

The Dog Lover's Guide to Your New Pet

THANK YOU for adopting your new dog from One Tail at a Time! Not only have you saved a life, but you are about to embark on one of the most rewarding personal experiences – sharing your life with a dog!



One Tail at a Time

www.onetail.org

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Dog Resource Guide

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Basic Needs

Lifetime Commitment

Adopting your dog is a lifelong commitment. Animals develop a bond with you and your family. Dogs are sensitive to their environment; major life changes such as switching owners and households can be dramatic and very stressful. You need to make sure you are ready to provide food, water, shelter, medical care and love throughout the life of your dog – this could be for 10 to 15 years. Dogs mature and age at much different rates; usually according to size and breed. It is commonly held that dogs age 7 years for every year that a human does. However, this serves only as a rough guide when converting and calculating your dog's age as dogs grow up very rapidly in their early years and then slow down.

You also need to make sure you are committed to keeping your dog as a trusted and loved companion as changes occur in your life (moving, job changes, etc.). There are many resources to utilize during these times of change that can make transitions smooth and comfortable for everyone.

No matter what age or how healthy you are, make sure you have preparations made for your dog if you become unable to care for him or her. This information should be incorporated into your will, or at minimum, a letter should be kept with your important papers. Make sure the caretaker knows they are responsible for your dog and that they should be contacted if something should happen.

An Enriching Environment

You need to make sure there are plenty of positive stimuli in your dog's environment. This would include changing out his toys, giving him treats that may or may not involve a challenge, playing with and petting her frequently, and giving her plenty of outside time but ultimately being kept inside as part of the family. Dogs are pack animals; it is important to make them feel like part of the pack (your family). You should spend 15-30 minutes, 3 times a day walking and playing with your dog at the very least. Always make sure you pet and praise your dog whenever you have the chance, even if it is a quick pat.

Sufficient Funds for Care

The average cost of care for one dog is \$800-\$1,000 per year. This includes basic supplies and routine medical care. Emergency care or care for an illness can cost from \$250-\$2,000. Care for a serious illness can cost in the area of \$5,000.

Proper Exercise

Dogs need plenty of exercise and socialization. Dogs enjoy a long walk in the park, visiting with the neighborhood dogs, riding in the car or sitting with you outside of the local coffee shop. A sufficient amount of exercise will prevent many unwanted behaviors. A tired dog is often a good dog! Each type of dog has different needs; it is important to understand if your dog is a working dog, a retriever, or a herder and then develop an exercise routine that matches his personality. Today, there are many options to make sure your dog gets plenty of stimulation and exercise; these include dog parks, agility courses, dog walking services, and day care. When exercising your dog, keep in mind that young puppies cannot handle much more than a walk around the block. Young puppies should not go running. At around 1 year of age, your dog can begin running with you. Animals, like humans, need to build up to longer, more intense exercise regimes. As your dog approaches his geriatric years, it is important to then decrease exercise and not force your older dog to keep the same activity level she had during her prime.

Potty Training and Use of a Crate

Your puppy will not automatically know it is inappropriate to soil in the home. It is your job to teach him. Regardless of age and background, housetraining is attainable for all dogs. Proper training requires time, patience, and consistency on your part. Some dogs will pick up on housetraining easily, while others may take more time.

Several strategies exist for potty training: crate, paper, pads, litter box, etc. Crate training is often the best choice – while learning not to soil in the house, your dog also learns to accept the crate as a safe, secure area. Dogs instinctively want a safe “den or resting area and usually learn not to soil it. Many crate trained dogs will be less anxious when kenneled for any reason – at the groomer, veterinarian, or boarding facility – because they are familiar with a crate or kennel environment. In order to accomplish these positive feelings about the crate, you should make sure the crate is a very comfortable place for your dog. Place a soft blanket inside and a favorite toy (that doesn’t have any pieces that can be swallowed). Give your dog treats when he is in the crate and don’t only have him go in the crate when you leave. The crate is a great tool to use when you need a break while at home (making dinner, cleaning the house, etc.). NEVER, ever use the crate for punishment. You want your dog to associate the crate with positive feelings.

It is very important to choose a crate size and type that is appropriate for your dog and use the crate properly. Your dog should be able to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably in the crate. You also want to make sure the crate is not too big. If your dog can eliminate on one side of the crate and lay down on the other side, the purpose of the crate (which is to not allow the dog to eliminate in his resting area) is defeated. Do not leave young puppies crated all day. Puppies 6-8 weeks old should be crated for no more than 2-3 hours at a time. As the puppy grows, crating time can gradually be lengthened. The general rule is the puppy can be crated for however many months they are old, plus one hour. So for a 5 month old puppy, she can be crated for up to 6 hours. Paper or litter box training is appropriate for small dogs that will not have regular access to outdoors. This is a great option if you live in a high rise building.

Regardless of what training strategy you use, your dog should immediately be taken to the designated area immediately upon waking in the morning, then frequently throughout the day, and finally right before bedtime. If you have a puppy, he will also need to go out prior to playing, after playing or eating, and as many other times as you can. Be sure to also watch your dog’s body language. Behaviors such as pacing, whining, circling, excessive sniffing or squatting indicate that your dog may need to eliminate. If you catch your dog exhibiting any of these behaviors, interrupt her and immediately take her outside. If she eliminates outside, praise her profusely and give her a treat.

If your dog/puppy has an “accident” in the house, or somewhere other than the designated area, immediately clean it up using an odor remover (so he doesn’t feel compelled to go in that area again). If you catch your puppy in the act of having an “accident,” take him immediately to the designated soil area. NEVER discipline or punish the puppy if you find an “accident” after the fact. He will not understand what the scolding is for. The act of punishing a dog for having an accident in the house can bring about behavior problems.

Plan to crate your dog or puppy while you are away for as long as it takes you to feel comfortable leaving them with the run of the house. For most puppies, this will occur around 1 year of age.

Obedience Training

Every dog deserves a great start, which is why it is highly encouraged that you attend a dog training class as soon as possible after getting your dog. Regardless of age, breed, or where you got the dog from, every dog can benefit from training. Attending an obedience training class is crucial in preventing future behavior problems by socializing dogs, developing the human to animal bond, rewarding them for appropriate behavior, and teaching basic commands that will help you and your dog communicate for a lifetime. Obedience training is not only for the dog, it’s for the owner too. So be sure to take your dog to an obedience training class where you are a part of the training. “Boot camp” type training can be appropriate with more difficult training issues.

If you adopt a puppy, you should sign up for a “Puppy Preschool Socialization Class” right away. Puppy classes begin for puppies as early as 10-16 weeks, when puppies are in their crucial socialization period. Training continues for the life of your puppy, and we encourage you to continue to take classes to educate yourself and your dog to ensure that you will both live many happy years together.

Secured Traveling

It is very dangerous to drive with a dog in the back of a pick-up truck. Not only can he be accidentally thrown from a truck as the driver swerves or stops, but flying debris can injure or kill your dog. It is recommended that any animal traveling in a vehicle be placed in a secured area (such as a crate, carrier, dog seatbelt, or the back of your car if it has a wall so they cannot get projected into the front seats if you have to slam on the brakes).

Never leave your dog unattended in public (tied to a tree or post while you go into a store/coffee shop). This is a perfect opportunity for your dog to get stolen or mistreated.

If you need to bring your dog with you on a plane, call ahead to the airline you are traveling on BEFORE booking your flight. Most have policies already in place that allow dogs to be placed in temperature-controlled cargo areas, but some airlines do not allow animals at all.

Basic Supplies

Dish Ware

We recommend stainless steel, glass, or ceramic food and water bowls. Avoid plastic containers – toxins in the plastic and the porous material encourage bacterial build up that could eventually cause major health problems in your pet.

