside of the ear becomes moist and hot, providing the perfect environment for infections. Take a close look inside your dog's ears for red and sore skin, and note if your dog cries out in pain as you try to examine the ears. Any of these may be signs of an ear infection which should be treated by a veterinarian.

## **Skin conditions**

Do you feel a slight greasiness on your hands after you pet your dog? This may be an indication of seborrhea, a common skin condition in dogs. These dogs have excess production of sebum, a normal product of the skin glands. The result can be flaky dandruff or an oily, waxy feel to the hair coat and a strong odor. Seborrhea may also dispose a dog to skin and ear infections. Frequent bathing with a medicated shampoo recommended by your veterinarian can help minimize the odor.

## **Soiled fur**

Longhaired dogs sometimes have a soiled rear from defecating. Without daily brushing, the rear can become matted and smelly. Monthly clipping around the rear end helps, as do daily brushing and grooming.

## **Infected glands**

Infection or improper emptying of the anal glands can cause odor and discomfort to the dog and a trip to the veterinarian is in order. Signs include a dog scooting his or her rear end on rough surfaces.

## **Flatulence**

Dogs can get gas too. Unless it is extremely severe, it's probably nothing to worry about. But to help reduce the likelihood of this issue, you can make sure you exercise your dog and feed a high-quality dog food. Exercise keeps things moving rather than allowing gas to build, and low quality foods can lower digestibility rate and produce gas. For

the best results for your dog, allow at least an hour before and after a meal before serious exercise.

## **Shedding**

Dog hair on your trouser legs and furniture are normal telltale signs of having a pet. If your dog has a coat, there is going to be some shedding, and you'll have to decide if you're comfortable with the amount of hair your dog leaves behind.

### **Seasonal Shedding**

For many dogs, shedding is just a spring and summer irritation as your dog sheds the extra protection of a wooly winter coat. Different breeds shed different amounts, so if you're sensitive to hair, consider this when choosing a dog. Look for breeds that don't shed as much.

You also may notice a difference between indoor and outdoor dogs. If your dog spends most of his time indoors, he may shed year-round since his body won't register the dramatic changes in temperature that trigger growth and shedding.

### **What You Can Do**

You can't keep your dog from shedding, but you can help keep it under control by removing hair before it has a chance to drop everywhere. The solution is consistent grooming.

- Make brushing your puppy a daily ritual, particularly if you have a breed with longer hair or one that naturally sheds. Brushing can be great for bonding and giving puppy the attention he craves.
- Slicker or pin brushes penetrate to the undercoat and remove most of the shedding hair.
- If you're in shedding season, you may also take your dog outside or into an easily vacuumed room and use a shedding blade or undercoat rake to remove more. You may be surprised how much flies away.
- A groomer will be able to tell you which tools to buy and how to use them correctly.

### **Excessive shedding**

If your dog is shedding excessively (more than in the past, or if bald spots start to appear), talk to your veterinarian. This may be coat loss related to a health condition that may need treatment.

## **Choosing a Groomer**

For some dog owners, it makes sense to have a professional groomer take care of their dog's grooming needs. Choosing one can be simple enough if you ask yourself the right questions. For most owners, the first step is deciding if a groomer is necessary.

### **Do you need a groomer?**

This is really a function of how much time you can give your dog. Generally speaking, the longer the coat, the more maintenance it requires. If you have the time and inclination to spend on grooming, you can take care of most grooming needs, although cuts and trims are usually best left to the professionals.

### **Things to Look For In A Groomer**

- Ask questions you might ask of any professional. Has the person had any training? How long has the groomer been doing this?
- Look at how the other dogs look when they leave the shop. Do you like their appearance?
- Look for a groomer who makes grooming a pleasant experience for your puppy.
- Ask your breeder, veterinarian, trainer or friend for a recommendation.

# CHAPTER 13

## DOG SPORTS & SHOW DOGS



### **Dog Sports**

Dog sports are increasing in popularity every year. More and more events are being televised, from agility contests to dog shows, and there really is something for every dog (and person) to participate in and enjoy.

