

# Heartworm Disease

## What are heartworms, and how does my pet get infected?

Heartworms are parasites that invade a pet's circulatory system and heart. The adult heartworms produce offspring called microfilariae, which circulate in the infected pet's blood. Mosquitoes feed on an infected pet, serve as a host while the microfilariae mature for approximately two weeks, and then transfer infective heartworm larvae when they bite healthy pets.

These heartworm larvae migrate through the pet's tissues and circulatory system and reach the heart in five to six months, where they arrive as small worms about two inches in length. Once they are in the heart, the adult worms reproduce and grow. They may reach a length of twelve or more inches and may stay in a pet's heart for several years. In a severe infestation, a dog's heart may contain up to 300 worms.

## What type of pet is most susceptible to heartworms?

Breed, sex and age do not affect your pet's susceptibility to heartworms. Dogs get heartworms much more commonly than cats, although the incidence of heartworms in cats is higher than once thought. Outdoor pets come into contact with mosquitoes more frequently than indoor pets and may be at increased risk for heartworms. The disease is found in virtually all parts of the United States and Canada.

## How can I prevent heartworm disease in my pet?

Highly effective preventive medications are available for dogs and cats that are not infected and for pets that have been treated successfully for heartworms in the past. Your veterinarian may prescribe preventive medications. If your pet becomes infected, these medications will prevent heartworm larvae from developing into adult heartworms. It is crucial to administer all prescribed medications as directed. As a safeguard, your veterinarian may recommend annual screening tests - even for pets that are on heartworm preventive medicine.

## What physical signs might my pet show when infected with heartworms?

There are several signs that might indicate the presence of heartworms in your pet. Talk to your veterinarian right away if your pet:

- Has sudden weight loss
- Develops a rough hair coat
- Has difficulty breathing
- Develops, a soft, persistent cough
- Tires easily
- Is listless or weak



Many of these symptoms are most noticeable after exercise. Heartworms clog the heart and/or the main blood vessels, reducing the blood supply to other organs such as the lungs and the liver. Major bodily functions, including breathing, are affected.

## How is heartworm disease treated?

Your veterinarian will require a blood sample to confirm the presence of heartworms. Once this has been done, further tests may be required to determine whether your pet can tolerate heartworm treatment. These tests include, but are not limited to, blood chemistry panels, radiographs (x-rays), and electrocardiograms (EKG). If your pet is diagnosed with heartworm disease your veterinarian will talk with you about the treatment your pet needs.

# Intestinal Parasites

## What is an intestinal parasite?

Cats and dogs can serve as unwilling hosts to many tiny organisms that benefit from living in their intestines. Four groups of worms - roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms and whipworms - and a few species of single-cell organisms, such as coccidia and giardia, are the most common.

How does my pet become infected with intestinal parasites?

There are many ways by which your pet can become infected, including:

- o Drinking contaminated water
- o Coming into contact with other infected animals
- o Getting bitten by fleas
- o Nursing from an infected mother

## What type of pet is most likely to get intestinal parasites?

Any dog or cat can become infected with intestinal parasites, but puppies and kittens are more susceptible than adult dogs and cats. Young pets can get parasites from their mothers and from living with other infected dogs or cats.

What are the signs of a parasitic infection?

Healthy, well-fed pets may have an intestinal parasite infection without showing any physical signs. However, watch for the following:

- o A change in appetite
- o Coughing
- o Diarrhea (sometimes with blood)
- o Weight loss
- o Skin irritation and itching
- o A rough or dry coat
- o An overall poor appearance



If you suspect the presence of parasites, talk to your veterinarian immediately.

## How do I know what kind of parasite my pet has?

Protozoan intestinal parasites are single-cell organisms that cannot be seen except under a microscope. Most other parasites are identified by the presence of their eggs in your pets' fecal matter (bowel movements). These eggs are too small to be seen by the naked eye. Microscopic evaluation is required before your veterinarian can make a diagnosis. Some adult worms release their eggs sporadically; therefore, several fecal samples may need to be examined to properly identify the organism.

Tapeworms are one of the few parasites that may be seen by the naked eye. The segments look like pieces of rice and appear in a bowel movement or clinging to the hair near the tail. If you notice these segments, carefully place them in a small container and take them to your veterinarian for positive identification, along with a fecal sample. Several types of worms may be involved, and it is important to identify all of them for proper treatment.

## How is an infection of intestinal parasites treated?

Once the specific parasites are identified, proper treatment can begin. Your veterinarian may prescribe pills, shots, powders or liquids, and the drug will vary depending on the parasite involved. Many of the medications are easy to administer. Your veterinarian will advise you if you can give medication to your pet at home. Do not use over-the-counter deworming preparations - they are not effective against all types of parasites. Trust your veterinarian to prescribe the safest and most effective treatment for your pet.

Most treatments take only a few days; however, periodic testing is necessary to be sure that all intestinal parasites have been eliminated. A fecal sample should be examined three to four weeks after treatment. Your veterinarian may request an additional fecal sample later. In most cases, you should wash your pet's bedding and clean their living environment to prevent reinfection.

