

The Whole Dog Journal™



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A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

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FEATURES

3 Close Encounters

Five things to do if you encounter loose dogs when walking your own dog on leash.

6 Getting the Bugs Out

Should owners who feed their dogs raw diets be worried about Salmonella? What about those of us who feed kibble and other foods?



10 Ready to Board

What you should look for in a boarding kennel.

15 Jail House Dogs

These trainers teach prison inmates to care for, socialize, and train shelter dogs in order to set themselves (and the dogs) free. Also, an interview with a former inmate/graduate of a prison dog-training program who is now training dogs professionally.

20 Not Too Hot for Fido

Cayenne is the International Herb Association's "Herb of the Year" – and so useful for our dogs!



PHOTO BY STEPHEN S. NAGY

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editor's Note
- 24 Resources



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Life-Long Learning

Try something new with your dog! It brings you closer and improves your overall communication.

BY NANCY KERNS

There is nothing sadder than the look on my 8-year-old dog Otto's face when he sees me loading my new puppy Woody into the car, on our way to puppy kindergarten classes. This is pretty much the only time I take Woody somewhere and don't ask Otto to come along, too. Otto's expression was so bereft, it got me looking around for some other activity to take up with Otto (and Otto alone).

We had a blast when we were taking agility classes a few years ago – Otto absolutely loves running, jumping, climbing, and balancing – so I think that's the thing we need to do again. There are several dog sports that I would really like to try (including Treibball and Nosework), but I know that agility is the one that Otto would have the most fun doing.

In contrast, I don't think Woody is ever going to be a sporty dog. I have been characterizing him as extraordinarily "calm" – but my son has just come out and said it: "Mom, the word is *lazy*. He even *eats* lying down!" Woody *can* be speedy, and he gets the "zoomies" a couple times a day, but when it comes to training, I have to keep the sessions short and sweet. After just a couple of "puppy pushups" – repetitions of sit, down, sit, down, or sit, stand, down, etc., Woody is liable to go down and *stay* down. "What's the point?" he seems to say. Of course, he's young, and he may well develop more athleticism and endurance as he grows up, but we'll see. There is no point trying to pound a square peg into a round hole.

Just today, I saw a post from a local protection-dog trainer, explaining how she's taking dock-diving lessons from another trainer with one of her dogs – a foster-failed dog who looked perfect for, but did not develop into, a protection-dog prospect. I have so much respect for that! She seriously appraised the dog's lack of enthusiasm for one type of training, observed how joyful he is in

another venue (water!), and said, "Well, okay, let's go do that!"

I recently saw a video made by another trainer I respect, of her and one of her dogs' first attempts at an entirely unfamiliar activity: sheep-herding. She admitted that she had no idea of how to go about it; she put herself and her dog into the hands of an experienced sheep-dog trainer, and gave it a go. Her dog, a Border Collie, absolutely loved it, learned a lot, and clearly had a blast. She's made plans to pursue it some more – not because it's something she wants to compete in, just as a novel learning experience, and one that her dog thoroughly enjoyed.

On another topic: I'm sorry that it's been taking so long for me to complete a planned profile of a dog food company whose manufacturing facilities I toured last September (Nature's Variety). My failure to get the piece completed – and to plan and begin several more pet food company profiles – can be blamed on any number of things, including too much puppy fostering in the past six months – and foster-failing/new puppy ownership, too. I *can* assure you that the Nature's Variety profile *will* appear in the June issue, and I'm scheduling several more company tours for the summer and fall. Which pet food companies would you most like to learn more about? Let me know; I'm motivated to learn more, too.

NK

Close Encounters

Five things to do if you encounter loose dogs when walking your own dog on leash.

BY STEPHANIE COLMAN

It's the stuff of nightmares: You and your dog are enjoying a walk through the neighborhood when all of a sudden, you spot an unaccompanied canine rounding the corner and heading your way. It can turn into a bad scene even if you and your dog are both young, healthy, and your dog is confident and well socialized. But what if your or your dog is frail or fearful? What if you've spent months trying to rehabilitate a dog whose is extremely reactive to other dogs?

Being approached by loose dogs, especially when my dogs are on leash, is my least-favorite experience as a dog owner. When we're walking in a public place, such as a beach or park, I can usually identify the owner and ask that he please wrangle his dog. Of course, this request may be met with varying responses, ranging from appropriately apologetic for their dog having invaded our space, to accusatory, suggesting I am the problem for not allowing my dogs to roam free and socialize. But as

uncomfortable as it may be to deal with unpleasant dog owners, it can be even worse to deal with a loose dog whose owner is nowhere in sight!

While every situation is different, requiring an on-the-spot risk assessment, having a mental list of possible tactics can boost your confidence and help you make clear-headed decisions when every second counts.

Following are five strategies that you can use to deal with loose dogs (or avoid them!) while on walks.

1 AVOID THE SITUATION. As a dog trainer, I work to avoid avoidance in my canine students (since it's a stress response), but I will happily work to avoid loose dog encounters. If I know there's a certain house where the dogs are likely to be uncontained and free to rush toward, follow, or otherwise harass my dogs and myself, I pick another route for our walk.

Yes, it stinks that I have to change my behavior as a result of someone else's inconsiderate habits, but my priority is the emotional and physical well-being of my dog and myself. At best, it's unfair to ask my leashed dog to tolerate interaction with a loose dog – even a friendly one. At it's worst, being ambushed by a loose dog can quickly spell disaster for dogs who are sensitive or reactive to dogs invading their personal space. And, of course, somewhere in the middle are the “we love everybody” dogs who would enthusiastically greet any dog, and whose enthusiasm quickly creates an excited frenzy that's difficult for an owner to control. From a training perspective, the last thing we want to offer the overly social dog is the chance to go nose-to-nose with the loose dog – even when it's a friendly dog – since that would be rewarding the over-excited behavior.

In general, leashes interfere with natural dog body language, especially when owners get nervous about the



Loose dog coming your way, and no owner in sight? Take the time – now! – to think about how you'd handle such a situation. It will help you remain calm if such a situation arises.

situation and without thinking or being aware of it, shorten (tighten) the leash. In this situation, the leashed dog is unable to use his natural language to effectively communicate with the approaching dog.

Dog body language is like a ballet of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors that facilitate an exchange of valuable information. When held close to the owner on a shortened leash, a dog is unable to defuse an uncomfortable situation by changing positions relative to the intruding dog, or simply walking (or running) away.

Also, the sudden tightening of the leash easily becomes a red flag to your dog that you are uncomfortable, which can further stress both dogs. It is for this reason that trainers generally discourage on-leash greetings between dogs (even when both are willing participants in the interaction), or at least remind owners to maintain a loose leash during greetings where both parties have given consent.

If your immediate neighborhood offers limited options for re-routing a walk to avoid problematic areas, consider hopping in the car and driving to another neighborhood, or even to a local shopping center where it's far less likely you'll encounter other dogs. It may seem horribly inconvenient at first, but an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure – especially with dogs for whom encounters with loose dogs are especially challenging. It's much easier to prevent significant behavior problems than to modify them later.

Depending on the situation, you can always visit the house where the loose

dog is often seen (without your dog), and kindly ask the owners to contain their dog. If the dog is frequently running loose and you know where he lives, consider timing your visit for when you will likely encounter the dog, leash him up if possible, and knock on the owner's front door. With this approach, it's wise to point out how the loose dog is at risk for getting hit by a car or lost when he's not properly contained, and you'd hate to see anything happen to him.

Although you're likely to be annoyed, and the dog owners are in the wrong, as the saying goes, "kill them with kindness." Find something to compliment about the dog, even if you've generally only see his less-than-desirable side. Something as simple as, "His coat is such a nice color," or "I love his eyes" can often go a long way toward defusing the potential for confrontation and help maintain peaceful relations with neighbors.

Consider explaining that your dog is afraid of other dogs and it's scary for her to have dogs run into her space, or that he's "old and cranky" and you don't want their (loose) dog to get snarked at by your dog. Yes, this approach can be a test of your emotional self-control since, if you're like me, you're likely to be supremely annoyed by the loose dog owners' mind-blowing sense of entitlement. But remember the end goal is to encourage owners to contain their dogs, not to prove you are "right."

If this fails, or past experience tells you it's not a safe approach, there's always the option of reporting a loose dog to

animal control, or, if the dog can be safely handled, collecting the dog when he's loose and unsupervised, and taking him to the local shelter. Some owners must experience some positive punishment before they are willing to change their behavior. (Note: In this case, "positive" is an operant conditioning term denoting the addition of something. In the case of "positive punishment," what is added is unpleasant – having to visit the shelter to retrieve the dog, possibly pay a fine, etc.)

2 PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS. The earlier you spot a loose dog, the easier it is to adjust your walk on the fly or prepare to manage a potentially sticky situation. I'm always shocked to see neighborhood dog owners walking dogs with leashes draped over their wrists and a coffee cup in hand, as they stare intently at their cell phones. All I can imagine is a loose dog rounding the corner, causing all heck to break loose in a very avoidable situation.

When you're out with your dog, pay attention – especially if you know your dog doesn't take kindly to interactions with unknown dogs, or if you worry about known loose dogs in the area.

If you do spot a loose dog, quickly changing direction is often an effective strategy, as many loose dogs are patrolling their perceived territory and aren't likely to follow you all the way home. Stay calm as you instruct your dog to turn around with you, and remember to not choke up on the leash, as a tight leash is a glaring red flag to your own dog.

I typically walk with a favorite toy and/or treats and readily use one of these tools to capture my dog's attention as I escort us out of the area. In that situation, I'd rather my dog not even notice the other dog, or if he does notice, I'd rather he not pay prolonged attention to the dog, since the more attention my dog pays to the loose dog, the more attractive we are likely to become.

The success of this U-turn approach depends largely on how readily your dog



This pup's handler needs to notice that she's spooked by an oncoming dog and put some slack in the leash, ideally within a second or two. The next best move for the handler would be to turn toward the loose dog and use his body to block the dog's access to his puppy. When the encounter is over, giving the pup a treat will take the edge off of the frightening experience.

complies with your instructions. That's a training issue. Never underestimate the importance of training.