### **Choosing a Sport**

In order to choose a sport, you have to know a little about each one. Here's a short description of some of the more common dog events:

#### **Agility**

Dogs race over, through and around obstacles as quickly as possible with the human keeping up and giving the directions. Most dogs and people can enjoy learning the basics of this sport even if competition is not a goal. Different size dogs jump different height jumps, so many toy breeds can compete with great success. Read more about Agility Courses.

#### **Flyball**

A canine relay race where a dog races over a series of jumps, grabs a tennis ball and races back. When one dog crosses the finish line, the next dog in the team starts. Jump size is set for the shortest member of the team, so most teams include a fast, small dog.

#### **Big Air/Diving Dog**

A relatively new event, this sport involves a dog racing down a dock and leaping into the water for a thrown object. The longest leap wins.

### **Flying Disc**

This is a sport for truly athletic dogs. Leaping in the air and vaulting off the handler's back makes for great entertainment, but these moves are extremely demanding. The dog is landing hard and often, twisting and turning in every direction, making injury a real risk. Make sure your veterinarian approves before starting.

### **Conformation**

This is what most people think of when they hear "dog show" – a contest to see which purebred dog most closely conforms to its breed standard. Some of the largest shows are now televised, so everyone can enjoy the glamour of these events.

### **Obedience**

While many of us struggle to get our dogs to sit, obedience competitors teach their dogs a complex series of behaviors on which they are judged.

### **Other activities**

There are numerous other sports in which to participate: pet assisted therapy, ski-joring, tracking, herding, Rally-O, dancing with dogs, hunt tests, backpacking, carting, swim tests, earth dog tests, sledding and much, much more are all available. Conduct a little research, invest your time and energy in training and you and your dog can join in the fun.

## **Things to Consider**

### **Age**

Dogs need to be fully mature to start doing strenuous physical activity, but do not let that stop you from starting to teach your pup the basics of the sport you're interested in early. Just work with a sensible trainer and take things easy until your veterinarian tells you it is safe for your dog to compete.

### **Soundness**

A strong body is a requirement for many sports. No matter what your dream is, if your dog isn't built for it or doesn't enjoy it, then it is time to adjust your plans. You and your dog are a team. It is your job to make sure your dog is safe, pain-free and happy.

### **Time to Devote**

The more strenuous the sport, the more time is needed both for training and for conditioning your dog to peak physical condition. Training or competing with a dog that is not in top physical form can lead to injury. So your choices are to devote the time needed to succeed, participate in a less intense way or find another sport that you can more easily work into your schedule.

Few things are as rewarding as competing with your dog, having all your months and years of training come together seamlessly so you both do your best. Win or lose, such moments are among the rewards of dog ownership.

## **Raising a Show Dog**

It is not easy to raise a show dog. First, you have to get a puppy with that potential. Very few puppies have that potential and virtually all that do come from a top show kennel.

Once you have such a puppy, it must be raised carefully with excellent nutrition, proper exercise and ongoing socialization.

Many handlers (the person who takes the show dog into the ring) start training the dogs to gait (move in certain patterns at certain speeds) and stack (pose) from an early age, being very careful to make it fun and exciting for the dog at all times. Show dogs must like the dog show game or they will not get far. Keeping the dogs happy, content and safe is a handler's #1 job.

If you are interested in raising a show dog, you should start by contacting breed clubs in your area. You'll want to research what breed interests you, and once you've settled on a breed, you will need to contact reputable resources to get started. Many top show dog owners invest a lifetime in this pursuit and do so out of a passion for their breed of choice, so if your interest is more casual, show dogs may not be the best match for you.

Very few dogs are show dogs, but for almost all owners that shouldn't really matter. Dogs are loved and lovable for what they have on the inside, not how they look on the outside. Most dog owners consider their dogs perfect just the way they are.

In addition to showing your dog, there are many fun, competitive activities that you can do together.

## About Agility Courses

There are a number of agility courses you can run with your dog for a variety of titles. The American Kennel Club (AKC) has two types of courses, Standard and Jumpers with Weaves, that can be run at three different levels, Novice, Open and Excellent.