## How do I keep my pet from getting intestinal parasites?

Bowel movements are the source of most intestinal parasites. To avoid parasites, keep your pet away from areas where other animals may have relieved themselves. Dispose of your own pet's feces as quickly as possible and keep your pet and their environment clean. Other ways you can protect your pet are as follows:

- o Because tapeworms infection occurs when your pet swallows a flea that has swallowed tapeworm eggs, you need to keep your pet's environment free from fleas.
- o A fecal check (a microscopic examination of your pet's feces) as part of your pet's annual wellness exam is good preventive medicine.
- o Routine, frequent fecal checks are important for predatory dogs and cats, because some types of worms are ingested when an infected rodent is eaten.
- o Puppies and pregnant dogs should be dewormed according to your veterinarian's recommendations.

## Can I get intestinal parasites from my pet?

Under some conditions, intestinal parasites can be transmitted to humans. Especially at risk are children, pregnant women, and immunocompromised individuals, such as people with AIDS. Avoid walking barefoot in areas where dogs and cats defecate, such as yards, beaches, and sandboxes. Parasitic larvae can migrate through the human body and lodge in the eye, brain or other areas, which can cause blindness or other severe health problems. The danger is real - discuss the risk with your veterinarian and physician.



# Spaying & Neutering

## Why is it important to spay or neuter my pet?

Your pet is a companion, a friend, and a member of your family. But not all pets are as cherished as yours are. In animal shelters throughout North America, four to six million dogs and cats are euthanized each year. Although these figures seem staggering, it's easy to understand when you consider this: If one pair of cats produces eight kittens per year, and each of those kittens then produces an average of eight kittens per year, there are almost 300,000 cats in the "family tree" in year six. In year seven, the descendants of the original mother and father numbered almost 2.4 million.

For every kitten or puppy that finds a happy home, four others are unwanted, unloved and possibly neglected or abused. Don't be part of the problem...be part of the solution! Spaying and neutering your pet not only help reduce the number of unwanted pets, it also provides long-term health benefits to your dog or cat.

## What is neutering?

Neutering of male dogs and cats, called orchiectomy, is the process of surgically removing the testicals. If neutering is done at an early age, it eliminates reproductive behavior.

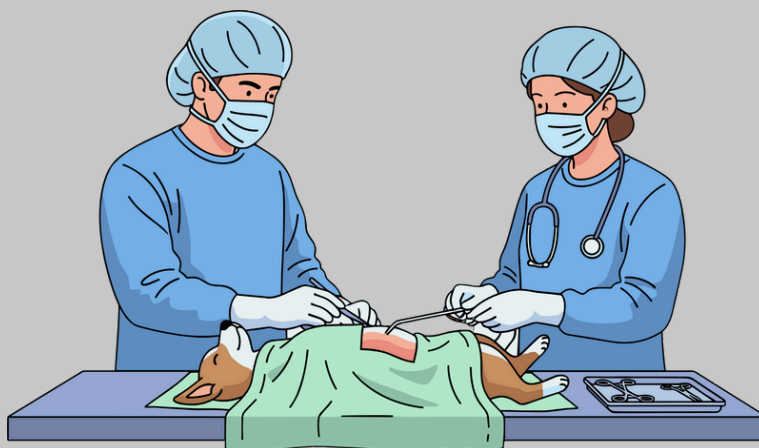
After they reach sexual maturity at six to nine months of age, male dogs and cats are able to breed any time they are exposed to a receptive female. Unneutered male dogs and cats are prone to wander in search of a female in heat. This means trouble! Pets that wander are more frequently exposed to disease, and they get injured infights and traffic accidents much more often.

Male cats are known to "mark" their territories by spraying odorous urine on furniture, walls, shrubs, etc. Male dogs are sometimes equally anxious to mark their territories. This tendency is greatly reduced when the pet is neutered. Neutering may also reduce aggressive behavior in dogs.

Male dogs and cats' benefit from the neutering process in other ways as well. They are less likely to develop diseases of the prostate gland and are no longer at risk for testicular cancer and infections.

After neutering, your male dog or cat will continue to have his own unique personality. He will be less likely to roam and enjoy staying at home more.

Neutering your dog or cat may reduce his metabolism. Consult your veterinarian to determine if your pet's food intake should be adjusted accordingly.



## What is spaying?

Spaying of female dogs and cats, called ovariectomy, is the surgical removal of the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus. Spaying your pet eliminates all heat cycles and the accompanying unwanted bleeding, nervousness and desire to mate.

Female dogs and cats are often mature enough to reproduce once they reach the age of six to nine months. Female dogs go through a reproductive, or “heat”, cycle every six months, usually once in the spring and again in the fall. The cycle begins with proestrus, or “bleeding”, prior to the true heat cycle, when the female is receptive to the reproductive advances of males. The entire cycle may be as short as a few days or as long as three to four weeks. Often, female dogs will experience some personality changes during heat cycles, such as becoming short-tempered or anxious.

Female cats enter their reproductive cycles continuously every three to four weeks during certain times of the year, primarily in the spring and fall. They rarely show any signs of bleeding during their reproductive cycles. Many female cats become nervous during heat cycles and exhibit unusual behaviors, such as rolling on the floor, hiding furtively, or begging for constant attention. They often become quite vocal, too, meowing through their cycles.

Studies show that by spaying your female dog or cat before her first heat cycle, you greatly reduce her chances of developing mammary (breast) cancer later in life. Having your female dog or cat spayed will also protect her from uterine infections and difficult or dangerous pregnancies.

Spaying your pet may reduce her metabolism. Consult your veterinarian to determine if your pet’s food intake should be adjusted accordingly.