In general, it might not seem like a big deal if your dog's focus defaults to the environment and you find it hard to get his attention while on a walk, or if his loose leash walking is mostly acceptable, except when he sees other dogs, he gets super excited and starts pulling toward the dog. But when you find yourself in a sticky situation, not being able to get – and keep – your dog's attention in the face of distractions can create unnecessary challenges.

3 REMAIN CALM AND TRY "CALMING SIGNALS." If you aren't able to avoid an unwanted interaction with a loose dog, do your best to remain calm and use calm body language as a way to tell both dogs – yours and the intruder – that everything is fine, there's no need for conflict.

Calming signals is a term coined by Norwegian dog trainer Turid Rugaas to describe a collection of behaviors dogs often exhibit when faced with stressful stimuli, including looking away to avoid eye contact, yawning, lip-licking, and sniffing the ground. Rugaas has postulated that these behaviors are used by dogs to communicate peaceful intentions and avoid potential conflict. Other behaviorists speculate that those behaviors are meant, in varying shades, to signal deference or avoidance – but the overall intent is to keep the dog who offers these behaviors safe and whole, not to "calm" the other.

We don't know for certain what these signals mean, but most dogs *understand* them, so even humans can use them to help defuse a tense situation. The other dog won't suddenly think you're a dog just because you're "speaking his language," but the ability to communicate in a way he's likely to understand can de-escalate an encounter that might otherwise turn into a confrontation, and can also help your own dog feel more relaxed during a challenging situation.

4 BODY BLOCK. My main goal when we encounter a loose dog on a walk, aside from ensuring our safety, is to prevent the loose dog from making contact with my dog. To help accomplish this, I will purposefully position myself between my dog and the incoming dog, asking my dog to sit and jockeying posi-

tion as necessary to keep the approaching dog at bay.

Depending on my interpretation of the incoming dog's intent, I might posture a bit, weight forward as I sternly tell the dog to "Go home!" or "Get back!" Sometimes asking a loose dog to "sit" in a firm voice helps stop the dog's forward motion. From there, you can toss a handful of treats behind the dog and as he turns to eat them, you now have valuable time to move away.

In the face of a loose dog coming at you and your dog, Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist Patricia McConnell, PhD, suggests taking the tossing of a handful of treats one step further; she actually suggests *throwing* a handful of treats into the charging dog's face. She admits it would not stop a "highly motivated, hard-charging dog who is laser focused on attacking you or your dog," but she made a video and posted it on her blog to show that it *can* work. See tinyurl.com/grrftsf.

5 OTHER OPTIONS. When it comes to managing encounters with loose dogs, there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Following are some additional tactics to consider:

■ DETERRENT SPRAY

– We don't recommend traditional mace or pepper spray, including those sold as animal deterrents, such as Halt! Dog Repellent (hot pepper-based), due to the potential risk of blow-back into your eyes or your dog's eyes. (Even the faintest waft of mace or pepper spray can be extraordinarily painful.)

However, a citronella-based deterrent spray such as Spray Shield (formerly sold under the name "Direct Stop") can help stop the unwanted advance of a dog, or, in extreme cases, can be used to help break up a dog fight, and is far less caustic in nature.

■ AIR HORN – The sudden, loud blast of an air horn can often frighten a loose dog and cause him to turn-tail and head home. Pocket-sized air horns can be found in sporting good and marine stores. The downside to an air horn is that the noise can scare your own dog,

too. If this is a tactic you'd consider using, it's wise to desensitize your dog to the noise first.

■ WALKING STICK – Many people carry a walking stick, golf club or other similar object that can be brandished as a weapon when faced with an unwanted approaching dog. The goal here, is to intimidate the dog in an effort to stop his approach, not to cause bodily harm. The crisp "crack!" of a stick slapping the ground, or the audible "whirl!" of a club slicing through the air will often deter an approaching dog without ever needing to make physical contact. Some people also report success using the sudden burst of an opened, push-button umbrella. With any of these tactics, be mindful of the potential for scaring your own dogs.

■ HEAD UP A WALKWAY/DRIVEWAY

– Heading toward a neighbor's front door or up the driveway as though you live there often gives loose dogs second thoughts, as they can be leery of more confined spaces and of being captured.

■ UNCONVENTIONAL EXIT STRATEGIES

– Depending on the size of your dog, objects in the environment can provide unique protection against approaching dogs. A client once told me her husband quickly jumped into the back of a parked pickup truck with their small terrier to avoid an aggressively approaching dog. The quick-thinking client of a fellow trainer once put her little dog in a trashcan to keep him safe as she dealt with the problematic loose dog. Lucky for them, it was trash day and the cans were out on the curb!



Whatever approach you choose, do your best to remain calm so as not to escalate the situation with your own panicked behavior. After any altercation with a loose dog, carefully assess your dog for injuries and consider taking him to the veterinarian, as bite wounds can be difficult to spot under thick fur. Write down as much as you can remember about the incident, such as location and a description of the dog, and contact your local animal control agency. 🐾

Stephanie Colman is a writer and dog trainer in Los Angeles. See "Resources," page 24, for contact information.



Kaos recovered from his ill-timed bout of serious digestive distress, which may or may not have been caused by his raw-food diet. Many symptom-free dogs also have *Salmonella* present in their stool.

PAW HEALTH PAW

Getting the Bugs Out

How worried should raw-feeders be about Salmonella? What about those who feed kibble?

BY DENISE FLAIM

There is no such thing as a good time for your dog to get violently ill, but Christianne O'Rourke of Long Island, New York, knows that there most definitely is a bad time. A couple of months ago, O'Rourke found herself shuttling back and forth to the hospital, where her grade-school son had been hospitalized for almost a week. And then the family's 3-year-old Rhodesian Ridgeback, Kaos, became suddenly ill as well.

One evening, returning from the hospital, O'Rourke returned to find Kaos squeezed into a corner of his spacious crate, desperate not to step in the pool of diarrhea that was seemingly everywhere. As soon as O'Rourke opened the crate door, Kaos ran to the backyard, only to come back in leaving a trail of bloody diarrhea. Panicked, O'Rourke took Kaos to a 24-hour emergency practice, where the attending veterinarians placed him under observation, gave him fluids and started a diagnostic work-up.

"Nobody could watch him for me, so I kept him in the emergency room," says O'Rourke, whose son and dog both pulled through their medical emergencies and

are now home and back to their regular lives. But the \$4,000 price tag for that prolonged veterinary care "brought me to my knees," she says wearily.

Four days after Kaos was admitted, the test results came back, showing *Salmonella* in his stool. A third-generation raw-fed Ridgeback, Kaos had been on a home-prepared raw-food diet since he was three weeks old. But, spooked by the diarrhea and the vet bill, O'Rourke switched him to a high-quality brand of kibble.

"A raw-food diet was great for him," says O'Rourke, adding that she could see a difference in Kaos's overall condition compared to kibble-fed dogs she had

owned previously. "Until we got to the *Salmonella*."

Depending on your point of view, Kaos' story is either a cautionary tale about the dangers in raw-food diets – or an equally telling example of how raw-food diets are reflexively blamed for episodes of intestinal distress. After all, it wouldn't be unusual for a raw-fed dog like Kaos to have *Salmonella* in his stool. And the emotional issues at play – the intense stress that a sudden hospitalization put on the family, the abrupt change in routine, and long periods of being crated home alone – could very well have triggered the explosive diarrhea that Kaos experienced.

Just how dangerous is *Salmonella*, not just to the dog that is infected with it, but the other animals and humans around him?

HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE

To say *Salmonella* is ubiquitous is an understatement: According to the Centers for Disease Control, this rod-shaped bacterium – named for the 19th-century scientist who discovered it, Dr. Daniel Salmon – is responsible for 1.2 million food-borne illnesses in humans, with 19,000 hospitalizations and some 400 deaths every year.

Thanks to dogs' industrial-strength digestive systems, their strong stomach acids usually disarm the *Salmonella* bacteria before they can cause illness. And even if enough of the bacteria survive and manage to take up residence in the dog's digestive tract, he may well be completely asymptomatic; not all canine carriers of *Salmonella* become ill. This makes it difficult to know how widespread *Salmonella* infections are in the canine population.

The *Merck Veterinary Manual* says that "many" dogs are *Salmonella* carriers, adding that, unlike in humans, "clinical disease is uncommon." Other estimates of *Salmonella* infection say that as many as a third of dogs carry the bacteria.

Whatever the real number, what is undisputed is that *Salmonella* infection in dogs isn't just a cause of concern for that species: *Salmonella* is zoonotic

– that is, transmissible from animals to people, which in the case of dogs is usually through the oral-fecal route. (In other words, a person comes into contact with feces that is contaminated with *Salmonella* – say, while picking up poop, he unknowingly gets some on his hand, and then eats an apple and inadvertently ingests some of the bacteria.)

Though it's relatively uncommon for dogs to actually become ill from ingesting *Salmonella* – the illness is called “salmonellosis” – the canine symptoms are similar to those seen in humans, including diarrhea, sometimes with blood and/or mucous; vomiting and refusal to eat; fever; lethargy; and abdominal pain and cramping.

Treatment usually involves the administration of fluids and electrolytes to avoid dehydration, and sometimes anti-diarrheal drugs. There is disagreement over the use of antibiotics in mild cases of salmonellosis, because of concerns that it may contribute to the microbe's resistance to the drugs. Mild cases can often be dealt with at home, provided the dog can be properly hydrated. In rare cases, a *Salmonella* infection may progress to sepsis – a systemic infection carried through the bloodstream.

It's also important to note that dogs who have been infected with *Salmonella* can shed the bacteria in their feces for four to six weeks.

RAISED CONSCIOUSNESS

While salmonellosis can be contracted through the consumption of raw meat, the reality is that the microbe can be found in many places in the environment – including, from time to time, in commercially produced kibble! Though extrusion (the high-temperature, high-pressure process that cooks kibble) kills the bacteria, the product can be recontaminated later, in the process of drying, cooling, application of an oil coating, or packaging.

Concerns about *Salmonella* in pet food peaked in the last decade, due in large part to the heightened attention that the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) has paid toward food contaminants in the wake of the 2007 recalls of foods containing the toxic substance melamine. In 2012, multiple brands produced by Diamond Pet Foods in the company's Gaston, South Carolina, facility were recalled after being linked to cases of salmonellosis in humans.