Food

We recommend high quality, dry dog food twice a day for adult dogs. Although it is more expensive, high quality dog food provides your pet with much more nutrition and natural ingredients than cheaper or generic foods that are usually stuffed with “fillers.” Treats should be used as a reward during training, but limited throughout the day. Giving your dog lots of treats may make her happy and is fun for you but can quickly lead to weight problems such as obesity.

Young puppies should start out with frequent meals (3-4) and eventually move to two meals a day. Usually, by 4 months of age, a puppy can begin eating twice a day. Read the label of your chosen dog food for serving sizes. (Keep in mind that dog food companies are in the business of selling dog food! You will want to feed your dog slightly less than the recommendation on the label). If you are going to change the brand of food, slowly change it over 1 to 2 weeks as animals’ stomachs are much more sensitive than humans’ and do not require the same variety in diet as people do. The weaning process should look something like this:

First few days: 1 part new food, 3 parts old food

Next few days: half new food, half old food

Final few days: 1 part old food, 3 parts new food

This will allow your dog’s system to adjust to the new brand. If they should vomit or have diarrhea, go back to the original brand.

Wet food should only be used in situations where your dog needs to gain weight or to encourage eating. If the wet food is simply being used to encourage eating, mix a small amount of wet food into the dry food at each meal. Gradually stop adding the wet food. You can add warm water to the dry food to moisten it up and bring out flavor as you wean the wet food out. Once you have a healthy, eating dog, there is no need for wet food.

As your dog ages and gets into his geriatric years, you will need to switch him to a senior food that is specially formulated to be low in fat and salt for a healthy heart, lower in calories to help combat obesity since they are less active, lower in protein to help the kidneys and live, and higher in fiber for the bowels to prevent constipation.

Water

Your dog should always have access to fresh water – changed at least twice a day. We recommend filtered, purified, or bottled water. Dogs, like humans, are impacted when impurities and toxins are found in their drinking water.

Places to Sleep

Every dog needs to have at least one bed. If you have enough room, you can have a bed in the bedroom where you sleep and in the main room where you spend most of your time. If your dog has his own bed, he is less likely to want to sleep on the furniture or in bed with you. A dog's bed is a source of comfort. If he is going to be in a strange environment, you should try to take his bed with for him.

Provide your pet with its own bed away from heavy traffic areas. All dogs, especially puppies, require sleep during the day as well as at night. If you are using a crate for potty training, be sure to leave the door open for your dog to go in when you are home. *Never, ever use the crate for punishment.* It should only be used as a comforting environment that your pet feels protected in.

Leashes & Collars

Dogs should have a buckle collar that has an ID tag and a rabies tag. You should be able to put two fingers between the collar and the dog's neck. If it's too tight, you may end up choking the dog; if it's too loose the dog can slip out. Make sure your dog's collar is fit properly at all times. There are a variety of training collars on the market. Consult your vet or a trainer to see if a training collar such as a Gentle Leader or a Martingale Collar is right for your dog.

The leash should be 4 to 6 feet long so that you can retain control of the dog. Retractable leashes are not recommended as they do not give you as much control over your dog. In public, your dog should be on a leash at all times. Even the best trained dogs can be scared and run out into traffic. If you have a fenced in yard, obviously your dog can be off leash, but you need to make sure the gate or door is closed at all times and there are no gaps in the fence so the dog cannot run out.

Toys

Toys are a great way to provide your dog with the mental and physical stimulation that make for a happier and healthier pet. There are a variety of different toys available today. You will need to experiment with a variety of toys to discover your dog's preference. We highly recommend Kong brand toys and other toys that involve a mental challenge. A Kong is a hollow toy that you fill with treats and top off with a dollop of peanut butter. (There are even Kong recipes online!) Your dog has to lick away the peanut butter and bat the Kong around so that the treat inside falls out. You can even freeze the Kong for a longer activity. Kongs are a great mental challenge for your dog and can keep him occupied for a long time depending on how much of a "Kong expert" they are/become.

If your dog enjoys tearing apart toys, make sure he does not get to the "squeaker" that is often inside a toy. Your dog can choke on the squeaker or stuffing. Be cautious of what toys you leave in the dog's crate while you are away, as well. Rope toys, or toys that don't have any part a do can swallow, are best.

Socialization

Why Socialize?

If the world was perfect, we could protect our dogs from negative, anxious and frightening situations. In the real world, we must help our dogs learn how to cope and respond, in a healthy and acceptable manner to the spectrum of people, animals, places, etc. they might encounter along the road of life. By exposing our dogs to different kinds of people, animals, and environments, we can help them develop confidence and ease. No matter when you adopt your dog, you can apply canine socialization principles to help her be a more stable, happy, trustworthy companion. Socialization does not end at puppy hood. While the foundation for good behavior is laid during the first few months (and these are a very important few months as puppies are learning what to accept and what to fear), good owners encourage and reinforce social skills

throughout the dog's life. Socialization should continue for as long as possible until your dog greets every new person or situation with confidence and ease (this could take months or years).

Often times, under-socialized dogs will become fearful of what they have never seen/met. They will act aggressively towards a certain type of person, animal, or experience. In order to avoid this, you will need to expose your dog to as many experiences as possible in your beginning time with her.

People

Dogs and puppies depend on you to make sure they are exposed to as many different people as possible, especially in the first few months of their lives. The more exposure they get to a wide variety of people, the more likely they are to be happy and well adjusted. By the age of 12 weeks, your puppy should be introduced to at least 100 people. Try to bring your puppy with you to as many places as possible or maybe have a party at your house so he can start meeting people right away. Make sure you have your puppy meet people of different ethnicities and ages, as well as people wearing/using a variety of items (baseball hats, costumes, wheelchairs, bicycles, dark coats, glasses, etc.).

If you're bringing a new adult dog into your home, your major concern is to check out how well socialized the dog is and to strengthen any weak spots. For example, if you find that this dog is a bit uncomfortable with men in hats, then you must make a concerted effort to help your new dog to learn to love men wearing hats.

Experiences

As with socializing your dog to people, it is also of utmost importance to expose your dog to a wide variety of experiences as well. You will want to make sure you have treats on hand in the beginning so your dog will connect new experiences with good things (treats!). Some of the experiences you will want your dog to get used to as early as possible as bathing, clipping nails, going to the vet, buses passing by, bicyclists passing by, walking on a leash, getting groomed, people walking by, and noises of everyday life. You want to praise any good behaviors (sniffing, walking calmly, sitting politely) with a treat. Undesirable behaviors should be ignored while trying to redirect your dog's attention to you.

Often times a dog whose only outside time is in a fenced in backyard becomes under-socialized. As mentioned, dogs need to experience a wide variety of people and situations. If the only interaction a dog has is with your family and friends in your backyard, he is likely to miss some great socializing opportunities. Make sure that even if you have a fenced in backyard, you still take your dog on walks to meet the neighborhood sounds, people, and animals.

Animals

Your dog is going to encounter a lot of other animals in his life, so he needs to be ready for those experiences. The key is to allow your dog to experience meeting these other animals as often as possible and reward him for good behavior.

Puppies will probably already have some experience with other dogs from being in a litter. With older dogs you really don't know what you're dealing with in terms of past socialization. They may have already accumulated negative experiences with other dogs, so it is important with older dogs to take it slow and start off finding out what he is and is not comfortable with. Some great ways to socialize your dog to others are through obedience classes, doggy daycare, and dog parks. Be sure you know how your dog behaves before taking him to a dog park. Not all dogs are "dog park dogs." And keep in mind that it does not necessarily mean your dog has behavior problems if they don't like every dog they meet. People are not friends with everyone they meet, so give your dog time to get to know a number of different dogs so he can feel more comfortable in social settings.