## When should my pet have the surgery?

Generally, veterinarians recommend that a female pet be spayed before her first estrus or heat period (about six months of age). Male dogs and cats can be neutered at six months of age. Under some circumstances, spay or neuter may be done when your pet is younger or old. Your veterinarian will be able to recommend the most appropriate time for your pet’s surgery.



## Why is pre-surgical lab work required for my pet?

Veterinarians depend on laboratory results to help them understand the status of your pet’s health. When your pet is healthy, your veterinarian may want to run certain laboratory tests to establish your pet’s “baseline” values.

Many veterinarians also routinely request pre-surgical laboratory screening tests to help identify patients at risk of complications if given general anesthesia, which is required for spays and neuters. These tests are required for pets of all ages - even for young, seemingly healthy dogs and cats.



# Your Puppy and Socialization

Puppies don't come into our world with ready knowledge about humans or the world in which we live. They need to learn all about us - about car rides, vacuums, weaving bicycles, and more. If they don't have a chance to learn about the people, animals and things in their environment, they may grow up to be fearful, anxious, antisocial adults. This situation can usually be prevented with early socialization and exposure to as many people, animals, sights, sounds and places as possible. If you are considering getting a new puppy, it is best to obtain it at approximately seven weeks old. Before this time a puppy needs to socialize with its mother and littermates. From seven weeks on, it is critical that puppies socialize with humans.



## Making Friends

Socialization is the process of developing relationships with other living beings in your environment. The first few months of your puppy's life are the most critical for its development. If this time passes without the young pup making necessary social contacts, irreparable damage may result, leading to fear, timidity, or aggression. Since the most sensitive period for puppy socialization occurs during the first 12 weeks of age, you should begin the socialization process as soon as you get your new puppy (and then continue into adulthood).

Start with simple, quiet, one-person introductions and gradually include more people in nosier situations. Invite friends, relatives, and their pets to come to your home to meet and play with your puppy. As soon as your veterinarian says your puppy is adequately vaccinated, take it on as many walks and outings as possible. Initially avoid situations that might be high risk for diseases, such as neighborhood parks or areas with stray dogs. To make the new introductions special, give a small treat to your puppy whenever it meets someone. As soon as your puppy can sit on command, have it sit when it meets new people, letting each new friend give the reward. This teaches your puppy to greet properly, rather than lunging or jumping on visitors and passersby.

## Networking

It is important that your puppy meets and receives treats from a wide variety of people of all ages and appearances. A puppy that grows up in a restricted social group (e.g., all adults or all females) may show fear and aggression when alter exposed to people who appear or act differently (e.g., children, men with beards). Even if there are no children living at home, it is likely that your puppy will encounter them sometime. Therefore, every effort should be made to see that your younger pup has plenty of opportunities to play with and learn about children. Some pups seem to consider kids to be completely different species since they walk, act and talk much more differently than adults. If you don't provide your puppy with adequate, positive interaction with children during its early month it may never feel comfortable around them.

Another excellent way to promote early socialization is to take your puppy to training classes. The new concept in training is to start puppies young, before they pick up bad habits and when learning is rapid. Many communities now have puppy training and socialization classes where puppies can be admitted as early as their third month. These classes not only help the pups get off to a great start with training, but they also offer a wonderful opportunity for important social experiences with other puppies and people. Ask your veterinarian about classes in the area.

Punishment during the early stages of development can negatively influence the puppy's relationships with people. Avoid training methods that involve physical discipline, such as swatting your pup, thumping it on the nose, and rubbing its face in a mess. These methods can teach your dog to fear the human hand or to become a fear biter. In general, during the early months of your puppy's life, avoid any interactions with people who might make it anxious.

## Habituation

Habituation is a fancy term that involves getting use to a varied environment. Your puppy matures; new sounds and situations can lead to fear and anxiety. Begin the habituation process at an early age. Frequently expose your puppy to different sights, sounds, odors and situations.

For example, repeated, short car rides can minimize anxiety associated with traveling, provided nothing unpleasant occurs during the ride. Also expose your puppy to stimuli such as the sound of traffic, sirens, airplanes, water, elevators, or alarm clocks. If your puppy seems to be exceptionally cautious when first introduced to new situations or stimuli, start off with mild exposure and give rewards for non-fearful responses. Never give rewards while the pet is exhibiting fearful behavior - this only rewards the very response you are trying to discourage. Your puppy then can be gradually "built up" to more intense exposure. Tape recordings of a variety of environmental sounds are available if it's difficult to expose your puppy to sufficient stimuli in your neighborhood.

Properly socializing and shaping your puppy's temperament requires an investment in time. You will find that your efforts are worthwhile when you become the proud parent of a social, friendly dog.

## Crate Training

We all need a special place to call our own - a sanctuary of sorts. Your pet is no different. Part of raising a healthy dog is providing it with its own sanctuary, and crates are a perfect solution. Both puppies and dogs can be easily trained to enjoy the retreat to their crate.

Crate training is neither cruel nor unfair, provided your puppy has sufficient exercise and an opportunity to eliminate it before you place it in a crate. However, allowing your dog to wander through the home unsupervised to investigate and chew on things is unwise and potentially dangerous.