According to veterinarian and natural pet-care advocate Dr. Karen Becker of Bourbonnais, Illinois, “There are endless sources of *Salmonella* present in the environment, but most do not cause pathogenic contamination,” meaning the source can test positive but never cause illness. Pools of standing water, unwashed vegetables, buildings

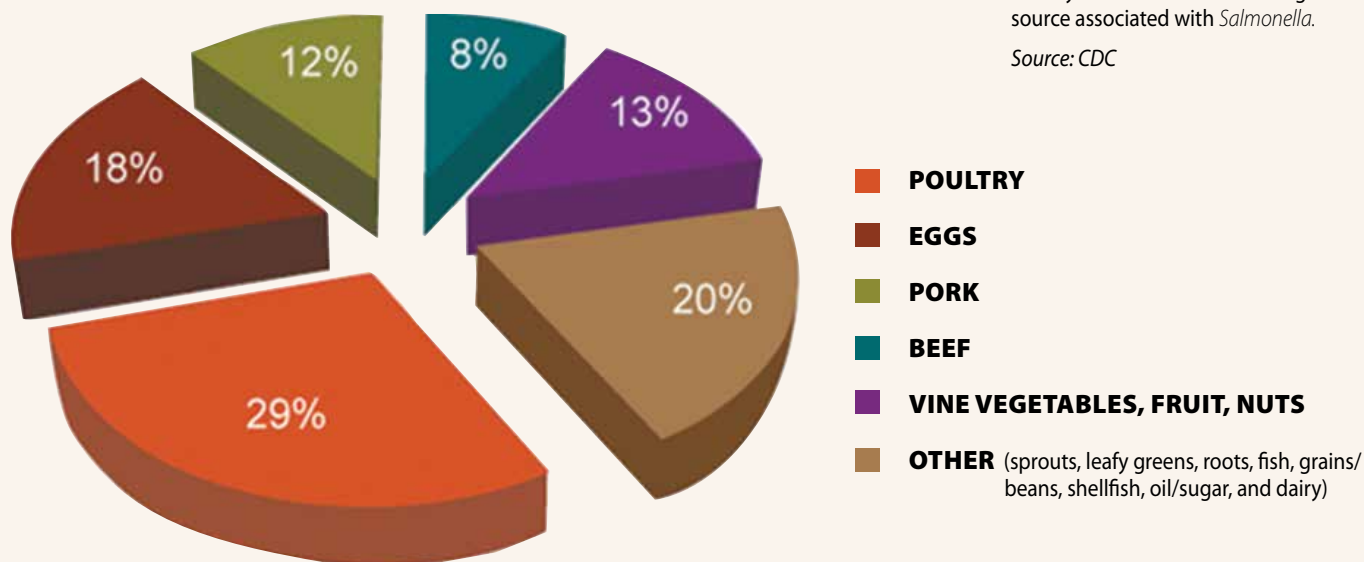
that contain rodent populations, open fields where birds fly overhead, the areas around bird feeders and bird houses, and, yes, bags of commercially produced dry kibble – all are potential sources of contamination.

In humans, potential contaminants are just as diffuse: *Salmonella* can lurk in the feed given to livestock animals, and waste from dairy-cow and pig factories can leach into water supplies used to irrigate crops. A 1998 study from the University of Arizona found that bacteria-covered chicken carcasses so contaminated kitchens that appreciably more pathogens were found on sponges and dishtowels than on toilet seats in the same households.

Still, in dogs, raw-food diets remain the poster child for *Salmonella* transmission. In November 2013, the FDA issued a warning about feeding raw-food diets to companion animals, cautioning that owners had a higher risk of getting infected with *Salmonella* and another common foodborne bacteria, *Listeria monocytogenes*. The warning was issued after a two-year study by the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine, which screened 196 samples of pet food and found that 15 were positive for *Salmonella* and 32 were positive for *Listeria*.

The news made some pet professionals far more paranoid than others. We heard of a case in Sudbury, Ontario, where

FOODS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SALMONELLA OUTBREAKS (IN HUMANS)



This chart shows the percentages of different single food commodities that are associated with *Salmonella* outbreaks.

Poultry is the most common single food source associated with *Salmonella*.

Source: CDC

veterinarians decided to quarantine any raw-fed patients, even if they were coming in for something as innocuous as a wellness check. Depending on the practice and the staff member, protective gloves and even surgical masks were used during examinations.

In a podcast last year on the subject of *Salmonella* contamination and raw feeding, holistic veterinarian and author Marty Goldstein noted that his Smith Ridge Veterinary Center in South Salem, New York, sells 2,500 to 4,000 pounds of raw food each month, with no ill effects. “*Salmonella* poses virtually no threat to most dogs,” he said, noting that according to the Morris Institute, 36 percent of healthy dogs carry *Salmonella* in their digestive tracts.

For her part, Dr. Becker points that many diagnoses of salmonellosis are based more on conjecture than science. “Most commonly, vets don’t even do a diarrhea panel, and simply say, ‘If your dog has acute illness and you feed raw food, the cause is the raw food, probably *E. Coli* or *Salmonella*,’” she says. “They make huge, sweeping generalizations not based on testing, but based on their personal and incorrect assumptions. Most cases of diarrhea pertaining to raw food are a dietary transition problem, not a pathogenic infection.”

Even if a veterinarian does do a fecal screening, Dr. Becker notes that test has its own limitations: “It will simply say it’s positive for *Salmonella*, but not what subspecies,” she explains. “Most are not pathogenic.”

A MANUFACTURER’S VIEW

Dean Ricard of Mountain Dog Food in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is a member of the Canadian Association of Raw Pet Food Manufacturers, or CARPFM, which has set up guidelines, third-party inspections, and best practices to prevent bacterial pathogens from infecting pets and people.

Ricard says it’s simply wrong to assume that the existence of *Salmonella* in raw meat is a foregone conclusion. “In fact, a properly processed product, coming from an inspected facility, basically does not contain *Salmonella* – it’s very low risk,” he says. “*Salmonella* is probably not as prevalent in raw foods as people would like to think.”

Ricard notes that there is no “acceptable” level of contamination for *Salmonella*. Either a sample has it, or it

does not, and if it’s the former, the product fails inspection, even if the bacterial load is miniscule. “Many people believe that any *Salmonella* in the product will cause problems, when in fact there have to be minimum levels of contamination before there is a problem,” he explains.

Ricard says the best way to ensure that raw-food products are free of *Salmonella* is to have a clearly defined “chain of custody” of the product, from the supplier who rears the chickens to the pet food manufacturer who packages the finished product. And he reminds that precisely because *Salmonella* is so commonplace, opportunities for contamination await at seemingly every corner.

“Many people believe it’s the process of raising the chickens that contributing to the *Salmonella* outbreaks,” including keeping them in highly confined quarters, Ricard says. “But the reason they wind up in barns is to prevent *Salmonella* from getting into the food stream.” Ironically, while more and more consumers want free-range poultry, the natural way those animals are reared leaves them vulnerable to *Salmonella* contamination, such as from the droppings of a passing critter or a bird flying overhead.

Salmonella-free birds raised in pristine, controlled conditions can be contaminated if they are shipped to a processing plant in trucks that have not been cleaned and disinfected appropriately, Ricard continues. After slaughter, the meat can be contaminated in the bagging area, for example. This is just as common a scenario in the manufacturing of kibble as it is commercial raw diets, Ricard says. “Unless you’ve got a good quality handling process, the potential for recontamination is there.”

All that said, Ricard notes that the frenzy to make our lives – and our food supplies – free of microbes might do more harm than good in the long run. Akin to the old-fashioned philosophy that says letting little kids hunker down in the dirt to make mud pies builds up much-needed immunity, there is a growing awareness that hygiene-obsessed first-world cultures are weakening their immune systems in their quest for a pristine world.

“There are a lot of countries in the world that do not have anywhere near the sanitary resources that we do in the United States and Canada, and they

are populating their part of the world quite well,” he says. “This move toward an ultra-sanitized world has created this atrophy in the immune system.”

Ricard adds that the paranoia over pathogens in the food supply is also somewhat myopic. “People focus on the meat, but we probably have a bigger problem from vegetable products” that are added to some raw diets, he says. “In actual fact, the majority of incursions from a bacterial point of view are coming from vegetables more than the meat. Vegetables are not anywhere near as regulated or as monitored as the meat.”

OUNCE OF PREVENTION

While most dogs can encounter *Salmonella* without becoming symptomatic, that’s not always the case with weak, ill, old, or immune-compromised dogs. What’s a concerned owner to do, if even commercial kibble diets carry with them the risk of contamination?

For dogs with such compromised immune systems – including those undergoing chemotherapy – Dr. Becker recommends a raw food that has been processed with high pressure pasteurization, or HPP. “It’s sterile,” she says, “and the safest food in the pet food industry.”

Instead of using heat to kill pathogens, HPP applies high hydrostatic pressure, which is exerted by a liquid in a water bath. (See “Under Pressure,” WDJ April 2015, for in-depth information about HPP and how it works.)

As for humans living with raw-fed dogs, the same concerns apply: Preschool children, the elderly, pregnant women, and the chronically ill or immune-compromised are at greater risk for *Salmonella* infection.

Even for healthy owners with vibrant immune systems, following common sense and proper hygiene can go a long way toward preventing infection. The top recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention include the following:

- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after handling raw pet food, and after touching surfaces or objects that have come in contact with the raw food. Countertops, the inside of refrigerators and microwaves, kitchen utensils, feeding bowls and cutting boards are all potential sources of bacteria.

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According to experts, we should never rinse raw chicken or other meats in the sink in this manner; if *Salmonella* is present, this is a great way to distribute it (in water droplets) all over the kitchen.

■ Thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces and objects that come in contact with raw pet food. (The FDA stresses the difference between those two verbs: Cleaning means only removing germs from surfaces and objects; disinfecting means actually killing them.) The FDA recommends first washing with hot, soapy water, then following with a disinfectant, such as one tablespoon of bleach dissolved in one quart of water. Running utensils and cutting boards through the dishwasher after use can also disinfect them.