Grooming

Socialization to Grooming

Grooming sessions should always be fun, so be sure to schedule them when your dog's relaxed, especially if he is the excitable type. Until your pet is comfortable being groomed, keep the sessions short – just 5 to 10 minutes. Gradually lengthen the time until it becomes routine for your dog. You can help him get comfortable being touched and handled by making a habit of petting every single part of your dog, including potentially sensitive areas as the ears, tail, belly, back, and feet. Most importantly of all, pile on the praise and offer your pooch a treat when the session is finished!

Trimming Nails

Your dog's nails should just barely touch the ground when she walks. If your dog's nails are clicking on the floor or getting snagged in the carpet, it's time to trim them. Your vet or groomer should show you how to trim your dog's nails the first time and help you decide which type of trimmer would work best for your dog. You should always use trimmers designed for pets that are very sharp. When trimming, start at the tip of the nail and snip a little. Look at the cut edge of the nail and when you start to see pale pink tissue near the top of the cut edge, stop. Avoid cutting into the quick, which contains nerves and blood vessels. It is painful and will bleed easily. On white nails, the quick is the pink section. Be extra careful when cutting dark nails because the quick is difficult to see. If the tip of the nail begins to bleed, apply pressure using a styptic powder or a substitute such as baby powder, flour, or cotton. Avoid wiping the blood clot off the tip of the nail once the bleeding has stopped. Remember to trim the dewclaw nail, on the inside of the leg. Since it doesn't touch the ground, it wears down less rapidly than the others. Trim nails once or twice a month. The quick will lengthen if you don't trim the nail regularly, and the long nails can cause traction problems or become ingrown.

Brushing

Regular grooming will help keep your pet's hair in good condition by removing dirt, spreading natural oils throughout her coat, preventing tangles and keeping her skin clean and irritant-free. Also, grooming time is a great time to check for fleas and flea dirt – those little black specks that indicate your pet is playing host to a flea family. Different brushes and brushing techniques are used for different breeds. Check with your vet to see what type of brush you should use, how often you should brush your dog, and what process you should use for brushing your dog.

Bathing

You should bathe your dog only once every couple of months or so. Always use a mild, dog formula shampoo (never human shampoo – it is not formulated for dogs' skin). Before you bathe your dog, give him a good brushing to remove all dead hair and mats. Then, place a rubber bath mat in the bathtub to provide secure footing and fill the tub with about 3 to 4 inches of lukewarm water. Use a spray hose, pitcher, or cup to thoroughly wet your pet, taking care not to spray directly in his ears, eyes or nose. Next, gently massage in the label's recommended amount of shampoo, working from head to tail. Finally, thoroughly rinse out all the shampoo, again avoiding the ears, eyes and nose. Dry your pet with a large towel; don't use a hair dryer on your pet as it will dry out his skin and can cause irritation.

Dental Hygiene

Home dental care is the first line of defense against periodontal disease in dogs, and the biggest weapon is the toothbrush. The brushing action of the toothbrush removes plaque. Ideally brushing should be done daily, but a minimum of 3 to 5 times weekly is recommended. You should use a soft bristled toothbrush and veterinary approved dog formula toothpaste, not human toothpaste. Beef or chicken flavored toothpastes work well.

You should make brushing your pet's teeth a positive experience. Start early with your puppy if possible. The first step in the process is to have your pet get used to having you handle him around his mouth. When first touching the mouth you could put a tasty treat on your finger to make the experience positive for your

pet. Once your pet is comfortable with this, begin rubbing the gums. Then gradually increase the time you spend playing with the mouth.

Adult teeth start to come through when the puppy is between 4 and 7 months of age (you will find your dog's puppy teeth on your floor if you look closely.) Some dogs, especially adult dogs that were not socialized to the tooth brushing process as a puppy, won't allow their owners to brush their teeth. Other than tooth brushing, several other approaches are available which may also help prevent dental disease. These include gels and rinses that are rubbed on the gums and specialized treats. There are also diets formulated to help reduce plaque; ideally these should be used along with brushing your dog's teeth, not instead of.

Ear Cleaning

Caring for your pets' ears is an important way to reduce the chance of ear infections and excess wax build up. Routine cleaning and at home examinations let you detect any infections or other problems early. Prompt treatment offers a better prognosis, reduces the potential for chronic disease or hearing loss, and gives earlier relief for any discomfort your dog may have. Ear cleaning starts with good general grooming. Excess, dirty, or matted hair should be removed from around the ear canal and the ear flap.

To clean the inside of your dog's ears, start by using a dog formulated ear cleaner. Soak a cotton ball thoroughly in the ear wash. Squeeze out excess ear wash. Place the cotton ball in your dog's ear and gently rub up and down. Allow your dog to shake off excess moisture. This is important for preventing ear infections. If the ear canal looks abnormal, clean only the outside and consult a vet. How often you will need to clean depends on your dog's breed, hair coat, activities, age, and the amount of ear wax she produces. Most dogs with normal ears should have a cleaning at least once a month. Others may need more frequent cleanings, especially those that swim or get their ears wet regularly.

Body Language

Reading Canine Body Postures

While dogs cannot speak our languages, they do display their state of mind via their body language. By taking careful note of ear position, pupil dilation, facial tension (particularly around the muzzle and forehead), tail carriage and body weight distribution, an observer can detect whether a dog is relaxed or fearful, or acting in a submissive or dominant manner toward the observer. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between play and aggression when dogs are with one another, as playing usually can include showing of teeth, growling and barking, biting, and pulling on fur. It is important to pay attention to other factors, as noted below, such as raised hackles, and tail and ear position, to determine when play has turned into aggression.

Neutral Relaxed

A neutral, relaxed dog will have the following body positions: head erect, ears up, tail relaxed and wagging, weight distributed evenly over all four feet, and a relaxed mouth that is slightly open.

Arousal

An aroused dog will have the following body positions: eyes large and staring hard, ears up and forward, tail up and bristled with a stiff wag, stiff legs with the weight over the front legs, and a tense muzzle with lips lifted to display teeth. An aroused dog is stimulated by something in the environment. When the dog is excited by something pleasurable, the hackles (the erectile hairs along the back of the neck) will be down and the tail will be carried a little lower and will loosely wag. The muzzle will be relaxed and the tongue may be seen. This posture may be displayed to subordinates in order to express higher ranking pack position.

Aggressive Attack

A dog that is about to attack will have the following body positions: ears erect and tilted forward, hackles may be up, tail stiff and raised, weight forward, teeth bared and snarling, lips curled, and eyes staring. This threatening posture is used to chase away another animal or to protect possessions, pack, or self.

Active Submission

An actively submissive dog will have the following body positions: ears back, tail hanging low and slowly wagging, a raised paw, mouth clearly closed with the tip of the tongue darting out, and eyes half closed and blinking. This pacifying posture is used when a dog acknowledges another dog or human's higher social ranking, or to inhibit another's aggression. A submissive dog may greet a more dominant dog with a muzzle nudge, a lick, or a tongue flick as an appeasement (pacifying) gesture.

Passive Submission

A passively submissive dog will have the following body positions: ears back, lying on back with belly exposed, tail tucked, releasing urine droplets, and a head turned away with an indirect gaze. This surrendering position is offered to a more dominant or aggressive individual.

Defensive Aggression

A defensively aggressive dog will have the following body positions: ears back, pupils dilated, hackles may be up, tail down and tensed, posture mildly crouched, weight over rear legs, and a tense, wrinkled, snarling muzzle with teeth exposed. When fearful, a dog will give warning signals to indicate that he does not wish to be approached. If unheeded, he will bite to protect himself.

Dog to Dog Communication

When dogs meet other dogs, they signal their status in relation to each other. Actions like raising a forepaw, looking away, licking or nudging at the other's muzzle or bowing with the forelegs, are submissive gestures. Mounting, raising up stiffly on one's toes, or placing one's head over another's withers (the place where the neck meets the back) indicate the more dominant individual of that interaction. Dogs also sniff each other's genital regions when greeting to gather information on sexual status.