There are a numerous benefits to crate training your dog:

- o Security for your dog
- o Safety for your dog
- o Prevention of costly damage (due to chewing, investigation, elimination.)
- o Help with training proper chewing and elimination
- o Easy traveling (help your dog become accustomed to caging for traveling and boarding)
- o Improved dog/owner relationship (fewer problems mean less discipline for your puppy and less frustration for you)



### A few tips

The first step is purchasing a crate. The main thing to remember is to leave enough room for your dog to stand and turn around - even when it is fully grown. If the puppy will be much larger as an adult, rather than purchasing multiple size crates, block the access to the back of a large crate to a proper size, extending the area as the puppy grows. Two basic styles exist: metal, collapsible crates with tray floors and the plastic traveling crates. Some dogs adapt better to a small room, run or playpen.

Because dogs are social animals, the ideal location for the crate is in a room where your family spends a lot of time, such as the kitchen, den or bedroom. Avoid keeping the crate in an isolated laundry or furnace room. For the crate to remain a positive, enjoyable retreat, NEVER use it for punishment. You can, however, use the crate to avoid potential problems (e.g., chewing, house soiling, jumping on visitors). A radio or television can help calm your dog and mask environmental noises that sometimes trigger barking.

## Training puppies

Introduce your puppy to the crate as early as possible. Place a few treats, toys, or food in the crate to motivate your puppy to enter voluntarily. The first confinement session should be after a period of play, exercise, and elimination (when it is ready to take a nap.) Place your puppy in its crate with a toy and a treat and close the door. Leave the room but remain close enough to hear your puppy. You can expect some degree of distress the first few times your puppy is separated from its family members. Never reward the pup by letting it out when it cries or whines. Ignore it until the crying stops, then release it.

If crying does not subside on its own, a light correction may be useful. Avoid any excessive correction - it can cause fear and anxiety, which could aggravate whining or cause elimination. When correcting, try to avoid being seen by your puppy so that it does not learn to associate the punishment with your presence. A squirt from a water gun or a startling noise (try shaking an aluminum soda can containing a few coins) can be used to interrupt barking. Or try a remote-control device that turns on a water pick or alarm strategically placed near the crate. There are commercial bark-activated devices that produce a distracting spray or alarm when your dog barks. Owners can fit their puppies with the devices or place them near the crate. If these devices do not immediately curb the barking or seem to cause distress, do not continue to use them.

## Teaching old dogs new housing

Training an adult dog is similar to training a puppy, except for initial introduction to the crate. Introduce your dog to the crate by setting it up in the feeding area with the door open for a few days. Place food treats and toys in the crate so that your dog enters on its own. Once it is entering the crate freely, it is time to close the door. Some dogs may adapt more quickly to crate training by placing the crate (with bedding inside) in your dog's normal sleeping area, allowing your dog to sleep in the crate at night. When punishing, take the same advice given in puppy training. Again, never punish your dog by putting them in their crate. Gradually increase the amount of time your dog must remain quietly in the crate before you release it.

## Traveling

Finally, the crate is an ideal way to house your dog when traveling. Try short trips first and gradually increase travel time. Let your dog accompany you to the store, the park, or on trips around town - anywhere that will adjust it to the crate and elicit positive feelings.

Never leave your dog unattended in any vehicle, especially when it is warm or cold outside. A car can heat up very quickly and could cause your dog to have a heat stroke, or possible death.



# Houstraining Your Puppy

Your home has just been blessed with a new puppy who arrived cuddly, warm and ready to be loved. Unfortunately, it did not arrive houstrained. Houstraining your new puppy can be easy and effective if you dedicate the necessary time and patience. A successful plan includes supervision, confinement, and encouragement. With these elements, most pups can be trained in a relatively short period of time.

## Getting the message across

If you want your puppy to eliminate outside, you must be aware of various conditions and activities that typically stimulate puppies to eliminate, including feeding, drinking, playing and waking from naps. Learn to be aware of these activities and be alert that your puppy needs to eliminate. Begin to condition your puppy by using a command such as “out” as you take them outside. With time, your puppy will learn to signal if it has to go out.

The next step is to teach your puppy where you want it to eliminate. To accomplish this, you **MUST** accompany your puppy **EVERY** time it goes outdoors. Choose a specific location with easy access. The area will soon become a familiar spot as the pup recognized the odor from previous excursions. Mildly praise any sniffing or other pre-elimination behaviors and consider associating a unique training command such as “potty time” or “hurry up” with the act of eliminating. When your puppy eliminates, praise it heartily, offers a tasty food reward, or starts playing. Your puppy will soon learn what is expected of it whenever it goes outside and hears the special command. As you begin house training, try to take your puppy outdoors every one to two hours. As it grows older and gets the hang of things, you can wait longer between outings.



## Scheduling puppy's dinnertime

Controlling your puppy's feeding schedule provides some control over its elimination schedule. Most will eliminate within a predictable time after eating, usually within the first hour. Because of this, it is best to avoid feeding a large meal just before confinement. Offer food two or three times each day at the same time and make it available for no longer than 30 minutes. The last meal should be finished three to five hours before bedtime.

## Preventing mistakes

The most challenging part of the houstraining process is preventing your pup from eliminating indoors. Until it is houstrained, you will need to provide constant supervision. You should not consider your puppy houstrained until it has gone for at least four to eight consecutive weeks without eliminating it anywhere in the home. Until your pup accomplishes this, keep it within eyesight of a family member 100% of the time. A leash is a handy tool to keep your puppy nearby when you are preoccupied and it might wander away.