■ Freeze raw meat until you're ready to use it, and thaw it in the refrigerator or microwave, not on the countertop or sink.

■ Carefully handle and segregate raw food, and don't rinse it, or you can splash the raw juices onto other food and surfaces.

■ Immediately cover and refrigerate leftover food.

■ Avoid kissing your dog around his mouth, and don't permit him to lick

your face, especially after he has just consumed a raw-food meal.

■ Thoroughly wash your hands after touching your dog, or after the dog has licked or "kissed" you. (Wait a second – not kiss your dog? Isn't that one of the more compelling reasons for having one?)

In the end, like most things in life, managing your dog's exposure to *Salmonella* – dietary or otherwise – isn't black and white. If you want the benefits of a raw-food diet, then you need to accept a degree of risk, to both your dog and yourself, in terms of exposure to pathogens like *Salmonella*.

That said, other commercially prepared foods are not without risk, either – and *Salmonella* is only one of them. You will have to weigh the pros and cons and make the decision that's right for you and your dog. 🐾

The founder of Modern Molosser magazine (modernmolosser.com) and a regular contributor to WDJ, Denise Flaim raises 12-year-old triplets, as well as raw-fed Rhodesian Ridgebacks, in Long Island, New York.

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Ready to Board?

What you should look for in a boarding kennel.

BY NANCY TUCKER, CPDT-KA

A couple of years ago, I was informed that the dog boarding facility I trusted – the one and only place where I felt comfortable leaving my own dog – was closing its doors indefinitely because the owner had fallen seriously ill. Obviously, my family was first and foremost very concerned for the owner. True, we relied heavily on her services, but she had also become a personal friend over the years. (The story does have a happy ending, as she has since fully recovered and is in excellent health.) While she was experiencing a very serious personal challenge, we – and all of her regular clients – were also suddenly faced with some significant inconveniences: Who would watch our dogs?

It can seem like a trite question, given the circumstances, but for a family like mine, whose members travel frequently for work, arranging for our dog’s care during our absence ranks very high on our list of priorities when making travel plans. If the one person we trust to take care of our dog is not available, we don’t seek to make other arrangements for our dog. Instead, we change our travel dates, or we don’t go. Period.

So while our friend and dog sitter recovered, we rearranged our lives in order to ensure someone could be home to care for our dog. This lasted 15 months!

During this time, I was approached by many of the kennel’s clients seeking guidance on where *else* in the area they could board their dogs. Several had been clients of my training business, and they wanted to know my recommendations. “Where would *you* go?” they’d ask. They were looking for someone they could trust implicitly, and they knew my standards would be high.

In many major metropolitan cities today, there are now upscale “hotels” for pets that offer luxury boarding in rooms that resemble human bedrooms. This facility, Wags Hotel in Sacramento, California, offers add-on services such as grooming, training, group play sessions, walks, swimming, and webcam surveillance that owners can monitor!

I had no answer for them. I was in the same boat as they were, and told them I was also searching for another boarding facility. They asked me, “How do you choose? How do you know a good place from a not-so-good place?”

This got me thinking about what criteria a dog-sitting operation should meet. What features should we look for? What are the deal-breakers? What features or services might be okay to live without?

What follows is a list of questions to ask a boarding facility before agreeing to leave your dog in their care during your absence. “Boarding facility” can also include those businesses that offer dog-sitting services in their private

home. (Note that while some businesses offer pet-sitting services that include visiting your own home to care for your dog while you are away, this article specifically addresses facilities where your dog goes to stay.)

If a boarding facility operator refuses to answer a question, or indicates that she shouldn’t need to answer these questions at all, that is an excellent cue for you to walk away and look elsewhere. If I were offering to care for someone else’s dog, I would expect them to ask me these same questions. They are perfectly reasonable.

■ HOW CLEAN IS THE FACILITY?

Obviously, this is one question you’ll want to answer for yourself. Visit the premises. Ask to see where your dog will spend most of his time. The verdict is out on whether you should call ahead of time to arrange for a visit, or if you should show up unannounced to see the place “in action.”

I think it’s courteous to call ahead and arrange a time that is most convenient for the owner of the facility. Operating a kennel requires a lot of skillful time management and there are many tasks to accomplish in a systematic way. Keep in mind that disrupting the operators’ schedule will directly affect the dogs currently in their care. While it is tempting to make a surprise visit to see “what really goes on when no one is looking,” at some point you have to trust that your questions will be answered honestly and will provide the information you’re seeking.

Use your senses while you’re there: Does it look clean? Does it smell clean? Is it heated or air-conditioned? Visit more than once if you’d like to verify if the conditions you observe are consistent.



PHOTO COURTESY WAGS HOTEL, SACRAMENTO, CA

■ IS DRINKING WATER READILY AVAILABLE? This is a question you won't want to skip. Some boarding operators prefer to withhold water during certain times of the day in order to minimize the number of times a dog needs to pee. I personally find this unacceptable. Dogs should have access to clean drinking water at all times, especially if they are experiencing stress, like many dogs do while away from home.

Note: Dogs of certain breeds and body types (deep-chested dogs, large-breed dogs over seven years old, large breed male dogs who are more than seven years old) are more prone to bloat than others. If you limit your dog's water intake immediately before and after eating, or follow other protocols recommended by your veterinarian to prevent bloat, make sure the boarding kennel operator will also follow these protocols, and that she knows why you have requested them.

■ DOES EACH DOG HAVE FREE ACCESS TO A PRIVATE OUTDOOR RUN? Depending on the design of the facility, some indoor kennel runs have a doggie-door that leads to an outdoor run and can be left open during the day (climate permitting), allowing the dog to move in and out as he pleases.

If there is no doggie-door, ask how often the dog is taken out of his enclosure during the day, and for how long. Does he just get to pee and then is returned immediately to his kennel? Or does he get to sniff around a bit, or go for a walk?

Ideally, check to ensure that your dog is let out of his enclosure for a minimum of 15 to 20 minutes at a time, at least twice a day.

If you see that a kennel facility can house 40 dogs during peak season, and that there are only two staff members on duty at any given time, you can probably do the math for yourself to figure out whether it's possible for each dog to receive personal attention outside of his enclosure.

For example, in a 12-hour day, is it humanly possible for one employee to let 20 dogs out of their enclosures, individually, for 15 minutes, twice? Well, yes, it's possible. However, there would be very little time remaining to handle all of the other tasks like cleaning and meal preparations, not to mention time for the staff member's own bathroom and meal breaks! Make sure the boarding facility is adequately staffed.



In some boarding facilities, dogs are let outdoors in groups to potty and play. If you don't want your dog socializing with other dogs due to concerns about his behavior and/or his safety, ask whether individual turn-outs can be guaranteed. Slim staffing at some kennels may negatively affect the availability of individualized options.

■ HOW SECURE IS THE FACILITY? If the door to your dog's enclosure is opened and he slips out and squeezes past the kennel staff, how far can he get? Is the building door kept securely shut? Is there a fence or a gate stopping him from running off the property or into the road?

■ WHAT SEPARATES THE ENCLOSURES? Solid walls, sometimes made of concrete or wood, separate some enclosures; others are simple chain-link fencing, either with or without a canvas or vinyl tarp covering the fencing. This is an important consideration if you have a dog who isn't at ease in the presence of other dogs. A visual barrier is often best to keep the peace and to reduce the stress level. Dogs should never be able to make physical contact between enclosures, like through spaces beneath or above the separating walls.

■ WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR DOG HAS A HEALTH EMERGENCY? You'll want to ensure that the person or people taking care of your dog know what to do in a medical emergency. Are staff members certified in pet first aid? Is there transportation available at all times to take your dog to the vet in case of an

emergency? Ultimately, you will also have established in writing what medical decisions the kennel operator can make on your behalf, and which ones must be made by you.

■ DO DOGS INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER? Whether or not dogs get to interact with each other brings up a whole other series of questions. Some businesses allow dog-dog interactions (and in fact, promote them), while others prohibit them at all times. Some dogs do very well in the company of other dogs, and a certain amount of well managed, well supervised interaction can be healthy.

Some dogs, however, are best kept apart from other dogs for various reasons. They may be fearful or aggressive around other dogs, or they might not be physically well enough to engage in direct contact (like if they're elderly, injured, or recovering from surgery). If dog-dog interaction is allowed, you'll want to ask the following questions:

- How large is the play area? According to the ASPCA, each play area should include 75 to 100 square feet of space per dog, and each group shouldn't consist of more than 10 to 15 dogs,



Some boarding kennels have lots of photos on their websites that make their facilities look *gorgeous*. But visit the facility and ask for a tour anyway, because there are lots of things you can't tell from a photo: how it smells, how the dogs' environmental temperatures are maintained, how the staff treats the dogs, whether their water bowls are clean and full of fresh water, etc.

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with at least one supervisor per 15 dogs. Personally, I find this ratio entirely too high and would prefer much smaller groups of dogs for each human supervisor – like four to six dogs per one supervisor.

- How would your dog's playmates be selected? Based on size or play style?
- What kind of training have staff members received? Are they qualified to read dog body language to recognize stress, discomfort, or volatile situations? What kind of handling skills do they have?
- What if you prefer that your dog *not* play with other dogs – will they respect your wishes? You know your dog best, and the decisions you make about your dog's well being should be honored.

■ **HOW DO THEY HANDLE CERTAIN BEHAVIORS?** Ask what exactly will happen to your dog if he barks excessively. Will they spray him with water? Will they use a special collar of any type to try to control the barking? What exactly do they do about barking dogs? Ask them to be specific. Any type of "correction" is unacceptable.

What about a dog who growls at

staff members or at another dog? How do they respond to this? Staff members should be qualified enough to recognize that a growling dog in an unfamiliar environment is most likely expressing fear or discomfort. Measures should be taken to help the dog feel more at ease. As with barking, any type of "correction" for growling is also unacceptable.

In any given scenario, your dog should be handled with kindness and patience. Ask specifically if staff members apply any physical corrections that are meant to startle or frighten your dog (like poking, jerking on the leash, "alpha rolling," pinning your dog to the ground, shouting, etc.) or tools that are meant to be aversive to your dog, such as choke, prong, or collars that emit a shock, vibration, or citronella. None of these handling methods or tools are acceptable, and no qualified kennel operator who is knowledgeable about dog behavior would use them to manage the dogs in their care.

