

# The Whole Dog Journal™



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*A monthly guide to natural dog care and training*

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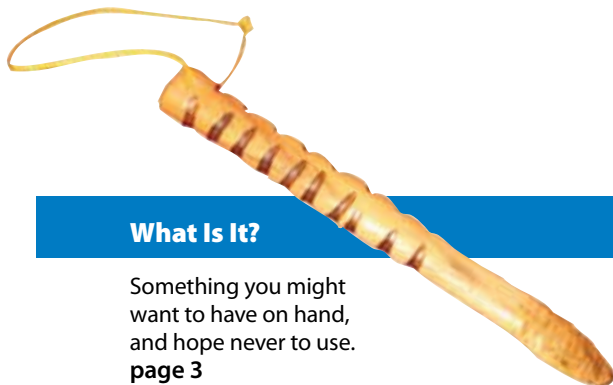
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# Welcome Change

## Britain's Kennel Club throws down the gauntlet.

BY GINA SPADAFORI

**O**n the first day of the Crufts dog show in early March, the Kennel Club in England confirmed that business as usual wasn't so usual anymore. This year marked the start of reforms put into place after the game-changing BBC documentary – Jemima Harrison's "Pedigreed Dogs Exposed" – shocked the country with images of dogs so structurally unsound that the normal life of a dog was impossible.

The result? Independent veterinary review of the judges' selections for Best of Breed Bulldog and Pekingese deemed the dogs too unhealthy to be granted their awards. And this was just on day 1. What's next?!

I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall in the private rooms at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, where the massive four-day show is held every year. But thanks to the Internet, I didn't have to be present to get the outrage:

"Please look at what has happened . . . most people have no idea what goes into creating a sound and healthy example of this breed," someone who follows me on Facebook posted to my wall. And then she linked to a blog post on a dog-show website. "The supposed injuries could not be deemed genetic in origin and in the case of Ch Mellowmood One In A Million, she had passed her health clearances in December of 2011," she added. "She has also garnered 20 cc's [top breed honors] as well as the coveted Bulldog of the Year title in 2011 and the Best In Show title in the Bulldog Inc show. Bulldoggers worldwide are united against this ruling!"

Except, well, not. Because while the breeding diehards are outraged, the ruling was indeed met with shock among dog-lovers worldwide – shock that at last the dog-show world appears poised to start doing something about the suffering of dogs bred to fashionable extremes.

The fast-dwindling ranks of True Believers see a conspiracy here. From the post on the dog show site:

"Now here is the real rub. It is the vet, who may or may not have ever bred a litter in his/her life, who makes the determination as to

whether the Breed winner is worthy of the award, not the judge. . . . [M]any of you have already run across vets who are not sympathetic to our hobby."

Count me in as another who is not sympathetic to the "hobby." I have attended two world-class veterinary conferences where veterinary surgeons and internists argued that these extreme structural malformations have produced dogs whose respiratory systems are so brutally compromised that they need to have corrective surgery in adolescence to have a chance at a dog's normal life. If breeding for these traits isn't animal cruelty, it's hard to imagine what is.

This blowback is not coming from animal-rights extremists. It's coming from people who have purebred dogs and love them, people inside the dog-show world as well those who just love a particular breed. And yes, it's coming from veterinarians who are no longer as willing to shrug sadly and look away from the problems.

*Enough.* As for those of you who continue to support this dead-end "sport" as it is, well, good luck to you, because you see, common sense, time, and public opinion are all on the other side. 🐾

*Gina Spadafori is a syndicated pet-care columnist and the author of more than dozen books on animals and their care. She is also the writing partner of "Good Morning America" veterinarian Dr. Marty Becker. After her champion Flat-Coated Retriever was recently diagnosed with a rare cancer that kills up to half of all Flatcoats before the age of 8, she started The McKenzie Project to challenge the closed-registry system that perpetuates health problems in purebred dogs.*

# Break It Up

## Five things to do to stop a dog fight.

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC

**A** dog fight that goes beyond a brief scuffle and doesn't resolve quickly is frightening to behold. In fact, it's one of the behavior scenarios most likely to result in significant injury to humans, not to mention the dogs. The first, most important thing to remember is keep yourself safe. After that, here are five things to do to try to end the conflict as quickly as possible, with minimal bloodshed.