When you are unable to provide constant supervision because you are busy, sleeping or away from home, confine your pup to a relatively small, safe area. Always take your puppy out to eliminate just before confinement. A wire or plastic crate provides an excellent area in which to confine your puppy when you cannot observe it. A crate has some limitations. Do not use it for longer than your puppy can physically control elimination or for more than four hours during the day. Most puppies will quickly adapt to the crate if you make training fun. Feeding in the crate, tossing toys inside for the pup to chase, and hiding treats in there should all encourage your puppy to look forward to being in the crate.

If your puppy is home alone each day for long periods, confine it to a larger area such as a small room or exercise pen. The area should provide enough space for it to eliminate if necessary and to rest several feet away from the mess. For easier cleaning, place paper at the sites where it is likely to eliminate. It is important to associate good things with the confinement area, rather than making it solely an isolation area. Spend some time in the area playing with your puppy or simply reading nearby as it rests there.

## Returning to the scene of the crime

To help prevent your puppy from returning to previously soiled areas, remove urine and fecal odor with an effective commercial product. Saturate the areas of soiled carpeting with odor-neutralizing products - merely spraying the surface is not effective. If your puppy begins eliminating in certain areas of the home, deny access to these areas by closing doors to the rooms, using baby gates or moving furniture over the soiled areas. Motion alarms will teach your puppy to avoid an area. Most pets avoid eliminating in areas where they eat or play. Feeding or placing water bowls, bedding, and toys in previously soiled areas can discourage elimination at those spots.

## Keeping your cool

No puppy has ever been housetrained without making a mistake or two. Be prepared for the inevitable. It does not help to become frustrated and harshly discipline your puppy. Punishment is the least effective and most overused approach to housetraining. A correction should involve nothing more than a mild, startling distraction and should only be used if you catch your puppy in the act of eliminating indoors. A quick stomp of the foot, loud clap, tug on the leash, or abrupt "NO" (given with enough intensity to interrupt the behavior without frightening your puppy) is all that is necessary. Immediately take your pup to its elimination area outdoors to finish. A correction that occurs more than a few seconds after your puppy eliminates is useless because it will not understand why it is being corrected. If the punishment is too harsh, your puppy may learn not to eliminate in front of you, even outdoors, and you run the risk of ruining the bond with your puppy. And don't even THINK about rubbing its nose in a mess. There is absolutely nothing it will learn from this, except to be afraid of you. Some pets will squat and urinate as they greet family members. Never scold them. This problem is due typically to either nervousness or excitement, and scolding will always make the problem worse. With a little patience and consistent approach, your puppy will be as housetrained as the rest of your family.



# Basic Training Tips

## When to begin

Puppy training can begin at an early age, even as young as 8-12 weeks, and often goes much faster and smoother when the pup is young. Early training can help with important areas of puppy learning, including establishing leadership, socializing, and preventing unruly behaviors. To successfully train a puppy, it is important to use correct training methods. Puppies don't learn well with forceful training.

In addition, too much force during your puppy's formative months can ruin your bond with your pet. Instead, use positive motivation to facilitate - rather than force - the training process. The biggest motivating factors for training and reinforcing obedient behavior are food, a favored toy, affection and social attention.



## Getting started

Generally, the healthiest choice for a reward is the puppy's own dry food, along with praise. Special treats are usually not necessary. Just remember that you may need to adjust how much your puppy is eating at mealtime if using treats or food to train. Training just prior to the puppy's routine dinner is an excellent time, as the puppy's interest in the food will be focused. Initially, the food reward should be given immediately following every correct response. As the pup gets better at performing the desired behavior, stop giving a food reward for less than exact responses, and only reward quick, well-performed responses. Once you reach your goal, continue to give praise for every correct response, but only provide the food reward on an intermittent, random basis. This will render the longest retention of learning. Also, remember to use hand signals along with food rewards. A dog is more likely to respond to a double signal (verbal and visual) command, rather than only a verbal command.

## Come

Teaching your puppy to come when he is called is quite simple. Hold a piece of dry food out between your thumb and forefinger, extend it toward the puppy, and say its name. As it approaches you, repeatedly wave your hand toward your chest and say "come". This gives your pet both verbal and visual cues to respond to. When it reaches you, give it the food and, as it eats, quickly take a few steps back and repeat the procedure.

## Sit

To teach your puppy to sit on command, start with the puppy in the standing position. Hold a piece of dry food directly in front of its nose between your thumb and forefinger and say the pet's name. Slowly move the food over the pet's head so that its nose points straight up. As the puppy's nose goes up, its rear end will be leveraged into the sit position. Say "sit" as it assumes the position and give the reward. Be careful not to hold the food lure too high above the pet's head, or it will jump up for the food.

## Lie Down

Teaching your pet to lie down on command is easier if the pup is on a smooth surface, such as tile or linoleum. Begin with the puppy in sitting position.

Hold a piece of dry food directly in front of its nose. Say the pet's name and, with a swift movement, move the food down to the floor, right next to the paws. Otherwise, if the food is five inches or more in front of the pup, it will probably stand up as it tries to get the food. With time, the downward sweep of your hand by itself will cause the pup to go into the down position.



## Stay



The stay command is the most difficult for the puppy to learn. Young puppies don't like to sit still for very long and love to follow people. Keeping this in mind will help you understand your puppy's actions, and you will be better able to train it.