■ **WHAT ARE THE KENNEL'S HEALTH REQUIREMENTS?** Most kennels will require that your dog's vaccinations are "up-to-date," but you'll want to find out what they mean by this. Would a positive vaccine titer test suffice? Or does the kennel require prospective boarders to have been vaccinated within

the past three years, or one year? What about the Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine? No matter what your personal feelings might be towards immunization protocols, you'll probably need to meet the boarding facility's requirements in order to use their services.

■ **HOW IS FEEDING HANDLED?** Find out if the kennel staff is willing and able to maintain the diet you specified for your dog. Will they honor your instructions to refrain from feeding a particular food item to your dog? If you bring a week's worth of stuffed Kongs and special treats for your dog, will they arrange to give them to your dog as requested? If you feed a raw diet, do they have the necessary freezers and refrigerators to store the food? Are they okay with handling raw food? Are they willing to take the time to mix and prepare dehydrated food?

■ **IS THERE A NIGHT SHIFT?** One of the reasons I chose the facility I use is because it is on the owner's property, next to her house, so there is always someone present at night, all night. But some kennels do not have staff members on site overnight. Ask if anyone stays behind with the boarders. If the dogs are left alone overnight, it's a deal-breaker for me. I want someone to be at least within earshot of the kennels at all times.

FURTHER RESEARCH

In the end, a boarding facility's reputation says a lot about its operation. Don't rely on advertising or a great-looking website. Get references from people who use their services. Ask local vet clinic staff about them.

Personally, security is my primary concern when choosing a boarding facility. I want to be able to leave my dog in the care of someone I trust, and not worry about her safety.

Also, I choose not to allow my dog

to interact with other dogs while she is boarded (the boarding facility I use does not permit dogs to come into contact with each other). She is not a socially confident dog, and I insist on supervising all dog-dog interactions that she engages in. That is my personal choice, and I need to know that the facility operator won't disregard it.

I prepare tons of interactive food toys in advance and pack them with my dog's belongings to ease the boredom of time spent at a boarding facility. I rationalize

that if the worst thing that can happen to my dog is that she is bored while I'm away, that's fine with me! I would prefer "bored" over "traumatized," "hurt" (by another dog), or "punished," "corrected," or "disciplined" by a stranger. 🐾

Nancy Tucker, CPDT-KA, is a full-time trainer, behavior consultant, and seminar presenter in Quebec. She writes about dog behavior for several Quebec publications, focusing on life with the imperfect family dog. See "Resources," page 24, for contact information.

TIPS FROM BOARDING KENNEL OPERATORS

Don Hanson, owner of Green Acres Kennel Shop in Bangor, Maine, and Allison Bennett of Warms Hearts, Cold Noses, in North Hatley, Quebec, helped me compile this list of tips – ways to make boarding your dog a good experience for everyone involved, and to help clarify why kennel operators have the rules they do.

✓ If your dog requires medications, bring them in the original containers that are labeled with dosage instructions as prescribed by your veterinarian. Pack a couple of additional days' worth in case you are delayed returning home.

✓ Portion your dog's food into Ziploc bags (or small Ziploc-type containers if not kibble), one for each feeding. Pack a few extra days' worth in case you are delayed.

✓ Provide an emergency contact and make sure that the contact knows you have chosen her, and that she understands she needs to be available and able to respond if called.

✓ If you are going to have someone else pick up your dog from the kennel at the end of his stay, make sure the facility knows this in advance. No kennel should release your dog to anyone other than you unless you have confirmed this in advance. (Check the kennel's payment policy; the person picking up may have to settle the bill if you haven't already made other payment arrangements.)

✓ Having someone visit or "check in" with your dog while they are at the kennel can be good or bad. It might be a nice break for your dog if the person takes them out for several hours or even a couple of days (keeping in mind that they will probably need to sign a release form). But it might also simply upset the new schedule that the dog has become accustomed to. A sure way to upset the dog is to simply stop in to say "Hi," and then leave. The dog may spend a very long time afterwards in a state of anticipation.



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✓ Be totally up-front with a facility about any past and current medical issues affecting your dog. If your dog has had a seizure in the past, or sometimes limps on one leg, the boarding facility needs to know. Mention any details about your dog's behavior that can be helpful, such as: he has thunder phobia, or guards his food, or is fearful of men and has bitten before.

✓ Write down anything that you'd like the kennel operator to know (or type and print to ensure legibility). Avoid rattling off instructions verbally to the kennel operator during your drop-off. Make a list and be specific.

✓ Avoid packing too many things. Your dog will be fine with one bed or blanket and one or two familiar toys (ask if your kennel accepts that you bring your own bedding). Bringing too many items also means taking up extra precious space in an already-confined enclosure.

✓ Clearly identify any items you leave with your dog at the kennel. Things can get moved around, or need to be washed or cleaned off and then are misplaced, especially during a busy season. If an item is treasured or irreplaceable, don't bring it. It may get lost, muddied, or chewed.

✓ Don't wait too long to book! If you know you'll be traveling during the Christmas holidays, don't wait until December to reserve your dog's spot at the kennel. Chances are, the popular periods (as when kids are out of school) will be booked up well in advance – sometimes weeks or months!

✓ Expect a kennel to have a "no show" fee if you make a reservation and then fail to show or call to cancel in advance.

✓ Avoid over-emoting when dropping your dog off. You've chosen the kennel because you trust the operators. Have confidence in their service, and rest assured that your dog will adapt to his new environment just fine.

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Jail House Dogs

These trainers teach prison inmates to care for, socialize, and train dogs in order to set themselves (and the dogs) free.

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

I went to prison a few years ago – invited to speak to the participants in Pixie’s Pen Pals dog training program at the Lunenburg Correctional Center in Victoria, Virginia. I was a little nervous, but I needn’t have been: The trainers for the program were professional and capable, the prison staff was welcoming and supportive, and the men in the program were friendly, attentive, and eager to share their experiences and show me their dogs. And the dogs, of course, were wonderful.

I left the prison that day with tears in my eyes and a renewed faith in humans, thinking I should write an article about the redeeming power of interspecies partnerships. Other articles were on the agenda, though, and the impetus for the article faded.

I was at a dog training conference last fall when I bumped into Katie Locks, one of the lead trainers from the Pen Pals program. She reintroduced herself to me, and then asked if I remembered the man sitting next to her. I must have looked blank, because she grinned a little when she introduced me to Rob, one of the now-graduated, former-inmate participants who now works professionally as a dog trainer! After a bit of a conversation, I was much impressed by this intelligent, soft-spoken, gentle man. It was the push I needed to finally write this article.

Some of my other colleagues are also involved with prison dog training programs. Brad and Lisa Waggoner, husband and wife trainers and owners of Cold Nose College in Murphy, North Carolina, have participated in a prison dog training program at the Colwell Probation and Detention Center in Blairsville, Georgia, for the past four years. Like Katie, they get a great sense of accomplishment from their work with the dogs and men in the prison dog training program they volunteer with.

Since 2004, she has worked with rescues and individuals to strengthen the bond with dogs through training. She trains for the Southside SPCA as well as Lab Rescue of the Labrador Retriever Club of the Potomac, is a mentor trainer for Animal Behavior College, and is the lead trainer for Pixie’s Pen Pals (the prison dog program).

Pen Pals was started in 2001, and operates at four Virginia prisons: Lunenburg Correctional Center, Buckingham Correctional Center, Deerfield Work Center, and Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women. Katie oversees the programs at the first two prisons.

PAT MILLER: How, when, and why did you become involved in a prison dog program?

KATIE LOCKS: I have been working in the Virginia prisons with Pixie’s Pen Pals since October 2009. The previous director of the program (then managed by Save Our Shelters, now managed by FETCH a Cure) contacted me and asked if I would be interested in meeting with

FOUR PROGRAMS IN VA

Katie Locks is the owner of Lucky Dogs Training and More in Amelia Court House, Virginia (luckydogstraining.net).



Katie Locks has taught dog training to prison inmates since 2009. One of her former pupils is now a professional dog trainer, too!

her and visiting a prison. I jumped at the opportunity to try something new and different.

PAT: Where do the dogs come from that you use in the program? What do you look for in selecting dogs for the program?

KATIE: The dogs that I take in to the facilities I oversee come from Southside SPCA in Meherrin, Virginia – a small, private, nonprofit organization run by a small staff and a large network of volunteers in rural central Virginia. I work closely with the Assistant Director, Francee Schuma, and we meet and evaluate dogs regularly. We look for the dogs who are not quite ready to go to adoption events but have a lot to offer. Usually, it's the “underdog” that I take in. There are no set criteria; we are always hopeful that through patience and a little training we can turn that dog's future around.

PAT: How are inmates selected for the program?

KATIE: I do not select the human participants in the program. They are selected by the liaisons I work with at the prison, and the criteria is pretty strict. The men selected for the program have to be charge-free for two years, cannot have had any animal cruelty-related or sex offenses, and they have to be “model” inmates and be eligible for honor housing.

Once they are part of the program, they must follow the education outline and show respect for the dogs and other handlers. At that point, I have input as to their continued suitability for the program.

At Lunenburg there are generally 12 men and six dogs in the program at any given time, and at Buckingham, four men and two dogs.

PAT: Do many inmates choose to work with dogs after they are released? Do they stay in touch with you?

KATIE: Some do wish to continue, either on a volunteer basis or as a career. For most guys, this has not become a career due to the time it takes to build a business or the difficulty in finding employment with facilities willing to hire them.

I have had a few over the years reach out to me for professional advice and

support, and update me on their progress on the outside.

PAT: What are the goals of the program? How does it work?

KATIE: It is a full-circle effect. The dogs come into the program because they need a second chance to learn new skills, and the men who train them need a second chance to develop their potential and sense of self-worth. So the goals of the program are to rehabilitate humans and dogs through a mutual system of trust.

The dogs stay with the inmates in their cells. Some facilities have one-man cells and others have two-man cells, but the ratio is two handlers per dog in all facilities.



Lucky received months of training and socialization as a Pen Pals resident and was adopted by a family in 2014. Few (if any) shelters can lavish this much attention on dogs who, previously, didn't have the skills or confidence needed to succeed in an adoptive home.