**1 SPRAY ME A RIVER.** Blast the dogs with water from a nearby hose – assuming a nearby hose with a powerful enough spray. An easily portable aversive such as lemon juice in a spray bottle can be an effective alternative. In a pinch, even a fire extinguisher makes a handy and effective fight-stopping tool.

**2 SOUND STRATEGIES.** Depending on the intensity of the fight, a loud yell might put it to rest. Try dropping one (or several) metal pans on the floor. A lit match held under a smoke detector alarm might also do the trick. Available at boating supply stores, a marine air horn can be effective at breaking up a fight. Warning: they are loud!

**3 AN OBJECT LESSON.** Keep your hands out of the danger zone by using a physical object to break up a fight. (You have to plan in advance.) Attach two handles to a sheet of plywood. When a fight happens, lower the board between the sparring dogs. The board will push them apart and provide a physical barrier between them to prevent a new grab.

Dogfighters – and some bully breed owners who don't fight their dogs but know their dogs' potential – always carry a "parting stick" or "breaking stick" with them. This is often a carved hammer or axe handle, tapered to a rounded point at one end. When dogs are locked

in combat, the parting stick is forced between a dog's teeth and turned sideways to pry open the jaws. Caution: Parting sticks can break teeth, and a dog whose jaws have just been "parted" may turn on the person doing the parting.

Tossed over fighters, one over each, blankets muffle outside stimuli, reducing arousal. This also allows humans to physically separate the combatants by picking up the dogs and pulling them apart with less risk of a serious bite; the blanket will cushion the effect of teeth on skin if the dog does whirl and bite.

**4 AIR SUPPLY.** When life and limb are at stake, extreme measures may be called for. Wrap a leash round the aggressor's neck or twist his collar to cut off his airflow. When he lets go for a breath of air, pull the dogs apart. You can also cover the dog's nose with a plastic bag to cut off the air supply. These are more challenging than they sound. It's difficult to get a leash around the neck of a dog who is "attached" by mouth to another dog; grabbing a collar to twist puts you at risk of being bitten and your fingers at risk of getting caught in the collar; and the nose is a moving target.

**5 LET'S GET PHYSICAL.** I heard about (never tried) a rather drastic technique observed at a dog show decades ago. The elderly judge was a tiny woman.

When two dogs got combative in her ring she had the handlers both grab their dogs and hold on tight. Then she took the dog on top by the tail and jammed her thumb up his rectum. He let go in an instant and whirled around to see what was happening. The judge excused the two dogs, calmly washed her hands, and continued her classes. Note: A client of mine tried this recently. It didn't work for her.

Here's another approach for smallish dogs in a one-on-one fight; it is not recommended for a multi-dog brawl. Lift the rear of the clearly identified aggressor so he's suspended with forefeet barely touching the ground. The dog lets go, and the target can scoot free. Supposedly, in this position the dog is not able to turn on the human suspending him, although I'm not giving any guarantees.

There are no guarantees for any of these methods; the best answer is management and modification. If you have dogs who fight, keep them apart, unless and until they learn to get along. The best



Other dogs may be drawn to the sounds and sight of a fight and rush into the melee. It would be helpful if anyone not involved in trying to break up the fight could try to keep other dogs away.

of management plans can fail, however. If and when that fight happens, take a deep breath, resist your instincts to leap into the fray, quickly review your available options, and choose the one (or ones) that are most likely to work in that place and time. When the fight is over and no one is being rushed to the hospital in an ambulance, remember to take a moment to relax and breathe, and then congratulate yourself for your quick thinking. 🐾

## DANGERS IN THE GRASS?

### *A study reveals a link between canine malignant lymphoma and professionally applied lawn pesticides.*

It's a ton of fun to see an athletic, healthy dog sprinting across a sprawling lawn of thick green grass – but could this practice be dangerous to the dog's health? A study presented in the January 2012 issue of the journal *Environmental Research* concluded that exposure to professionally applied lawn pesticides was associated with a significantly (70 percent) higher risk of canine malignant lymphoma (CML).