The best time to begin training is when your puppy is calm, possibly after a long walk or play session. Start with the puppy in the sitting position.

Ask it to sit using a hand and a verbal signal, but no food. As soon as the puppy is sitting, lean toward it, make fixed eye contact, extend the palm of your hand toward the pup, and in a firm voice say "stay" in a serious tone as you lean toward it. Once the pet will successfully stay for ten seconds at one step away, you can start working on distance. Slowly increase distance and time until your pet fully understands the concept.

## Additional tips

Remember that patience and consistency are key!

On days when the pet seems fidgety and has a shorter attention span, keep the training session short and stop before the pup begins ignoring commands.

Start the training, in a quiet area. When the puppy's responds to commands become dependable, move the training to environments with more distractions. Be sure the pet knows once command before proceeding to the next.

Tone of voice is important. When teaching "come", "sit", and "down", use a happy high-pitched tone of voice. This will help motivate the pet to move. "Stay" requires a slow, deep-toned command.

Avoid repeating your command over and over. If your puppy is not taught to obey on the first command, it will learn that it's not necessary to obey until multiple commands are given.

Praise your puppy and say "good dog" whenever you are giving a food reward. This will reinforce desired behavior and help in training as the food reward is gradually withdrawn.

## Destructive Doggies

Most puppies have a strong, natural desire to investigate and chew. But this desire can be a major problem if your puppy digs up your garden or destroys your new shoes. Many owners rely solely on punishment to correct chewing or digging, but you'll find that reinforcing good behavior works better and keeps your dog happier. You can do this easily by giving your puppy a place where it can explore and investigate and by giving it safe, interesting chew toys. Plenty of play and exercise is a must for your puppy, since unused energy contributes to its desire to search and destroy.

## Chew toys

When selecting chew toys, begin with a variety of toys to determine which type your pup prefers. Just as children enjoy playing with new and novel items, you may find your puppy prefers to play with possessions over its own toys. Rotate different toys every few days to keep them interesting. When you see your pup chewing its toys, reward it with affection or a bit of puppy food. Toys made of sheet rawhide, nylon, and durable rubber are most practical. Some toys are designed so you can stuff food into openings (such as Kongs and Buster-cubes.) Others can be dipped in broth or covered with a small amount of food spread. This will increase your puppy's interest in the toys and will extend the length of time they stay occupied.



## Preventing problems

Even with an excellent selection of appealing chew toys, many household items may still be more inviting. Until you can trust your dog, supervise it or confine it to a safe area, such as its dog crate or exercise pen. Never give items to your puppy to chew that are like household items you don't want destroyed. For example, your puppy may not be able to distinguish between old and new shoes. As your puppy grows older and is allowed more freedom around the home, it's likely that your puppy may slip up and attempt to munch on things you want it to avoid. Some puppies can be taught to avoid these items by making them taste bad. Use commercial anti-chew sprays, citronella oil, booby traps, or a small amount of cayenne pepper mixed with water as deterrents. Punishment for chewing is not a good solution since it can cause your puppy to fear you. At best, it may only teach it not to chew the items when you're watching. Tugging on a head halter with a ten-foot leash is an appropriate way to immediately interrupt chewing.

## Anxiety

Destructive behavior is often a direct response to anxiety, not your dog's attempt to get even with you. Extreme anxiety and destructiveness during your absence may require an in-depth consultation with your veterinarian or behaviorist. Lessen the problem by teaching your dog that it cannot receive attention on demand. Train it to rest and sleep in its own bed or crate, rather than constantly lying near you. This will allow it to feel more confident when it is alone. Exercise your dog before you leave home and try to sneak out when it is occupied. Practice short departures, then gradually increase the length of time that your dog is alone.

## Digging

Dogs dig for several reasons: to cool off, chase rodents, bury and retrieve bones, escape confinement, or just for the fun of it. Digging commonly occurs when pets are left alone with insufficient stimulation. Provide your dog with stimulating chew toys, increased play and exercise, and perhaps even a second pet. Of course, give some extra thought to the addition of a second pet, since you could end up with two diggers instead of one.

Digging can be suppressed in your presence by punishment. However, unless you identify and address the cause, the digging will continue in your absence. Try these methods to discourage digging: remote punishment (turning on a sprinkler, pulling on an extended leash, tossing a tin can containing a few pebbles) or changing/covering the surface (placing chicken wire or rocks over the area or covering with concrete). For some dogs, the most practical solution is to provide a digging area. Build an eight-inch-deep wood frame and sink it into the ground. Mix the soil with sand and partially bury toys (smear a small amount of cheese or meat juice on the exposed ends). Occasionally give your dog food treats to reinforce appropriate digging.



## Barking and Growling Problems

Most dogs get noisy when exposed to anything new or unusual. The stimuli that trigger noise can vary from dog to dog and from household to household. This vocalization can come in the form of barking, whining, growling, or howling.

### Why all the racket?

Many situations can lead to barking:

- Strangers or other animals entering the dog's property
- Sight of prey, such as a squirrel running through the yard
- Separation from their pack, mother or family members
- New sounds, such as a smoke detector alarm
- Need for attention, food or affection
- Other anxieties or high states of arousal



Growling is associated with fearful or assertive displays. Whenever growling or barking is successful at achieving the pet's goals (e.g., the threat is chased away) the dog feels rewarded. Subsequently, the growling will likely become more frequent or intense.