I go to the facilities once a week to evaluate, monitor, and teach new skills to the handlers. The dogs stay in our program until they are adopted or a long-term foster can be found. The inmates stay in the program as long as they are permitted and continue to meet the criteria of the program.

The men do have ongoing course work and advance to higher skill levels upon completion of each level (i.e., beginner,

secondary, and primary handler status). Each level is assigned seven to 10 books and videos which they must read/view. The inmates must write reports, take tests, and pass a skills assessment.

PAT: What do the dogs learn? What training methods are used?

KATIE: The first thing the dogs must learn is to trust. Once there is a good rapport and bond with the handler, they begin to learn the basics (sit, down, wait, stay, come, leash walking, crate training, houstraining, good manners.) Once dogs are proficient at the basics, the men are allowed to teach them some fun stuff (roll over, play dead, wave).

We promote only positive training methods using incentives such as food, toys, praise, and access to fun stuff.

PAT: How are dogs placed in homes after they complete the programs? If there is a waiting list for adopters? Are the dogs usually easy to place?

KATIE: Dogs are posted on the FETCH a Cure website and through Petfinder, and remain in the program until adopted.

I wish there were a waiting list! Some dogs are in the program for far longer than necessary. The dogs themselves are, for the most part, fantastic, but we just don't have adopters waiting in line.

PAT: What's your favorite thing about the program?

KATIE: I love the fact that dogs who need a little help and humans who need a little help get to help each other, sometimes without realizing the huge impact they have on each other. I have seen many men transform through this program and become responsible, caring individuals who are better able to handle life on the outside because of this program.

PAT: What do you consider your greatest success so far?

KATIE: The greatest success is seeing the sense of accomplishment that these men feel when their dog is adopted by a family who is very grateful and appreciative of all their hard work and effort.

This program has changed my life and the way I view people in general. There is good in everyone if you are willing to see it.

A FORMER INMATE'S SUCCESS STORY

Rob was one of the inmates in the Pen Pals program when I spoke there several years ago. It was a delightful surprise to see him at the Pet Professional Guild trainer conference in Tampa, Florida, last fall and have a chance to chat. It is clear from his comments that the program contributed to his successful reintroduction into society. Rob is currently working with a mentor trainer to gain additional experience and knowledge in the field of dog training and behavior.

After the conference, I contacted Rob and asked if I could interview him for this article. He was happy to participate. We've withheld his last name to protect his privacy.

PAT: How did you come to be incarcerated?

ROB: Many years ago I was rather immature and selfish, and lacked any sense of direction. With a mind filled with negativity and alcohol, I did something unkind and thoughtless.

PAT: How did you get involved with the prison dog program? How did it affect your life while you were in prison?

ROB: In 2007, the Pen Pals program was introduced to the facility where I had been assigned. An application process was set up to determine which men would be best suited for the program. I applied, and in July of that year I was accepted, and immediately moved into a cell with another inmate handler. That move was probably one of the best moves I have ever made, as it afforded me the opportunity to live and breathe dog training 24 hours a day.

PAT: What did you like about the program?

ROB: There are so many things! One of the top ones is the sense of accomplishment and self-worth you get from helping another living creature find a life of happiness, security, and comfort.

PAT: How long were you in the program? How many different dogs did you train?

ROB: I was in the program from July 2007 until October 2014. In that time I worked with close to 40 dogs – those brought in for the program as well as those owned by staff working at the facility.

PAT: Did they all get adopted? Was it hard to let go?

ROB: Almost all of those dogs were successfully adopted, with the rare exception of one or two who were unable to adjust to the prison environment due to extreme fear. It was always a little difficult to let go – but it was comforting knowing they were going to loving homes and would be cared for, for the rest of their lives.

PAT: Was there one dog in particular who touched you?

ROB: All of the dogs affected me, but the one who stands out the most was a Foxhound/Collie-mix named Woody. He was the first one I worked with who had severe fear issues, and he taught me more than any other about fear and behavior, and about myself as well.

PAT: Were there things you learned in the program that have helped you with other aspects of your life?

ROB: I learned so much through the program. One of the most important is letting go of the old, selfish mindset, and opening up my heart and thoughts for others. Also, having been entrusted with a leadership role within the program, I was able to develop skills so valuable to all of life, such as *real* listening, conflict resolution, and public speaking, as well as being a liaison between staff and inmates.

PAT: Do you currently hold any trainer credentials? Are you pursuing any?

ROB: I am a professional member of the Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT), as well as an AKC Canine Good Citizen evaluator. I will possibly pursue further certifications and credentials in the future, but for right now I am attempting to gain as much direct experience and understanding as I can in relation to all aspects of training, behavior, and business.

PAT: Do your clients know you were in prison? Has this created any obstacles for you?

ROB: Some of the clients I have worked with know about my past, and those who do are not bothered by it.

PAT: What did you think of the PPG conference?

ROB: The PPG Summit was an incredible experience, one that I will look back on for a long time with happiness.

PAT: Is it your plan to make dog training a lifetime career?

ROB: Training animals is what I would love to do as a lifetime career. I am working hard to follow that dream.

PAT: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

ROB: I would like to thank all of those who were involved in the program at all levels. I hope they realize how amazing it is for me to have been a part of something so big and



Woody in his adoptive home.

LISA & BRAD WAGGONER

Lisa Lyle Waggoner, CPDT-KA, PMCT, CSAT, and her husband Brad Waggoner, CPDT-KA, KPA CTP, are the owners of Cold Nose College in Murphy, North Carolina (coldnosecollege.com). The Waggoners have been involved with the dog training program, “RESCUED: Saving Detainees and Dogs One Life at a Time,” at the Colwell Probation and Detention Center in Blairsville, Georgia, since it was started four years ago.

PAT: How and why did you become involved in the RESCUED program?

LISA: My dad was a psychologist in maximum security prisons when I was growing up. He had a PhD in psychology, and lobbied for using positive reinforcement vs. punishment in the rehabilitation of prisoners. There were many times he was a whistleblower, standing up against inmate beatings.

In 2004, while driving to Maryland to attend a week-long dog training instructor course at Peaceable Paws, I drove by a prison and thought of my dad’s work. It was then that I first hoped to one day be involved in a prison dog training program. When Brad and I were approached about implementing a dog training program within the Colwell Probation and Detention Center, it was easy to say “Yes!”

PAT: Where do the dogs used in the program come from?

BRAD: The dogs come from two shelter partners of the program, Castoff Pet Rescue and Humane Society Mountain Shelter, both in Blairsville, Georgia. RESCUED is a 10-week program that matches a detainee with a dog in need of care and patient training.

We don’t select the dogs for the program. However, the two groups have done a nice job of selecting dogs who have only general training needs, as opposed to serious behavior issues.

PAT: How are inmates selected for the program?

BRAD: The detainees are selected to participate in the program after an extensive application process that includes an essay, a thorough background check of their criminal histories, and an assessment of their institutional behavior. When the detainee has successfully completed the



The Waggoners at work: Lisa (red vest) and Brad (white shirt) teach inmates to train shelter dogs in a Georgia detention center.

first part of the process, he is interviewed by a panel. After this, the board makes a decision of who will fill the vacant handler positions.

PAT: Do many inmates choose to work with dogs after they are released?

LISA: There are only two that we know of who initially began working with dogs. One as an employee in a boarding/day care/training facility and the other as a vet assistant.

PAT: Do they stay in touch with you?

LISA: Many do and it’s a joy to continue hearing from them via email or by staying in touch through Facebook.

PAT: What are the goals of the program?

LISA: RESCUED is the first dog rescue program within the Georgia Department of Corrections. RESCUED teaches viable job skills that enable the men to gain employment upon re-entry into their communities. As Diane Hassett, superintendent of the facility says, “This gives them a chance of being ‘rescued’ from the revolving door of incarceration.”

The detainees are also taught useful skills and given the privilege of on-the-job training, which helps solidify their foundation as productive citizens.

A recent group of participants in the RESCUED program pose with their shelter-dog partners.

In addition to positive dog training and a grooming program, the program has expanded to include a number of other programs offered by different organizations. These include a basic animal health class taught by Dr. Patti Barnes and Dr. Dwaine Zagrocki of Union County Pet Hospital, classes in pet first aid and pet CPR taught by Brad, and a variety of classes on building a resume, job search skills, problem-solving, computer skills, small business and money management, and anger management. Also, detainees can earn a certificate in grooming through a course offered by Central Georgia Technical College.

PAT: How does the program work?

LISA: Three dogs from each shelter partner organization are selected for each 10-week RESCUED program. In June of 2012, the six men and four dogs were housed in a 216-square-foot room, which included six bunks, four dog crates, and additional dog gear. After the successful first year of the program, the Georgia Department of Corrections gave Colwell the permission to expand the program and the space it occupies. The men and the dogs now live together in a 1,100-square-



foot dorm that also includes six double bunks, a bathing and a grooming area, and a library of positive dog training books, DVDs, and publications donated by dog trainers from around the United States.

The total number of men varies, though there is always a minimum of six dogs and six handlers, along with two or three mentor detainees. The mentor detainees are men who have completed the previous 10-week program and stay involved until their release date. Colwell is a minimum security and probation detention center, so the stays are much shorter than in maximum security prisons.

We spend one morning a week teaching the participants positive dog training, which includes basic family manners, agility for fun, a two-hour presentation on dog body language and canine communication, and a session on nose work, along with presentations on learning theory, pet first aid, and CPR.

Dogs usually stay in the program for the 10-week session, but if a dog isn't adopted at the end, the dog often stays in the program until he finds his forever home, though some dogs may go back to the shelter. The two partner groups are responsible for the adoptions.

Sometimes the men in the program adopt the dogs they've worked with, though some of them cannot because of life situations upon their release. But finding homes for the dogs is becoming easier now that we have two new shelter partners, and the Georgia Department of Corrections has allowed the facility to have a Facebook page for the program. The Public Affairs Office is also in the midst of putting together a video about the program that will soon be released, which we anticipate will help promote adoptions.

PAT: What do you like about the program?