### Course Types

A Standard Course includes jumps and 'contact obstacles.' These obstacles (the A-frame, dog walk and seesaw) require that the dog hit colored contact zones at certain points. This is for the dog's safety; it discourages risky leaps on or off the obstacle.

Jumpers with Weaves is a course of jumps and a set of 'weave poles' – poles a dog must weave in and out of in a specific pattern.

### Competition Levels

- Novice level classes have fewer obstacles and give teams a longer time to complete the course.
- Open level dogs have more to do and less time to do it in.
- Excellent courses are the most complex, with the most obstacles to be navigated in the least amount of time. At the Excellent level, dogs are expected to cover 2.5-3 yards a second.

Other organizations offer titles for unusual classes such as Relay, Snookers and Gamblers. Check with dog organizations in your area for more on these courses.

Regardless of what course is being run for what organization, agility is always a lot of fun for everyone at the event: handler, dog and fans!

# **CHAPTER 14**

## **GETTING ANOTHER DOG?**



### **Things to Consider Before Getting a Dog**

#### **Dog Expenses**

If you're thinking of getting a dog, be sure to budget for more than just the adoption fee or pet-store cost of your new pet. From supplies, to health care, to regular monthly expenses, you should have the whole picture of dog expenses in mind when you make this decision.

That's not to say you need to be a millionaire. Truth is, most people who want a dog can make it fit their budget and lifestyle. But by thinking ahead about what you'll need money for and by researching those costs, you can make a better informed decision when choosing your dog.

Naturally, costs vary from place to place and from person to person. Some people might want all the latest gadgets and conveniences; others just want the basics. We can't tell you exactly how much a dog will cost you when all is said and done, but we can tell you a few things you'll need so you can research costs in your area yourself.

#### **Startup Costs**

The cost of the actual dog will vary depending on whether you obtain him from a pet store, a breeder or from a Humane Society or rescue group.

- Vaccinations and first veterinarian visit – If you're getting an adult dog, these costs may be less, but you should go in for an initial checkup
- Collar
- Leash - two of different lengths, long and short
- Food and water bowls - stainless steel or ceramic are best as bacteria can thrive on plastic bowls.
- Grooming supplies - including brush, nail clippers, shampoo
- Cleaning supplies - your puppy or dog may have some accidents at first
- Dog bed or blanket – though you may want to hold off on this if your puppy is of a breed known for chewing
- Crate
- A supply of quality food
- Chew toys
- Dog tags
- Dog training classes – recommended for puppies or dogs that need additional training
- Spaying or neutering, if not done already

## **Ongoing Expenses**

- Every month, you will need to budget for food. It's worth mentioning that, obviously, large dogs eat a lot of food.
- Veterinarian visits – puppies may need up to 6 or more visits their first year; ask your veterinarian for an estimate of costs. Adult dogs should have an annual checkup unless your veterinarian suggests more.
- It's a good idea to have a little money available for emergencies. Like people, dogs can have accidents and illnesses that may require a hospital visit.

## **Other Possible Expenses**

Depending on your personal situation and the type of dog you want, these may be beneficial as well:

- Fence

- Outside kennel
- Dog house
- Doggie door
- Gates - to block off certain rooms or staircases indoors
- Anti-chew spray

With a little research, you should be able to find a way to make these expenses fit your needs. If you get this planning out of the way before you get your dog, you'll have more worry-free time to enjoy spending with the newest member of your family.

## **Finding the Right Dog**

Finding the 'right' dog means matching the dog to your needs and lifestyle. There is no one breed of dog that is right for everyone; all dogs pose their own challenges and rewards. Matching those to the desires and tolerances of a certain person just takes a little planning and research.