Maternal Correction

In a maternal correction the mother dog quickly snarls and places her mouth around the muzzle or head of the puppy. The puppy submits by flattening to the ground and whimpering. The puppy will tuck its tail and raise its paw. The mother dog is disciplining the dog with a quick muzzle grasp and the pup learns to offer submissive body postures.

Play Solicitation

The play bow is a combination of dominant and submissive gestures. It is offered to invite another to play or as part of courtship behavior. A dog that is soliciting play will have the following body positions: ears up, tail up and loosely wagging, eyes soft, mouth open and relaxed, tongue exposed, front end lowered and ready to leap forward.

Introducing a New Dog into Your Household

Households with a Dog

First of all, you need to realize that your dog will not always get along with every other dog. Dogs are like people - they are drawn to some, while others may take some getting used to, and still others may not ever get along (they may tolerate each other but won't be the best of friends). Also, prior to introducing a new dog into your family, you need to be ready to accept changes in your current dog. As hard as it may be to watch an animal you thought of as dominant take a lesser position in the household, it is vital that you step back and let the animals determine their social status. Your current dog may be quite relieved to relinquish the stressful position of leader to a new dog. Unless you believe that one of the animals may be injured, let them work things out and then accept the structure they establish. Here is how you should introduce them:

- Make sure you pick a neutral, quiet place, where there are not toys or treats to introduce them
- Feed and exercise both dogs and allow them each to go to the bathroom prior to the introduction

- Make sure both dogs are leashed and both handlers have a tight grip on the leashes
- Slowly allow the dogs to approach each other
- Let the two dogs sniff each other for several minutes while the handlers observe the body language
- Interrupt any signs of aggression with a spritz of water, a loud noise, or by pulling the dogs away from each other by the leashes. NEVER attempt to separate the dogs with your hands. This is how a lot of people get bit.
- If the dogs seem to enjoy each other, let them play together for a while
- Take the dogs on a long walk together
- Eventually, bring them both back to your home. Keep them on the leashes until you are comfortable with their behavior. Make sure there are no toys or treats on the floor.
- Gradually introduce toys to both of the dogs, making sure there are plenty around (not just one)
- If you are confident that the dogs are getting along, allow the dogs to be off leash but supervised
- Increase the time they are together until they are fully trusted to be unleashed together- it can take days, weeks, or even months until you feel comfortable
- Keep the dogs separated when you are unable to supervise, until you are confident that no harm will be done

Advantages of a Multi-Dog Household

There are many advantages of having a multiple dog household. Two or more dogs that are compatible can provide exercise for each other. This works best when they are of similar size and activity level (a puppy will only annoy a laid back adult dog – not “pep him up”), and are free of physical problems that could cause pain or irritability. Two or more dogs can also provide each other with dog-to-dog social interaction. This daily contact with their own species tends to keep their ability to communicate with other dogs in good shape. It also keeps away boredom. Finally, humans who enjoy watching dog behavior will enjoy seeing the family dogs interact. Since you also get to see the dog-to-dog relationships develop over time, your understanding of your dogs can grow by watching how they react to each other. Your ability to read canine body language can be enhanced.

Households with a Cat

Introducing a dog to a cat is a much slower process than introducing a dog to another dog. There is a serious risk involved if you introduce these two animals incorrectly. Be sure that you go slowly, and follow all the steps outlined below. The ultimate goal is to have your cat be confident that the dog does not pose a threat. Once this is established, the opportunity for a wonderful friendship can begin. Here is a how you should introduce them:

- Keep them separated for a week or so– when you bring your new dog home, have a separate space set up for the cat with a litter box, toys, water, bed and a scratching post. A spare bedroom would be perfect.
- Scent is the all-important factor in cat to dog introductions. Before letting the pets have visual contact with each other, let them smell each other’s bedding.
- Encourage interaction through the door – Place your cat’s food near the door of her room so she stays near the door. Your dog will smell and hear her through the door. Give your dog treats near the door of the new cat’s room so that he associates it with good things.
- Let the cat roam alone – Put your dog in the bedroom, and let the cat roam around the house. This lets your cat explore and get exercise. Then put your cat back in her room and let the dog walk around and smell her without having to see the new cat. This is a great way to get them used to each other’s scent.
- Reward obedience on the dog’s part with a treat.
- Now it is time for the introduction. Make sure your dog is wearing a properly fit collar and leash. Have another family member or friend bring in the cat and have them sit down with the cat on their lap at an opposite end of the room. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and the dog are tolerating each other without signs of fear or aggression.
- Next move the animals closer with the dog still on the leash and the cat gently held in a lap. If the cat does not like to be held use a crate or carrier. If the cat becomes frightened, increase the distance between the animals and progress more slowly.

- Initially, the dog should be wearing a collar and a leash when the cat is present so that any attempt to bark at or chase can be stopped instantly. Praise and treats should be lavished on the dog when he is calm and obedient in the cat's presence.

Keep the dog and cat separated when you are not home until you are certain that the animals are safe around each other unsupervised. Be sure the cat does not have to pass through or by the dog's area to get to his food, water, or litter box. If your dog enjoys raiding the litter box, place a gate across the entrance of the room where the litter box is kept to allow the cat to pass through but not the dog.

Households with Children

From the start, children should be taught how to properly approach a dog. The child should be taught some basic dog body language so that they will know to leave the dog alone when his fur is raised, he is baring his teeth, his tail is between his legs, or he is growling. Your child should be taught how to properly pet a dog, not to pull its tail or ears, not to run away screaming from a dog, not to try to play with a sleeping, eating, or nursing dog, or try to take his toys or food or treats away. A child should also not play with a dog unsupervised. The key to a harmonious household is to supervise the interactions between the dog and the young child. Children can share in the responsibility of caring for your dog; just make sure that an adult is ultimately responsible for the care of the dog.

Households with Senior Citizens

Dogs can make great companions for senior citizens. The most important thing for seniors is to make sure they can provide the care and support required in owning a dog. This includes being able to walk and manage the dog. The temperament and size of the dog needs to be taken into consideration when choosing a dog for a senior. Also, it is important for a senior citizen to establish who will take care of the dog if they become unable to do so themselves.

Allergies

Controlling allergies takes some work, but it is definitely doable if someone is committed to it. The allergens your pet carries are associated with its skin, hair follicles, and saliva. Dander, a naturally occurring combination of skin cells and saliva, is most often the cause of pet allergies. Dander is shed from your dog and embeds itself in carpeting, furniture, and draperies and stays in the environment for a long time causing allergic reactions. It is the protein in this dander that causes the reactions. Some dogs shed more of this dander than others, making them less tolerable than other dogs.

The problem of allergies can be solved by making some minor adjustments to your environment. People who have allergies are rarely allergic to just one particular thing. Since the allergic person is sensitive to more than one thing, it is the "Total Allergen Level" that causes a reaction. Whether or not a person has symptoms depends on how many allergens are in the environment. An individual who is allergic to animals may exhibit no noticeable symptoms when the total exposure is below his allergy threshold level. The goal should be to minimize exposure to allergens that exceed your tolerance threshold and trigger attacks. Air purifiers, vacuums with air filters, and keeping your environment clean and free of dust and hair are important in controlling your allergies. If you have allergies, you might want to consider not letting your dog sleep on your pillows or bed.

Feeding a high quality diet greatly reduces dander production due to the dog's skin being healthier. There are food, treats, and shampoos on the market that reduce shedding, thus reducing dander production. There are also de-shedding tools such as the Furminator that can reduce the allergic reactions as well. Talk to your physician about medications that are available to help with allergies.