LISA: The ability to see the amazing transformation in the men (as well as the dogs). We see their attitudes and their anger melt away as they begin to learn with their dogs. It's also so incredible to see them realize that positive techniques can be applied to people, too. It's evident

to see that the program has a powerful effect on the men, as demonstrated by the comments I received after last week's training session:

Detainee Carlton, now a mentor, says, "Mentorship wasn't what I expected. It was harder. I've managed construction crews before, but it was not of this magnitude. It's expanded my leadership abilities. I now have a different way to teach and lead people."

Detainee McGraw offered, "It's been a wonderful learning experience. I wasn't looking to fall in love with a dog. I was really just looking for a way out of the other dorm, but we've all come together.



Above: A detainee with Bingo, who was adopted by an employee in the Georgia Department of Corrections four weeks into the 10-week program, but stayed for training until the end.

Right: The Waggoners at a recent graduation ceremony for detainees.

We've learned more from the dogs than they have from us, especially patience. These dogs have had a hard life in the shelter and it's amazing what you can teach them. If they can learn, then we can, too. Anything is possible."

Detainee Fulkerson chimed in that for him, "It's been a challenge working with the other people and a challenge for ourselves. We have to set an example. Some of us have a harder time following integrity, but we've learned that integrity is about doing the right thing with no one is looking. The dogs want to be loved and we want to be loved."

And Andrew Holcomb, a former graduate who is now working as a long-

haul truck driver, said to me this week via Facebook, "The RESCUED program taught me that there is more to life than myself. I actually care about more than myself now. It changed my outlook on life all together. It taught me how to love and care for others and no matter what, always do the right thing."

For Brad and me, it just doesn't get any better than that!

PAT: Is there anything you'd change about the program if you could?

LISA: Not a thing. We have an amazing team of individuals involved in this program and we all believe we're making a difference in the lives of the men and the dogs. The superintendent recently put together a proposal to convert the vacant gymnasium (which has never been used) into a new facility where more men and dogs can be in the program, as well as an adoption center where dogs can easily stay and wait for their forever homes if they're not adopted.



PAT: What do you consider your greatest success so far?

BRAD: Everyone involved in the program sees the acceptance and expansion of the program as its greatest success. To date, 74 detainees have completed the program and were released. Of those, 67 percent continue to be productive members of our society.

I'd like to tell other trainers, "If you have a chance to volunteer for such a program, jump on it!" We're honored to be involved. 🐾

Author Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, is WDJ's Training Editor. She and her husband Paul live in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, where Pat offers dog-training classes and courses for trainers. See page 24 for more information.

Not Too Hot for Fido

Cayenne is the International Herb Association's "Herb of the Year" – and so useful for our dogs!

BY CJ PUOTINEN

Cayenne or chili pepper – the spice that gives Mexican and Sichuan food its heat – is an important medicinal plant. Not only is it Herb of the Year for 2016, it's good for dogs!

Since 1985, the International Herb Association has announced its Herb of the Year during National Herb Week, which this year is May 1 through 7. The IHA has just published *Capsicum: Herb of the Year 2016*, a book that reviews chili peppers and their growing conditions and uses, and the organization helps garden centers and herb farms promote its featured plant.

Cayenne (*Capsicum annuum*) and other members of the Capsicum family are known as chili, chilli, chille, or chile peppers. They belong to the nightshade family, which includes potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, bell peppers, paprika, pimento, tomatillos, and tobacco.

Native to Central and South America, where they have been cultivated for more than 6,000 years, *Capsicum* peppers were brought to Europe by Christopher Columbus, whose physician recognized their medicinal benefits. Portuguese explorers continued the trend, and soon hot peppers were grown around the world. Today's popular varieties include (from mild to hottest) Anaheim, jalapeno, serrano, cayenne, tabasco, Thai, habanero, and ghost peppers.

Rich in vitamins C and A, cayenne also supplies vitamins B3 (niacin), B2 (riboflavin), and B6 (pyridoxine), the minerals iron, copper, and potassium,

plus flavonoids and other micronutrients.

Cayenne's unique ingredient is the alkaloid compound capsaicin (pronounced cap-SAY-sin), which gives hot peppers their heat.

How hot is hot? In 1912, Wilbur Scoville, an American pharmacist,

created a test to measure the heat of chili peppers. Now called the Scoville scale, its SHU (Scoville Heat Unit) ratings range from zero (bell peppers) to 30,000 to 50,000 (cayenne), 100,000 to 300,000 (habanero and Scotch bonnet peppers), and up to 2 million for the world's hottest peppers. Today their heat is measured by High Performance Liquid Chromatography, or HPLC, but the Scoville Heat Units remain popular.

Medicinally, chili peppers are added to herbal formulas in small amounts as a catalyst, a substance that causes or accelerates a chemical reaction without itself being affected. In oral supplements or when added to food, cayenne speeds reactions in the digestive and circulatory systems. Applied topically, it is a rubefacient, which means that it increases circulation to the skin, nerves, and joints, opening subcutaneous capillaries and acting as an analgesic. Wherever applied, cayenne improves the body's ability to absorb nutrients, fight infection, alleviate pain, and reduce inflammation.



PHOTO BY STEPHEN S. NAGY

Peppers are the ripe fruit of *Capsicum* plants, which grow around the world and are famous for their culinary and medicinal uses.

Senior dogs with heart disease may benefit from the addition of cayenne to their diet. Start with a tiny dosage and increase slowly.

HOW HOT IS TOO HOT?

The key word in any application of medicinal herbs is moderation. This is especially important with cayenne because too much applied topically can damage the skin or, when swallowed, cause severe digestive pain.

Cayenne made headlines in Seattle three years ago when a property manager sprinkled cayenne pepper around her apartment complex, hoping to repel resident dogs whose owners left their waste behind. At least one dog was injured as a result, prompting demands for legal action. Charges of animal cruelty were not filed by the county's prosecuting attorney because while exposure to cayenne can be painful, it isn't fatal and doesn't cause lasting damage. The dog received veterinary treatment and recovered, the property manager apologized, and pet owners agreed to clean up after their dogs.

Capsaicin is the main ingredient in self-defense sprays designed to repel aggressive dogs, bears, coyotes, and other animals. An Internet search will display a variety of sprays and testimonials about their effectiveness. Commercial pepper sprays use oleoresin capsicum or chili oleoresin, an extremely hot pepper extract. Pepper sprays are considered weapons if used against humans, and regulations regarding their legality vary by state according to the products' strength and size. In some cases, such as when misused by law enforcement officials, pepper sprays have been fatal.

While the taste of pepper doesn't always deter dogs, less concentrated sprays may prevent Fido from licking and chewing pillows, plants, shoes, or furniture. One popular do-it-yourself repellent spray posted at vetinfo.com combines 1 part cayenne powder with 10 parts water in a spray bottle. "Shake up the mixture to evenly combine the two," says the instruction page. "Spray just a few sprays of the mixture on the surfaces of the furniture that you're interested in protecting and in the area surrounding it."

Cayenne is also recommended as a garden insect, ant, and rodent repellent.

Because cayenne irritates mucous membranes, be careful to avoid your



dog's eyes, nose, genitals, and rectum whenever spraying or applying this herb.

HEART HEALTH AND IMPROVED DIGESTION

Can cayenne stop a heart attack? For hundreds of years, herbalists have made this claim, and it appears to be true. Dr. John Christopher, a 20th century American herbalist, used cayenne so often for this purpose that he and his followers made cayenne a routine treatment for heart disease.

As Candace Hunter and Sue Sierralupé wrote in their book *Chili Pepper: Naturally Hot Herbal Medicine*, "Chili peppers may help stop a crisis in progress. We have historical data to suggest a goodly dose of chili powder swallowed amidst a heart attack can stop the crisis, though we don't currently have scientific studies to support that. What we do know is chilies can assist the body in healing afterward. Heart surgery patients who experience low circulation, lack of energy, and listlessness are strengthened and invigorated by a daily dose of cayenne pepper in capsule form."

According to Randy Kidd, DVM, PhD, in his article "Promoting Canine Cardiovascular Health" (WDJ February 2005), "Cayenne is probably the most useful of the systemic stimulants, regulating blood flow and equalizing and strengthening the heart, arteries, capillaries, and nerves. Cayenne is a general tonic and is specific for the circulatory and digestive systems. It has the ability to balance blood pressure, correcting it to a normal range."

As Dr. Kidd explained, cayenne can be used any time an animal is debilitated, whenever the circulation is stagnant or there is congestion in the body, and whenever there is a lack of energy or vitality. Cayenne is also an outstanding carrier herb, helping in the transport of other herbs and medications to various parts of the body, especially to the heart, stomach, and brain.

Canine heart disease can cause lethargy, weakness, vomiting, a chronic cough, shortness of breath, lameness, and a rapid pulse, all of which may improve when cayenne is added to a dog's food. Cayenne's warming effect spreads throughout the body, even to an animal's extremities, warming a dog's cold paws and improving the health of veins and capillaries.

In the digestive tract, cayenne improves the body's absorption of nutrients while reducing gas, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation, and other uncomfortable symptoms. Years ago doctors warned human ulcer patients to avoid hot, spicy foods, but more recent research shows that chili peppers can actually help heal ulcers.

Cayenne is available in capsules, tinctures (liquid extracts), and as the familiar culinary powder. Start with a small amount, such as a pinch of powder or a drop of tincture hidden in your dog's food or in a capsule that can be hidden in food; two-part gelatin capsules are sold in natural food markets and online. To help prevent digestive discomfort, feed cayenne with a full meal, not on an empty stomach.

Over a period of days or weeks, gradually increase the dose according to your dog's weight and tolerance. If purchasing cayenne capsules, look for products with a Scoville Heat Unit rating of 30,000 to 40,000, or try Nature's Way Capsicool controlled-heat cayenne or Solaray's Cool Cayenne, both of which are advertised as gentle to the stomach. If the recommended dose for adult humans is 2 capsules per day, work up to 1 capsule for dogs weighing 50 to 60 pounds, or, with the help of empty 2-part gel caps, feed half a capsule to dogs weighing 25 to 30 pounds or one-fourth of a capsule to dogs weighing 10 to 15 pounds.

Approximate measurements should work well because individual responses vary and sensitivity to cayenne decreases with daily exposure. If your dog shows signs of discomfort, simply reduce the amount.