It's a broad conclusion and light on specifics. The case-control study, conducted between January 2000 and December 2006 at the Foster Hospital for Small Animals at Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, was structured around a 10-page questionnaire that was mailed to dog owners who were having their pets treated at the Foster Hospital; the resulting data came from the owners of 266 dogs with confirmed cases of CML and 478 dogs in two control groups (non-CML cases).

The questionnaire was not included in the article; a summary stated that it covered a wide variety of data considerations, including breed, weight, medical history, and the types of chemicals used in the home. The characteristics of the CML cases did not vary much from the controls, other than in the weight category (the CML dogs tended to weigh more than 50 pounds). Exposure to types of flea and tick products and frequency of administration was similar among the groups, as was overall exposure to lawn care products.

What did show cause for concern was that the CML cases were more likely to live in homes that reported professionally applied pesticides and herbicides, though the results were only marginally significant for the herbicides. Exposure to other types of professionally applied lawn care products was not associated with increased risk. There was an increased risk, however, for dogs who live in homes where owners applied lawn-care products containing insect growth regulators – substances that inhibit the development of insect eggs and larvae.

One disappointment: specific lawn care chemicals or insect-growth regulators were not identified. Instead, the umbrella categories of herbicide, pesticide, insect growth regulators, fungicide, rodenticide, and fertilizer were used. It could be that some of these chemicals are already designated as known carcinogenics. The article notes that studies evaluating frequency of exposure and exposure dose are needed; thus it appears that the

researchers did not determine which chemicals the dogs were exposed to, in what quantities, or for how long.

Also disappointing was the fact that genetic factors were apparently not considered as part of the study. Three-fourths of the CML dogs were classified as purebred, as was the control group. The incidence rate of CML is not the same for all breeds; increased risk has been reported for several breeds including Basset Hounds, Boxers, Airedales, Golden Retrievers, Saint Bernards, Bulldogs, Bullmastiffs, and Scottish Terriers. This predisposition could indicate an inherited characteristic.

Like the canary in the mineshaft, dogs can serve as sentinels for human disease because they are our close companions and are subjected to many of the same environmental influences. Canine cancers have the same biology and behavior as human cancers, and in some cases have identical histology and response rates to treatment. The goal of this study was to identify risk factors for CML from exposure to environmental chemicals in an effort to provide insight to risk factors for humans in developing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.



Keep in mind that exposure to lawn care products is different for canines than it is for humans. People can know if a lawn has been recently treated with chemicals and thus avoid it and take precautions when handling such chemicals. Our pets have no such option; their uncovered and unprotected bodies come in direct contact with the environment. They see an enticing outdoor carpet, perfect for rolling around on, running across, playing fetch and wrestling with playmates on, and even ingesting. Dogs

have their mouths on everything: themselves (grooming), their playmates, their toys and sticks lying in the grass, and yes, the grass itself. And those mouths can be the conduit from external to internal exposure.

Though more study is needed, the preliminary findings of this study suggest that you can reduce your dog's risk through the following:

- ❖ Don't use pesticides on your own lawns, or allow lawn-service providers to use them on your property.
- ❖ Don't use lawn care products that contain insect growth regulators.
- ❖ Prevent your dog from walking on (or rolling on, eating, etc.) any lawns, unless you are able to determine that absolutely no pesticides are used to maintain them. (Most municipalities are required to make their chemical lawn-care regimens available to the public. It says something about these chemicals that their use is prohibited on most public school grounds.) 🐾

– Barbara Dobbins

# Saving Squid

*A darling dog with way too much energy, attitude, and bite strength is transformed into a solid canine citizen.*

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC

**S**quid almost didn't make it to the adoption option at the Humane Society of Washington County (HSWC), Maryland. Whole Dog Journal readers who have been with us for a year or more already know part of his story: the eight-week-old Jack Russell Terrier mix was surrendered to our full-service shelter by his owners because they "didn't have time for him." (See "Chill Out," WDJ May 2011.) What that really meant was that the small white-and-tan pup was a heckuva handful: they couldn't deal with his incredibly high energy level, fierce puppy play-biting, low tolerance for frustration, lack of impulse control, resource guarding, and sudden, intense aggression when restrained. He easily failed his behavior assessment. It's a good thing he was impossibly cute!