Dog Proof your House

Make sure your house does not have any items that are harmful to your dogs. This can include poisonous plants, plastic bags, and chemical cleaners. Chemicals in household cleaners can be dangerous to your dog. Please check the labels. The ASPCA Poison Control Hotline (888.426.4435) can provide pet owners with additional and valuable information about household chemicals and plants that can be harmful to your pets or you can call your local animal ER for free help over the phone. If you have a puppy, you will want to make sure that all your valuables and small items that the puppy could get into are off the floor.

In Case of Emergency

Make sure you have the following phone numbers in an easily visible and accessible place:

- The name, number and address of your vet – If you are on vacation, call before you leave to authorize treatment and payment in case something happens while you are gone.
- The name, number and address of the closest emergency vet (24 hour).
- ASPCA Poison Control Hotline
- Important medical information – Medications, allergies, etc.
- The person's information (name, number) of who to call in case something happens to you.

Behaviors

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement dog training is a humane method of teaching your dog to perform behaviors using a reward such as treats, attention, verbal praise, etc. Rewarding appropriate dog behavior makes that behavior more likely to occur in the future and is one of the most powerful tools you can use to shape or change your dog's actions. Positive reinforcement dog training not only teaches your dog what behaviors you desire in a humane manner, it also creates stronger bonds between you and your dog.

Attention Seeking Behavior

Attention seeking behavior is one of the most common canine management problems. The high social nature of dogs contributes to attention seeking behavior which can take the form of pawing, pushing, jumping, mouthing, barking at, eliminating in front of, or any other behavior which the dog has deduced will get your attention. Attention seeking behavior may be either active or passive, and the attention it elicits may be either negative or positive.

To prevent attention seeking behavior from developing, always ask your dog to do something (sit, stay, come, etc.) before getting anything (food, walks, attention, petting, toys, etc.). Ignore any attempts to get your attention (even negative attention) through undesirable behavior! This means that if your dog jumps on you to get your attention, instead of pushing the dog down, shrug the dog off and walk away. Do not give your dog any attention until she has exhibited a desirable (sit on command) behavior. Your goal is to teach your dog acceptable forms of attention getting (such a sitting, lying quietly, etc.). In order to succeed, you will need to praise and reward the dog whenever she is calm and relaxed.

Barking

Many dogs with barking "problems" are merely exhibiting normal canine behavior in response to environmental stimuli (i.e. sights, sounds, and scents). Some breed types such as terriers and scent hounds have been bred to bark more readily than others. Because barking is a self-reinforcing behavior, it is important to teach you dog what type of barking you find acceptable right from the start. To do this, you must first discover what causes your dog to bark. Solving this problem may be as simple as eliminating the source. For example, if your dog barks out the window at other dogs, you might try leaving the curtains/blinds closed and using a radio/TV to mask outside sounds.

If your dog barks in your presence, you can begin to teach him a more acceptable behavior in place of the barking, such as sitting on command. You will need to consistently interrupt (using a stimulus such as water, a loud noise, head halter, etc.) your dog as soon as she begins to bark and immediately redirect her to another activity. As soon as your dog engages in the acceptable activity, praise and reward her. Never give your dog any direct attention (including verbal or physical corrections) while he is barking. Some dogs regard even negative attention (such as being scolded) as desirable.

There are a few quick solutions to undesirable barking. Ultrasonic anti-bark collars are not effective on most dogs. The stimulus of barking is just more rewarding than the deterrent. "Shock" or "electronic impulse" collars work by causing pain and can heighten anxiety. If you need a humane way to control your dog's barking when you are away, you may want to consider a citronella anti-bark collar (such as the ABS Anti-Bark Collar™). Citronella collars emit a citrus oil mist in response to the dog's bark that discourages

the dog from barking without causing fear or pain. While you still need to address the cause of your dog's barking, citronella collars can be a useful tool in preventing excessive barking.

Digging

Digging in yards should be curtailed by constant supervision and plenty of exercise. Many dogs will dig out of boredom. If you think this is the case, increase exercise and play time, and decrease unsupervised outside time. Some breeds are bred to dig (many terriers), so redirection to an allowed digging area should be considered. Never directly punish your dog for digging. Remember, for many breeds, this is a very natural activity. If you can catch your dog in the middle of digging, interrupt him with an indirect stimulus, and then redirect him to acceptable behavior. Praise profusely once he engages in good behavior.

Mouthing and Chewing

Mouthing and chewing are most common in young puppies and new dogs in the household, especially in play and while teething. It's up to you to teach your puppy or dog what is acceptable and what is not. First of all, dogs must learn to inhibit their bite before they are 4 months old. Normally, they would learn this from their mother, their littermates and other members of the pack. However, sometimes puppies are taken away from this environment before the learning is complete, so we must take over the training. If your dog or puppy mouths on your hand, make a quick, high pitched yipping noise to simulate what your dog's littermate would do if they mouthed him too hard. Discontinue any playing and leave the room; do not look or give any attention to your dog. Eventually, he will learn that the mouthing behavior makes playtime and attention come to a quick stop, which is undesirable to him.

There are several anti-mouthing and anti-chewing products on the market. Apple cider vinegar, mouthwash, and Bitter Apple spray can all be put on anything you do not want your dog to mouth or chew on (hands, ankles, chair legs, etc.) to discourage him from mouthing or chewing.

To discourage chewing, make sure you have fully puppy proofed your house so that nothing valuable or dangerous is on the dog's level for him to get in to. Make sure you constantly supervise your new dog or puppy so that you can teach him what is acceptable for him to chew on, and what is not. Do not let your new dog or puppy wander around the house getting into whatever he pleases. Keep your new dog or puppy with you or safely confined to a dog friendly area (crate, bathroom, etc.). Once your dog is has learned what not to chew on in a room, introduce him to another room. Do not let your animal have run of the house until you are sure that it is safe to do so. Most puppies aren't ready for a full run of the house while you are gone until 1 year of age.

Destruction

Destruction can include normal chewing/teething or play behavior. Preventing destruction by limiting access to vulnerable items is the easiest way to deal with this problem. Redirecting chewing to appropriate toys (if you catch your dog chewing on your shoes, a shoe-like toy is not appropriate; she won't be able to tell the difference), increasing exercise, and providing stimulating playthings (Buster Cubes™, stuffed Kongs™, etc.) can also help eliminate inappropriate destructive behavior. Many plants are poisonous and should be kept out of reach of your new dog. Never directly punish your dog for destructive behavior. If you can catch your dog in the middle of destructing, interrupt him with an indirect stimulus, and then redirect him to acceptable behavior. Praise profusely once he engages in good behavior.

Jumping

Jumping is a habit that is important to break early on. Your dog should learn as soon as possible that jumping is not an appropriate way to greet people. When your dog jumps on you, make sure you do not give him any attention (even yelling) and turn your back to him. Only turn around if your dog sits or stands nicely. He will realize that in order to get attention, he needs to sit or stand nicely. Try to get as many people to follow this same rule with your dog. You may want to put your dog on a leash when visitors come over so that you can control him more.

Inappropriate Playing

Mouthing, jumping, mounting, and rough play need to be discouraged from the very first day you bring your new dog home. Remember that what is cute and playful in a puppy can be annoying and dangerous in an adult dog. Teach your dog to only play with toys (not hands, feet and other body parts). Ignore all inappropriate playing and avoid rough play. Teach your dog rules for play (drop, stop, etc.) and constantly reinforce them.

Aggression

Aggression is a very serious behavior problem and is surprisingly common in dogs. It is a myth that only "vicious" dogs bite or that once a dog bites, the only alternative is to put her to sleep. Virtually all species of animal have a variety of aggressive behaviors in their repertoires to defend themselves from perceived threats, as well as to compete for resources such as food, mates and sleeping locations.