You may not have to hide cayenne to get your dog to swallow it, for some dogs are chili heads! Seamus, my husband's Cairn Terrier, is famous for his enthused vocalizations when he's offered anything containing hot sauce or cayenne.

HOT PEPPER FIRST-AID

It sounds counterintuitive, but cayenne can be an effective first-aid treatment for cuts, scrapes, bites, bleeding nails, mouth lacerations, and other injuries. It is a natural styptic, which stops bleeding on contact, and an analgesic, which stops pain.

FIRST AID FOR CAYENNE EXPOSURE

It's easy to forget to wash your hands thoroughly after handling cayenne – and then absent-mindedly touch your eye or sensitive skin. Ouch!

If this happens, rinsing with water won't help right away, though extended rinsing will eventually remove the irritant, because the chemicals that make peppers hot are not water-soluble. For faster results, apply a vegetable oil to the affected area and gently wipe it away with a tissue.

The burning sensation of too much cayenne in the mouth or throat will increase if you drink water. This is why experts recommend drinking full-fat milk instead. The resin in chilies can be broken with soap, alcohol, or vinegar as well as fats.

When she was a child, a friend was bitten on the leg by her grandmother's horse. "My grandmother hauled me back to the house," she says, "filled her hand with cayenne powder and held it against the wound. That hurt for a second or two, but then it stopped bleeding and stopped hurting. The bite was never infected, and it healed in record time without a scar."

Herbalist Alicia North of Cornwall, Connecticut, has a similar story. Several years ago her cousin snipped the tip of her 14-year-old Terrier's ear while trimming his hair. "Jack had been bleeding for 10 minutes when she called," says North, "and none of the remedies she had tried made any difference. She was frantic and without a car so she wanted me to take them to the vet."

North asked her cousin whether she

had any cayenne pepper and then told her to apply it to the cut on Jack's ear. "She was skeptical and thought that it wouldn't work and was afraid it would hurt him," says North. "I assured her that it would help, so she reluctantly agreed and we hung up so she could apply it. Moments later she called back shouting, 'It worked! I'm so relieved! I thought he might bleed to death. Who knew that spices in my cabinet could be used for anything but cooking?'"

"Of course, I knew," says North, "and I was happy she got such instantaneous results!"

ACHES AND PAINS

Some of the most popular treatments for human joint pain and arthritis contain capsaicin.

As the Arthritis Foundation explains at its website, arthritis.org:

"Applied as a topical cream, gel, or patch, capsaicin works by depleting the amount of a neurotransmitter called substance P that sends pain messages to the brain. For the first couple of weeks of use, it may cause burning or stinging as substance P is released and ultimately depleted; it must be used regularly to keep substance P from building up again. Many studies have shown that capsaicin effectively reduces pain from osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and fibromyalgia. In a 2010 German study, joint pain decreased nearly 50 percent after three weeks' use of 0.05 percent capsaicin cream.

"Most capsaicin products – such as Zostrix, Zostrix HP, Capzasin-P and others – contain between 0.025 to 0.075 percent concentrations. Apply regularly three times daily."

CAYENNE RESOURCES

Capsicum: Herb of the Year 2016 by the International Herb Association, Jacksonville, FL. Paperback, \$17. lherb.org

Chili Pepper: Naturally Hot Herbal Medicine, The Practical Herbalist's Herbal Folios, by Candace Hunter and Sue Sierralupé. Practical Herbalist Press, 2015, Kindle Edition, \$3

Herbs for Pets: The Natural Way to Enhance Your Pet's Life, by Gregory L. Tilford and Mary L. Wulff. Bow Tie Press, Second Edition, 2009. Paperback, \$30

Flower Essence Society, Nevada City, CA. (800) 736-9222 or (530) 265-9163; flowersociety.org

Jean's Greens Herbal Tea Works, Castleton, NY. Cayenne powder, tincture, and do-it-yourself supplies. (518) 479-0471; jeansgreens.com

Mountain Rose Herbs, Eugene, OR. Cayenne powder, tincture, capsule kits, and other supplies. (800) 879-3337 or (541) 741-7307; mountainroseherbs.com

Dogs can enjoy similar results from topical products containing capsaicin. Consider making your own liniment to warm and relax joints and muscles, increase circulation, relieve inflammation, improve flexibility, and speed healing. Traditional recipes combine skin-warming ingredients and therapeutic herbs with cider vinegar.

For example, in a glass jar combine 1 pint (2 cups) apple cider vinegar with 1 teaspoon powdered cayenne pepper, 4 tablespoons dried (or ¼ cup fresh) rosemary, and 2 tablespoons dried (or ½ cup fresh) comfrey leaf or root that has been cut or broken into small pieces. Cover and let stand at room temperature, shaking daily, for a week or longer. Strain before using.

Massage this liniment into tight muscles, bruises, or sore joints, or simply soak a cloth or bandage and hold it on the affected area for as long as possible. You may want to wear latex or vinyl gloves while applying it. Keep this liniment away from eyes and mucous membranes.

Cayenne can be especially helpful in the treatment of pain following surgery, leg amputation, or similar traumas. Taken with food, cayenne increases circulation and promotes tissue regeneration, and applied topically, it helps reduce pain and stimulate healing. According to some reports, human patients with phantom limb pain have been helped by cayenne, as have human and canine patients with nerve damage caused by accident or injury.

GROW YOUR OWN

Cayenne and other peppers make attractive garden plants and can be colorful house plants. Most seed catalogs carry a variety of peppers and most garden stores and nurseries offer young plants that transplant easily. Peppers prefer full sun or sun with shade, and overnight temperatures should remain above 55° F (13° C) so that plants produce fruit.

MAKE YOUR OWN

You can make your own custom-dose cayenne capsules by partially filling two-part gelatin capsules with cayenne powder. Herb supply companies sell capsule-filling kits to simplify the process.

Make your own cayenne tincture by filling a one-pint or one-cup glass jar with loosely packed fresh cayenne peppers (for best results, cut or chop



the peppers as you fill the jar) or loosely packed crushed or broken dried peppers, then add 80-proof vodka or a similar distilled alcohol to fill the jar. Close the lid and leave the jar in a warm but shady location, shaking it every few days for four to six weeks.

When ready to use, strain the tincture through cheesecloth or muslin and pour it into dropper bottles. All the supplies you need are available at natural markets, herbal supply stores, and online. Alcohol tinctures keep for years if stored away from heat and light.

For a culinary adventure, make your own lactofermented hot sauce (sriracha) so you and your dog can further enjoy the benefits of chili peppers. Start with 1 pound Fresno or other fresh hot peppers, 4 cloves garlic, 2 teaspoons salt, 2 tablespoons honey or maple syrup, and 4 tablespoons liquid whey (the clear liquid that separates from live-culture yogurt when you cut it with a spoon and leave it in the refrigerator).

Combine these ingredients in a food processor or blender, or mince the peppers by hand and combine with the other ingredients. Spoon the chili mixture into a glass jar, leaving 1 inch of head space, cover, and let stand at room temperature for 3 to 5 days (longer if the kitchen is cool, less in hot weather).

Transfer to the fridge until ready to use, then set a fine-mesh strainer over a mixing bowl and press the fermented chili through it, or sieve the sauce through a food mill. Pour the strained sauce into a jar or bottle and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for months. Use in moderation to add warmth and spice

Freshly ground whole peppers make a versatile sriracha (hot sauce) that can benefit your dog as well as your dinner.

to your meals. The taste is uniquely complex and more flavorful than that of vinegar-based sauces. Try adding a drop or two to your dog's food or use it in place of pepper tincture in two-part gelatin capsules.

HOMEOPATHY AND CAYENNE FLOWER ESSENCE

No discussion of cayenne would be complete without mentioning its use in homeopathy and flower essences. Homeopathic preparations are so diluted that they contain very little of their original ingredient, making them exceptionally safe to use. Homeopathic *Capsicum annum* is often prescribed at the 3x or 6x strength for those with poor circulation or who have respiratory or digestive problems. Homeopathic remedies are usually given under the tongue between meals.

Flower essences are made by placing freshly picked blossoms in crystal bowls of pure spring water and leaving them in direct sunlight for three or more hours, after which the flowers are discarded and the energized water is preserved with brandy.

According to the Flower Essence Society, "Cayenne flower essence is a wonderful catalyst whenever we are stuck and need to light a fire to move through obstacles... Cayenne essence can fire up a sluggish will, stimulating activity and movement when our life has stagnated, to move through inertia and challenging obstacles." It is considered a treatment for apathy and depression.

Some canine massage therapists and acupuncturists incorporate flower essences into their hands-on work. Applying flower essences to a chakra or an acupressure point and then pressing, holding, massaging, or tapping the point can increase the treatment's effectiveness. Because frequency of application makes flower essences effective, try applying a drop of cayenne flower essence to your dog's bare skin (nose, paw pads, abdomen, and inside ears) at least twice or three times daily. 🐾

CJ Puotinen, author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and other books, is a long-time contributor to WDJ. She lives in Montana.

 RESOURCES 

BOOKS AND DVDS

- ❖ WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of *Positive Perspectives; Positive Perspectives 2; Power of Positive Dog Training; Play With Your Dog; Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First Class Life*; and her newest book, *How to Foster Dogs: From Homeless to Homeward Bound*. Available from dogwise.com and wholedogjournal.com
- ❖ *The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care* and *Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats*, by WDJ contributor CJ Puotinen, are available from dogwise.com and from wholedogjournal.com

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

- ❖ **Stephanie Colman**, Caninestein Dog Training, Los Angeles, CA. Offering training

for basic through advanced obedience, competition dog sports, problem-solving, and more! Private lessons and group classes. (818) 414-8559; caninesteintraining.com

- ❖ **Pat Miller**, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Group and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Miller also offers a variety of dog training academies and instructors' courses. (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com
- ❖ **Nancy Tucker**, CPDT-KA, Éducation Canine Nancy Tucker, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. Training and behavior consulting; seminars on dog behavior for owners, trainers, and veterinary staff. (819) 580-1583; nancytucker.ca

WHAT'S AHEAD ...

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❖ **THE GOOD-ENOUGH DOG**

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