Medical problems can contribute to vocalization, and senile changes may lead to barking in older pets. In some cases where barking becomes intense, repetitive, and difficult to interrupt it may be deemed compulsive. Pets with medical, geriatric, and compulsive disorders may benefit from medical therapy along with behavioral retraining techniques, so talk with your veterinarian if your pet is showing any of these signs.

### Prevention starts early

Socializing puppies to a variety of new people, animals, environments, and noises can reduce anxieties as the dog grows up. Owner control, training, and leadership are also essential. While young, the dog should learn to spend some of its time playing or relaxing by itself, perhaps in its bed or crate so that it's not too distressed when it must be left alone, as we all know must happen sometimes. When you give in to your dog's demands, its barking is rewarded. Allowing a barking dog to come indoors, or feeding, praising, playing with, or even just going to it to quiet it, may encourage barking. The dog feels that if it barks, you will eventually come. This is why we try to make sure people don't just pick up a puppy every time it cries.

### Correcting bad habits

Correcting a barking problem requires an understanding of the situations and stimuli that initiate barking. It is much more difficult to correct a problem than prevent them. Until effective control and leadership is established, training programs are unlikely to be successful. Increasing play and exercise, obedience training, and head halter training may be necessary before bark control can begin.

Once you have effective control over your dog, you can begin to train it to quiet down when barking begins. Training the dog to stop barking on command can be accomplished with lure-reward techniques, disruption techniques or head halter and leash training.

Begin training sessions with situations that are easily controlled (a family member knocking at the door) before proceeding to more difficult situations (a stranger coming to the door). Training a dog to be quiet on command allows it to continue to bark at stimuli but stop at your request. Rewards are then given for quiet behavior. At each subsequent training session, the dog should remain quiet a little longer before the reward is given. Teaching a dog to stop all barking in the presence of the stimulus is much more difficult. To be successful, barking must be interrupted immediately as it begins, and the process repeated until the dog does not bark at the stimulus (at which time it can be rewarded). Punishment is generally ineffective in the control and correction of barking problems. Excessive punishment can increase anxiety and further aggravate the problem, while insufficient punishment merely rewards the barking behavior by providing attention. For punishment to be effective, barking must be disrupted at the instant it begins, using a technique or device that effectively interrupts the barking. When you are not present as barking begins, the only solution might be to use bark-activated products. But unless the dog is also trained to be quiet in the presence of the stimulus, devices will only disrupt, not eliminate the barking habits.

### Practical products

There are several products that may successfully interrupt barking. Owner-activated devices are often effective at disrupting barking and achieving a quiet response. Devices include ultrasonic trainers, audible alarms, water sprayers, and shake cans (an empty soda can with coins or pebbles sealed inside).

Bark-activated products are often the most practical means of deterring inappropriate barking and may be a better choice than owner-activated devices since they ensure immediate and accurate timing, even when you are not present. They are also effective in training the dog to stop barking in selected areas. Off-collar, bark-activated alarms or water sprayers are useful when barking does not occur in a single, specific location. Audible and ultrasonic collars are occasionally effective but seldom a reliable deterrent. Citronella-spraying collars are effective with most dogs. Electronic shock collars are a final option. Since they have the potential for injury or abuse, discuss this option with your veterinarian. As soon as the barking ceases, take the opportunity to direct the dog into appropriate behavior, such as play, so the problem diminishes over time, and the dog feels reward for being quiet.



# Rough and Tumble Puppies



One of the reasons that we have pets is so that we can cuddle and play with them. Such interactions should be the source of much joy, but they often lead to injury to the pet or to the person. Rough play can worsen a behavioral problem that is developing. Some basic guidelines for appropriate play with dogs can minimize these problems and may also lead people to fully appreciate the intricacies of canine communication.

Puppies, like young children, are energetic, can quickly progress to lack of control and exhaustion in their play, and make mistakes in both the objects and the intensity of the play behaviors. Unlike human children, puppies and kittens do not have hands with opposable thumbs. Instead, they have jaw and tooth structure that allows them to carry and manipulate a variety of objects. Hence, much play between young dogs involves the use of their mouth. Puppies will also box, rear, and pounce on each other as part of play. Young animals transfer these behaviors to people unchanged.

## Boxing, Mounting, Rearing or Pouncing

Boxing, mounting, rearing or pouncing are normal puppy behaviors. These behaviors function to allow closeness and energetic play between animals and may help shape adult social behaviors and communication skills. By their second month of life, puppies begin to pay more attention to people and use the same behaviors that they use to communicate with other animals to communicate with humans. The tendency is for puppies to play with humans exactly as they would play with other puppies and for humans to mimic these puppy behaviors using their hands.

When dogs are small and do not weigh much, these wrestling and boxing behaviors tend to be noninjuries. However, as the animal grows the pouncing and boxing can injure a child, or, in the case of large-breed dogs, an adult human. Very exuberant, large-breed dogs can knock a human toddler to the ground and fracture the skull. Tragic deaths and injuries are no less tragic because the animal "didn't mean to do it." Puppies remain youngsters



until they are socially mature, which occurs at around 2 years of age. Accordingly, they cannot be expected to show the judgement and restraint that an older dog might. It is unfair to make the puppy solely responsible for the decisions about the directions that play will take. Human guidance **MUST** be provided.