When a dog is uncomfortable around strangers, or dislikes certain strangers, such as men, kids or uniformed people, it is usually because he has not been fully socialized. When dogs threaten or bite family members, the usual suspects are resource guarding and poor tolerance of body handling. This behavior frequently pops up in our pet dogs, in the form of possessiveness of anything from food dish and bones to sofas, tissues and even garbage! Luckily, there are exercises owners can do to make their dogs much more relaxed around resources. It is best to consult a trainer with help for aggression issues.

Handle-ability problems are also common in pet dogs. Many will be naturally reluctant to have their bodies touched or manipulated, in certain places or in certain ways. If they are not taught to accept and enjoy handling, they may threaten or bite in this context. Gradual exercises can desensitize dogs to being patted, hugged, grabbed by their collars and to tolerate having their feet, mouths, tails and bodies handled and restrained.

Dogs that have serious difficulties with other dogs often have similar issues as dogs that have problems with people: resource guarding (against dogs), under-socialization (to dogs) and poor bite inhibition. Dogs will also occasionally learn that it is fun to bully other dogs. Treatment efforts may include desensitization and counter conditioning, remedial socialization, prompting and selective reinforcement of more polite on-leash manners and changing the consequences for dogs that bully.

Dogs are highly social, to the point of compulsion. When most dogs spot another dog on the street, they are highly motivated to approach and investigate. Being on leash restricts their ability to do so. The resulting frustration translates into increased excitement and agitation, which can be alarming to the owner who may then deliberately restrict access, tense up before encounters or even punish the dog. This starts an association between the sight of dogs and frustration as well as owner tension and possible punishment. A vicious cycle is then born that often culminates in thwarting-related or "barrier frustration" aggression. This, combined with owner-proximity induced resource guarding, is why so many dogs are more aggressive on leash than off.

Fights between dogs that live together are very common. Dogs compete for resources such as food, bones, toys, owner attention and sleeping spots and have individual preferences and moods. Many dogs are also sensitive about proximity and body-contact. If the fights are non-injurious (i.e. you are not at the vet following each fight having one or both dogs sutured), there are a number of options, including non-intervention. Fights are usually context-driven and, once the triggers are uncovered through detective work, some combination of obedience routine to manage the dogs, selective reinforcement of better behavior, changing emotional associations ("good things happen to you when SHE'S around") and time-out penalties for fights will bring relative peace. If the fights are damaging to either participant, efforts must be much stricter, with an airtight management regime usually being necessary.

Prevention of aggression is much easier than treatment. Socialize your puppy to as large a variety of people and friendly dogs as possible. Make it fun with lots of treats and playing. Practice anti-guarding exercises. Teach puppies to bite softly by using time-out consequences for hard bites before forbidding all play-biting. Handle your puppy all over and make it fun with treats and praise. Find and enroll in a reward-method puppy kindergarten class that covers these exercises and allows free puppy play. Maintain

socialization and comfort around resources and handling in adult dogs with regular practice. Maintain your dog's soft mouth by insisting she take treats gently and by carefully monitored and controlled physical games, such as tug. Allow your dog regular opportunities to socialize with other dogs.

Separation Anxiety

Dogs are pack animals that prefer to be with others. When left alone, some dogs become very distressed, suffering from an attachment disorder known as separation anxiety. Dogs who suffer from separation anxiety can't learn to cope with being alone, and they express their anxiety by barking, howling, whining, chewing, soiling, and/or attempting to escape. The most effective treatment for a dog with separation anxiety is to accustom the dog to very short periods of time alone. While at the same time, you must pair the experience of being alone with something wonderful, such as his favorite treats. Also, make sure you keep your departures and arrivals low key so the dog doesn't associate comings and goings with arousal and stress. Practice short absences and gradually build up the time you are gone. Finally, give your dog plenty of physical exercise before leaving your dog for lengthy periods of time, especially if you leave first thing in the morning. What you should not do is confuse your dog's anxiety with revenge, spite, or dominance. Your dog is genuinely upset and distressed and needs your help. Punishment will only exacerbate the dog's anxiety. Also, do not continue to confine your dog to a crate or room if the dog is injuring himself trying to escape. Only use the crate while you are gone if your dog sees it as a safe haven. Separation anxiety is a serious issue where it is best to consult a professional trainer.

Dog Fighting

Dog fighting is a sadistic "contest" in which two dogs—specifically bred, conditioned, and trained to fight—are placed in a pit (generally a small arena enclosed by plywood walls) to fight each other, for the spectators' gambling and entertainment. Fights average nearly an hour in length and often last more than two hours. Dogfights end when one of the dogs is no longer willing or able to continue. Dogs used in these events often die of blood loss, shock, dehydration, exhaustion, or infection hours or even days after the fight. In addition to these dogfights, there are reports of an increase in unorganized, more spontaneous street fights in urban areas. Dog fighting and animal abuse are criminal activities and require police intervention. Call 911 if you see a dog fight or suspect an animal is being used for dog fighting.

Preparing Your Dog for a Change in the Family

Baby

Dogs and babies can be the best of friends. To help your dog prepare for the newest member of the family you should:

- Set up the nursery as soon as possible. Let your dog explore the room during the process.
- Introduce your dog to the new scents that he will be living with once the baby is home by using some of the powders, soaps, lotions you will use on your baby.
- At least one month before the baby's arrival, establish necessary changes in your dog's routine. For example: If you don't want to allow your dog in the newborns room while the baby is sleeping, now is the time to close the door and to teach your dog that this room is off limits.
- To get your dog used to the sights and sounds of babies, invite friends with babies to visit or obtain an audiotape of a baby crying. Baby sounds may be the most frightening aspect of having a baby around from your dog's perspective. Try to desensitize your dog gradually before the baby comes home.
- Before bringing the newborn home, bring home an unwashed piece of his or her clothing for your dog to smell so he gets used to the new smell.
- Once the baby is home, try to keep your dog's routine as close to normal as possible. This means regular meal times and play sessions. Praise your dog and give him attention when the baby is in the room so your dog will associate the new member of the family with good times, not competition for attention.

New Love

Take a look it a from a dog's point of view: While once he was the apple of your eye and recipient of nearly all your attention, now he has to wait until your new love is gone before he gets a pat on the head. The hierarchy in the pack has been challenged. Not only is this a new smell in the house, and a new voice, he has taken over some of his favorite resting spots. It is no wonder that he exhibits his stress by growling, urinating or chewing whenever he makes an appearance. Here's how your new love can become friends with your dog:

- Food – Have your new love feed your dog. Have them remain in the room while he is eating. In the beginning, sit across the room and gradually move closer as your dog gets more comfortable with him.
- Talking & Walking – Both of you should take your dog on a walk. When your dog is relaxed, have your new love walk him with you. When he is comfortable with your new love, have him walk him alone.
- Scent – Put a couple of your new loves' shirts by your dog's favorite sleeping areas. You might even consider wearing his jacket while you are petting or playing with your dog.
- Approach – Let your dog approach your new love. Forcing your dog to confront him will only increase the level of stress and question his place in the pack.
- Playtime – Have your new love play with your dog with her favorite toys.

Separation from a Family Member

To ease your dog through this transition, especially if it is the primary care taker who will no longer be taking care of the dog, place an article of clothing with their scent on it in the dog's bed. Keep the dog's routine as consistent as possible and make sure you spend extra time with the dog giving love, attention, and its favorite treat.

Dog Senses

Smell

Smell is the dog's most prominent sense and the one that is the most different from ours. It has been estimated that a dog's sense of smell is 100,000 times more powerful than a humans. Scientists think that humans have about 40 million olfactory receptors, versus 2 billion for your dog.

Hearing

Dogs are able to hear sounds which we cannot. Dogs can hear at four times the distance humans can. Their ears are also better designed to gather more of the available sound waves – they have 15 different muscles that move their ears in all directions. Plus they can move one ear at a time, independently of the other, to absorb even more information.