### **Step 1: Are You Ready For a Dog?**

While dog ownership is within the reach of most people who desire it, go down this checklist and make sure you can provide your dog with all these necessities:

- Reason: Friend, companion, playmate, competition partner - these are all good reasons to get a dog. "Because it's cute" is not.
- Room: Dogs need room to play and exercise, even if it's a public park. Active dogs need lots of room. And while large dogs can live in an apartment, the two of you might feel cramped.
- Time: Expect to devote several hours a day to playing with, training, caring for and monitoring a new puppy or dog. And be ready to spend time every day for up to the next 15 years with your dog.
- Money: It doesn't need to be a lot, but you'll have to budget money every month for food, supplies and care. And the one-time "startup costs" for a new puppy can add up.
- Patience: Dogs need to learn, and they're going to make mistakes. It will take a lot of repetition and praise - not anger and scolding.

- **Environment:** Your home will have to be equipped and prepared. That means getting supplies ahead of time and dog-proofing your home.
- **Responsibility:** Puppies and dogs need regular interaction and care. You or someone in your family will have to take personal responsibility for your pet's well-being.

## **Step 2: Choosing a Breed**

When you choose a dog, you'll have to decide what traits and qualities are most important to you. If you're getting a puppy, remember to think long-term - all puppies are cute, but as adult dogs they can be very different.

Here are a few considerations:

1. Make sure the breed you're interested in fits the reason you're getting a dog. A short-nosed toy breed isn't a good running partner, and a high-energy hunting breed isn't a good pet if you don't go outside much.
2. Consider purebred or mixed breed. Purebred dogs are a known entity - most dogs of a given breed have similar qualities. Mixed breeds can have desirable qualities from many breeds and often are more affordable.
3. Learning rate, dominance level, energy level and grooming needs all impact the amount of time you'll need to spend with your dog.
4. Think about how the dog will interact with other people in the house, not just you.
5. Of course, everyone is looking for something different. The best general advice is to think of a dog's traits in terms of how they will affect your life.

## **Pure-Bred vs. Mixed Breed Dogs**

Which is best: purebreds or mixed breeds? Both are wonderful in their own ways and have millions of fans all over the world. Here are a few advantages and disadvantages of each.

Purebreds are more likely to have predictable traits. You will usually have a better idea of what the purebred dog will look like when he matures. Breed standards have been developed for each breed and contain valuable information about a breed's origin. Certain behaviors have been fairly standardized as well, stemming from activities for which the breed was originally developed. Terriers have a tendency to dig and bark because they were used to hunt vermin; some Sporting dogs like to swim and carry things in their mouths because they were used to hunt for their masters; and most Herding dogs will want to chase fast moving things because they were used to gather and move livestock.

Mixed breed dogs have just as much to offer in the way of companionship as their purebred friends. Experienced Animal Shelter or Rescue employees can usually give you an educated guess at the mix of breeds in a certain dog, and this may help you assess what size a puppy will be as he matures, as well as some overall behavioral characteristics. But it is not always easy to tell and there are often surprises. That is part of the charm of mixes for many people -- they delight in the unique, one-of-a-kind quality of their particular dog. To adopt a mixed breed dog, visit your local Animal Shelter, or rescue group.

If you choose a purebred, research the breed you are interested in. Try to obtain breeder referrals through veterinarians and Breed or Training Clubs. Go to reputable breeders who have done their homework on the pedigree of their breed and who are very knowledgeable about their breed's predisposition to specific heritable health problems. Try not to adopt or purchase the first dog you come in contact with; spend some time with several different breeders and animal shelters (purebreds are available at animal shelters) until you know beyond a shadow of a doubt what you are looking for in your family companion.

Remember, this dog will hopefully live a long and happy life with you and your family, so it's worth the effort to do your research first to help ensure the appropriate choice for your lifestyle. When you make the right choice, you can experience a lifetime of happiness with your new companion.

### **Step 3: Adopting Your Dog**

For many people, getting a dog means finding one through networks of friends or buying from pet stores or breeders. But you should also consider a local animal shelter or rescue group when you begin your search.

These organizations:

- Are dedicated to preserving and protecting the welfare of animals.
- Have both purebred and mixed-breed dogs.
- Offer hands-on help to new owners.
- Benefit the whole community.

**Petfinder.com** <http://www.petfinder.com>

Petfinder is an online pet adoption service that helps match countless homeless pets with owners each year. You can find homeless pets in your area that need a good home.