Tackling, pawing and mounting by young animals can be acceptable if and only if the people involved can do the following: (1) always stop the behavior by saying no or by withdrawing, (2) redirect the behavior to another focus (a toy), and (3) gently correct the behavior so that it decreases in the future, should the behavior be too rough. If the animal's response to a gentle correction of standing up or withdrawing a leg is to attack it more forcefully, there is already a problem. Either the animal is already displacing some undesirable tendencies related to aggression and control, or the person has already taught the animal to play too roughly. Appropriate correction for forceful tackles or pouncing includes stopping, saying no, startling the animal (blowing in the animal's face may work), and asking the pet to exhibit a more appropriate behavior, such as sitting and waiting for a toy.

People should not correct animals by swatting them in the face or by thumping them on the rump. This only stimulates the animals to respond to the body part that has just been whacked and teaches puppies that rough play stimulates rough play. This is not the message you want to send. People should also refrain from exhibiting what they perceive to be human versions of canine correctional behaviors. These include rolling a dog over forcefully and lying on it while growling in its face; shaking a dog by the jowls, scruff or neck; swatting a dog cross the ears; slapping a dog under the chin; and so on. First, these behaviors are not mimics of behaviors that adult dogs exhibit toward puppies. Second, there is a real danger in overdoing them and causing the pet injury. The best emotional relationships with pets are founded on a basis that is devoid of fear and injury.

## Mouthing and biting

Mouthing and biting are common complaints of people who have inadvertently played too roughly with their dogs. No puppy should be encouraged to mouth.

Puppies do this naturally because they use their mouths much as humans

use hands. It is a simple matter to abort this behavior when it first

starts, but it can be very difficult to abort it if it has been ongoing for a

long time. The first thing a client should do when their puppy mouths

them is to say "no" and freeze. If clients pull their hand away from the

puppy, even if doing so to avoid a prick, they encourage the animal to

pursue the "game." Say "no", stop, and gently extricate or remove the

body part while holding the body of the animal. Then quickly offer the animal

something on which it can chew (a stuffed toy or ball) and tell the dog that it is good.

Repeat this often as necessary. If the animal persists, make a sharp noise, whistle, or blow

in the animal's face to startle it. Remember that the only reason to startle the animal is to

stop the behavior so that a more appropriate one can be taught. Most people understand

that they wish the animal to stop the behavior and can get them to do that; however, it is

equally important to reward the cessation of undesirable behavior with one that is more

appropriate.



Remember, puppies are very focused and will exhaust the average person almost instantly. You must be vigilant and, if you are not willing to be so, then consider placing

the animal in a safe area (its own room, a crate or pen) until they feel they have the

energy again to face the onslaught of play. Puppies need energetic, positive attention. If

they cannot get attention through positive means, they will get it through negative ones.

Clients are responsible for shaping the pet's behavior. Young puppies are just like young

children - if the only interaction they get is negative, they will learn to crave that negative

interaction, and like children, they will intensify the negative behaviors to get every-

increasing amounts of response.

Clients often think they do not have to correct puppy nipping because it is not injurious and does not hurt. This is incorrect. These dogs will get bigger; the bigger the dog, the

more powerful the jaws, and the more damage that the dog will do if it bites. The time to

learn to inhibit activity using the mouth is when the dog is young. If dogs are allowed to

mouth, they will form a behavioral habit in which mouthing is acceptable. It is much

harder to unlearn a behavior than to teach an appropriate one in the beginning.

People (often adult human males) often believe that they can teach their dogs to be protective by wrestling with them. This is wrong and dangerous. If a dog is going to protect a family when a threat is present, they will do so regardless of whether they play roughly. All this type of “training” does is to teach the dog to treat the family roughly. All this type of “training” does is to teach the dog to treat the family roughly. This is not what you want. Clients should use a toy, not their arm! Using a toy for playing helps a dog understand the contextual differences between play and threat. Dogs need this help, which is easy to provide.

## Teaching Tug

Clients often want to play an energetic game of tug with their pets. Many training manuals state not to do so because it will make the pet aggressive. This is not true. If the goal is to play appropriately, energetically, and interactively, clients can play tug with a pet if the following rules are observed:

1. The dog must sit and wait until the client is ready to start the game and until the toy is offered.
2. Clients must say “take it” and the dog must wait to take the toy until the request.
3. The client and the dog both pull on the toy, and the tugging is gentle and does not swing the dog around the room (which could injure its neck), and the dog is gentle and does not grab any body parts.
4. If the dog simply grazes any body parts, the client should act as if mortally wounded, stop the game, ask the dog to sit or, preferably, lie down, and the dog complies.
5. Again, offer the toy as in step 1.
6. The client decides when the game is over by announcing that it is time to stop (“stop”, “enough”, “that is it”), then dog sits (“sit”), and drops the toy into the client’s waiting hand (“drop it”), and the client always wins.
7. The client releases the dog (“okay”) and it goes off to do something else without charging.

If all these steps cannot be executed flawlessly, do not play tug. The client and the pet will be safer. Remember, dogs, like people, make mistakes. Clients must not lose their temper with an animal, particularly one that is a baby. Not only could a young pet be seriously injured by such irresponsibility, but also it sets the tone for future interactions and could teach that dog to be fearful, aggressive, or simply to play too roughly.