Touch

Dogs vary widely in their reaction to touch. Some dogs like a good, deep scratch, while others prefer a soft petting. Dogs which like being touched on the chest or behind the ears are easy to reward for a good response to a cue while training. Many dogs do not like to be touched on their paws.

Sight

Because of the position of the eyes on the head, dogs have a wider angle of view than we do. However, the field of vision from each eye does not overlap as much as ours so that less of what they see is in focus. This means that they can see further around them but can not always identify what they see. Dogs are very good at noticing movement. This is one of the reasons why they respond well to training by hand signals as well as voice commands. It was once thought that dogs were "color-blind" – only able to see shades of black and white with some grey, but scientific studies have found that's not true. Dogs are great at detecting motion – that's one reason they can detect a cat up a tree at a much greater distance than you can! And their night vision is typically better than ours – dogs have an additional reflective layer in the eye

called the tapetum lucidum, which reflects light back into the receptor cells of the eye, which not only increases their night vision, but gives the appearance of eyes glowing in the dark.

Taste

Just as with humans, taste is closely linked to the sense of smell. Every dog has different taste preferences.

Memory

Dogs have very good memories - if they didn't it would not be possible to train them as easily as we can. Unfortunately they will also remember things that we would prefer them to forget.

Medical

Symptoms to Watch For – These are signs that your dog is not feeling well and you need to call your vet:

- Continual diarrhea
- Continual vomiting
- Not eating or drinking water and a lack of interest in food
- Lethargic – reduction or change in their level of activity or play
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Loss of color in their gums
- Abnormal discharge
- Difficulty urinating or defecating
- Lumps
- Marked weight loss or gain
- Hair loss
- Foul breath
- Excessive scratching or licking
- Swollen or painful abdomen

Ongoing Medical Care

It is advised that you schedule an annual exam to have your dog's heart, weight, skin, teeth and fecal checked. Medical care will be based on the age, as well as the physical and mental condition of your dog. Your vet should prescribe a flea and tick preventative that should be given once a month all year round, as well as a heartworm preventative that will also be given once a month all year round. It is very important to keep up the heartworm and flea and tick medication, especially because these are prominent in the Midwest. Just because your dog is inside most of the day means they are less likely, but still very capable of contracting heartworm or getting fleas. Your vet will also put your dog on a vaccination schedule for Bordetella, Distemper, and Rabies as well, which are very important to have if your dog comes into contact with other animals. Rabies vaccinations are also required by law to be kept up-to-date.

Spaying and Neutering

Spaying and neutering, often called sterilization, involves removing the reproductive organs so that the animal cannot reproduce. It is the best way to reduce the pet overpopulation problem – it stops the animals from having unwanted litters. Spaying and neutering also reduces your pet's cancer risk, saves on vet bills because sterilized pets are healthier, eliminates messy and annoying heat cycles, greatly reduces urine spraying and marking, stops pets from roaming, increases your pet's loyalty, protects children from dog bites because neutering reduces aggression, and lengthens your pet's life because sterilized pets live longer.

Microchip

The microchip is a tiny chip, only about the size of a grain of rice, encapsulated within a biocompatible material that is injected through a hypodermic needle under the animal's skin. The microchip is inserted between the shoulder blades near the base of the neck, where a thin layer of protein anchors the chip in. It never needs to be replaced, and will remain active for the entire lifetime of the pet. The chip has no battery

and emits no signal; it simply has a unique identification code. A quick wave of a microchip reader sends a radio signal to the chip and reads the identification number assigned to your pet. This process is similar to how a bar code on an item is read at the check-out counter. Once an animal is microchipped, it's important to note that guardians need to send a registration form into the National Registry that will add their information to the microchip identification. Without this information form, the microchip identification will remain assigned to the original location where the microchip was implanted. Microchipping insures that your companion animal will have a permanent, positive identification that cannot be altered or removed. However, it is important to remember that the microchip does not serve as a replacement for an ID tag that should be worn at all time on your dog's collar when out of the house.

Summertime Tips

Always make sure you have plenty of water and shade for your dog when she is outside. Unlike humans who sweat to cool themselves off, dogs cool off by panting. Prolonged panting can indicate a serious problem, such as heat stroke. If your pet exhibits signs, cool her down immediately with cold towels and ice and transport her to the nearest veterinarian's office or ER.

If you are running errands in the summer, do not bring your dog with you. If you absolutely must take your pet along, do not leave him unattended in parked vehicles. Even with the windows cracked, temperatures can reach over 150 degrees in just a few minutes. Your pet can overheat and suffer from heat exhaustion in a matter of minutes.

Weekly grooming of your pet is also extremely important during the summer months. Brushing and grooming removes loose hair and keeps your pet more comfortable. A heat wave haircut (very short or shaved) is a good choice.

Wintertime Tips

No matter what the temperature, wind-chill can threaten a pet's life. A dog is happiest and healthiest when kept indoors and taken outdoors for exercise. Don't leave dogs outdoors when the temperature drops; their fur cannot protect them from the cold for very long. When walking in the winter, short-coated dogs may feel more comfortable wearing a sweater. Also, the salt and other chemicals used to melt snow and ice can irritate the pads of your dog's paws. There are booties your dog can wear or you can wipe your dog's paws with a warm, damp towel when you return from walks. Be sure to always wipe down paws after walks before he licks them and irritates his mouth. It is also very important to be aware of any anti-freeze or chemical puddles you see in the winter, as anti-freeze is highly toxic to animals, even in the smallest amounts. If your pet ingests any amount of anti-freeze, call your vet or an animal ER right away.

Tail Docking and Ear Cropping

Tail docking today is the amputation of a dog's tail at varying lengths to suit the recommendations of a breed standard. Docking involves the amputation of the puppy's tail either with scissors, a knife or with a rubber band. The cut goes through many highly sensitive nerves in the tissues including skin, cartilage, and bone. This procedure is usually performed without any anesthetic at between three to five days of age. Tails have many useful functions and are important for balance and body language among other things. Dogs have evolved into their current shape over many thousands of years. If a tail were not useful to a dog, natural selection would have eliminated it long ago.

Ear cropping refers to the practice of reshaping a dog's ears by surgically removing the pinna, or "floppy part" of the ear. Generally, one-half of the ear is removed. Ears are cropped when a puppy is between nine and twelve weeks old. Once the pinna is removed, the veterinarian then tapes the ears in an erect position to a splint or bracket. Post-operative pain medication is rarely provided, though the ears have blood flow and are comprised of cartilage and nerves. A series of follow-up visits are conducted during which the ears are handled, stretched along the edges, and re-taped.

Parvo

Parvo is a virus that attacks the lining of the digestive system. It causes dogs and puppies to not be able to absorb nutrients or liquids. Puppies are especially prone to it because they have an immature immune system. Symptoms usually begin with a high fever, lethargy, depression, and loss of appetite. Secondary

symptoms appear as severe gastrointestinal distress, such as vomiting and bloody diarrhea. In many cases, dehydration, shock, and death follow.

Distemper

Canine distemper is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus (paramyxovirus) which attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems of dogs. It often crops up in seemingly healthy pets without any warning. Distemper often mimics benign problems, like the common cold. Many cases progress to the point where they are no longer treatable before the owner even realizes what's happened. Although dogs are the most commonly affected, Canine Distemper is also seen in foxes, ferrets, mink and many other carnivores. These infected animals are often the cause of the spread of this disease to domesticated dogs.

Owners can detect distemper by a couple of signs. First, yellowish-green or green discharge from the eyes and nose is a classic indication. It's often accompanied by sneezing and general lethargy. While dog diseases can manifest differently from animal to animal, another hallmark of distemper is shaking or twitching. This happens because the disease attacks the canine neurological system and makes muscles fire continuously. Unfortunately, by this stage, it's rarely treatable and the humane step is euthanasia.

Rabies

Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. Rabies primarily attacks the nervous system and causes encephalitis. The virus is transmitted in saliva from the bite of an infected animal. The incubation period prior to clinical signs is extremely variable, but is usually two-to-eight weeks. The virus will begin shedding in saliva a short time before clinical signs develop, usually less than 10 days.

There are three phases to the course of the disease: prodromal, furious, and paralytic. Death occurs three to-seven days from the onset of signs. The **prodromal** stage lasts two-to-three days. The signs can include behavioral changes, fever, slow eye reflexes, and chewing at the bite site. The **furious** stage lasts two-to-four days. During this stage, signs of erratic behavior may include irritability, restlessness, barking, aggression, vicious attacks on inanimate objects, and unexplained roaming. Disorientation and seizures may also develop. The **paralytic** stage lasts two-to-four days, during which signs of paralysis develop, usually beginning in the limb that was bitten. Paralysis of the throat and face cause a change in the bark, drooling with typical foaming at the mouth, and a dropped jaw. These signs are followed by depression, coma, and death from respiratory paralysis. Once clinical signs develop, there is no treatment. All dogs and cats should be vaccinated against rabies according to local rules and regulations.

Parasites

Parasitic worms are very common in dogs and puppies. In most cases, worm detection is easy and treatment is effective. However, ignoring possible symptoms and necessary treatments can lead to serious illnesses and sometimes even the death of your dog, as well as the possible transmission of a worm infection to you. The most common worms to dogs in the United States are the roundworm, tapeworm, whipworm, and hookworm - which live primarily in the dog's intestine and the heartworm, which lives within the heart and in the blood vessels leading from the heart to the lungs.

The roundworm is the most common, and puppies are often born with an infection. In the mother dog, the resting roundworm larvae are activated by hormones during pregnancy, and the larvae then cross the placenta to infect the unborn puppies. Less commonly, the larvae are carried in the mother's milk into the newborn puppies.

Heartworm disease is a serious yet preventable disease spread by mosquitoes. A female mosquito ingests heartworm larvae from an infected dog while obtaining a blood meal. The larvae further develop inside the mosquito, and then the mosquito injects more mature larvae into another susceptible dog. This dog becomes infected with heartworm disease. The heartworm larvae migrate in the dog's body from the area of the mosquito bite and eventually enter the dog's blood. Adult heartworms develop in the right side of the

heart and major lung blood vessels, causing damage to these vessels and obstructing normal blood flow. Over 250 adult worms may develop in a dog's heart and vessels. Direct infection from dog to dog does not occur. The heartworm larvae must develop inside the mosquito to reach their infective stage.

Intestinal parasites are also transmitted to your pets by other animals contaminating the soil. The infected animal's excrement will contain the worm or the eggs. These eggs will then develop into a microscopic larva. The larva will then attach itself to your pet's paws and migrate through the body, eventually ending up in the intestine of your pet. Tape worm is transmitted by the ingestion of fleas or the ingestion of infected rodents.

Treatment for parasites is extremely important because worms can be transmitted to people. These include certain species of tapeworms, roundworms, and hookworms. The same larvae infecting your pet can migrate into a person and cause either a skin infection or in some cases an internal infection to the liver.

In many cases, a dog owner will note the signs of worm infection or it will be detected during a regular checkup when your veterinarian does a microscopic exam of your dog's stool sample. Heartworm detection requires a blood test. Your veterinarian can easily make a specific diagnosis and begin effective worm treatments that usually cause little discomfort to your dog.

Hip Dysplasia

Canine Hip Dysplasia (CHD) is a congenital disease that mainly affects large breed dogs. The word "dysplasia" means improper growth. Hip dysplasia can be described as a faulty or abnormal development of the hip. In CHD, the hip becomes loose and wobbly, eventually leading to a form of arthritis which is commonly referred to as Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD). The degree of lameness that occurs is usually dependent upon the extent of arthritic changes in the hip joint. Physical conditions such as exercise and weight contribute to the disease and bring out symptoms.

Typical signs of CHD are less activity, problems with stairs, less jumping, trouble rising, or laying down, painful reactions to the extension of the rear legs, and a faint popping sound coming from the hip. Treatment for CHD can be as mild as recommending rest, or as severe as surgery, depending on the severity of the dysplasia, amount of DJD, the age of the dog, the size of the dog, and many other factors.

Kennel Cough (aka Canine Cough)

Kennel Cough is usually caused by several infectious agents working together to damage and irritate the lining of the dog's trachea and upper bronchi. The damage to the tracheal lining is fairly superficial, but exposes nerve endings that become irritated simply by the passage of air over the damaged tracheal lining. Once the organisms are eliminated the tracheal lining will heal rapidly. The most common organisms associated with Canine Cough are the bacteria called *Bordetella bronchiseptica* and two viruses called Parainfluenza virus and Adenovirus and even an organism called *Mycoplasma*.

Kennel Cough in dogs will stimulate a coarse, dry, hacking cough about three to seven days after the dog is initially infected. It sounds as if the dog needs to "clear it's throat" and the cough will be triggered by any extra activity or exercise. Many dogs that acquire Kennel Cough will cough every few minutes, all day long. Their general state of health and alertness will be unaffected; they usually have no rise in temperature, and do not lose their appetite. The signs of Canine Cough usually will last from 7 to 21 days and can be very annoying for the dog and the dog's owners. Life threatening cases of Kennel Cough are extremely rare and a vast majority of dogs that acquire the infection will recover on their own with no medication. Cough suppressants and occasionally antibiotics are the usual treatment selections.

The causative organisms can be present in the expired air of an infected dog, much the same way that human "colds" are transmitted. The airborne organisms will be carried in the air in microscopically tiny water vapor or dust particles. The airborne organisms, if inhaled by a susceptible dog, can attach to the lining of the trachea and upper airway passages, find a warm, moist surface on which to reside and replicate, and eventually damage the cells they infect. The reason this disease seems so common, and is even named "Kennel" cough, is that wherever there are numbers of dogs confined together in an enclosed

environment such as a kennel, animal shelter, or indoor dog show, the disease is much more likely to be spread.

Vaccinating with just the commercial Kennel Cough vaccine alone (contains only the Bordetella agent) may not be fully protective because of the other infectious agents that are involved with producing the disease. Some of the other agents such as Parainfluenza and Adenovirus are part of the routine vaccinations generally given yearly to dogs. It is important to keep your dog up to date on all vaccinations to prevent Kennel Cough.

Further Information

Here are just a few of the many resources out there for pet owners. If you find another resource that you think should be added to our list, please let us know! Visit these websites for more information on caring for your dog, dealing with health and behavior issues, potty training, posting a found or lost pet, and to get in touch with hundreds of other dog owners through community forums:

General Information on Pets and Pet Care:

Anti-Cruelty Society: www.anticruelty.org

PAWS Chicago: www.pawschicago.org

ASPCA: www.asPCA.org

Pet Communities and Forums:

There are many breed-specific communities and pet forums on the web. Just do a search for the breed of your dog (or one of the breeds, if you have a mixed pup) and see what comes up! Many times these forums can act as a great source for having breed-specific questions answered in regards to behavior traits, medical issues, and general pet care.

Other forums to try:

Chicagoland Tails Magazine: www.tailsinc.org (a wonderful local news source for local happenings and articles on pet-related issues)

Petfinder: www.petfinder.com (good for finding articles on pet care and behavior through their Library, posting lost or found pets, and finding a new pet for your home)

Craigslist Pets Forum: www.chicago.craigslist.org/pet (also a great place to ask questions about pet care and to post a lost or found pet)

Best Friends Animal Society: www.bestfriends.org (a GREAT resource for articles on pet care, behavior training, keeping up-to-date on animal welfare news, and becoming more involved in the rescue world)