I arrived at the shelter on a Tuesday morning in early spring of 2011 and was met by a shelter staff member, paperwork in hand, a pleading expression on her face.

"This pup failed his assessment," she said, handing me Squid's paperwork. "Do you think he'd be a candidate for the Gold Paw program?"

Gold Paw was a newly launched shelter program that I helped create. It was designed to give "marginal" puppies and adult dogs a chance for lifelong loving homes. The program encouraged staff and volunteers to identify canines with adoption potential but who had one or more behavioral challenges that might make them ineligible for adoption, or significantly decrease the likelihood of success in a new home.

If a dog was accepted into the program, he was then placed in a capable foster home for behavior modification. The foster parents would work closely with me to implement a program custom-designed for each dog. For more detail about the Gold Paw program, see sidebar on next page.

Staff described Squid's difficult behaviors, and I took a quick look at him. As a young, too-cute-for-words, otherwise highly desirable adoption prospect, Squid was an ideal candidate for the program. Only problem was, the program was so new we hadn't yet recruited any



Gold Paw foster homes. So Squid came home with me to Peaceable Paws for his behavior modification. Between me, my husband Paul, Peaceable Paws staff and apprentices, and our upcoming trainer academics, surely we could fix this pup!

We started by identifying all Squid's inappropriate behaviors and creating a modification plan for each. Some of the pieces overlapped, so it wasn't quite as daunting as it might appear – but it was still plenty to work on!

## STRUCTURE AND CONSISTENCY

We put some rules in place to ensure that no one would reinforce Squid's inappropriate behaviors, to give him lots of reinforcement for making appropriate behavior choices, and to provide him an environment with clear structure and consistency.

Everyone who interacted with him was to implement the "say please" program to reinforce self-control; Squid needed to sit to get his kennel door opened, to have his leash put on, and to gain access to toys, treats, and attention. An inappropriate puppy nip triggered an "Oops!" and removal of human attention. Because he was so inclined to puppy biting, touching was kept to a minimum unless the handler was actively working on his touch- and restraint-protocol.

Squid would live in a stall in the barn and in one of the kennels adjoining the training center. His energy and intensity were too much to add to the Miller household of five dogs and three cats – particularly too much for Scooter, our Pomeranian. Their one encounter traumatized Scooter badly enough that he suffered a life-threatening bout of hemorrhagic gastroenteritis; it took him several weeks to fully recover.

Exercise was a critical part of Squid's program. All that energy had to go somewhere – and the best place for it was on the fields and in the woods of our 80-acre campus. Every day, weather permitting, I

**A rare early photo of Squid sitting still. Teaching him to sit in order to "say please" for anything he wanted played a big role in "civilizing" the strong-willed, energetic puppy.**



**Miller's other dogs, including Lucy (seen here), helped to tire the relentless pup.**

took Squid for at least two, preferably three long hikes; sometimes with Missy, our Australian Shepherd, and Lucy, our Cardigan Corgi, and sometimes by himself. On days we couldn't hike, we ran him in circles with a flirt pole and encouraged him to chase toys in the barn until he was tired.

The hikes with the other dogs were good for his dog-dog socialization as well as energy draining. Lucy was particularly

good at letting him know when his puppy biting was inappropriately painful – even to the point, early on, that on one occasion she snagged his ear and drew blood with a bite of her own. His bites to Lucy were noticeably less intense after that! He also joined the Miller dogs (Scooter excepted) helping with barn chores morning and night.

**The other dogs also helped him learn a little something about modifying the pressure of his bites. Lucy bloodied Squid's ear after he bit her too hard; Squid was careful to be gentler after that.**

## TIME FOR GOOD MANNERS

Of course, basic good manners training was on Squid's to-do list. A conveniently scheduled Level 1 Trainer Academy was the perfect venue to get him started. He was assigned to a pair of trainers who worked with him every day for a week, teaching him sit, down, come, leave it, trade, targeting, and wait. He tested the patience of his trainers with his sharp puppy teeth, but they discovered the value of using a camping food-squeeze tube for treat-delivery to a hard-mouthed pup, and did an excellent job providing him with a solid foundation for his future training.



## GOLD PAW PROGRAM

The Gold Paw Program was developed by the Humane Society of Washington County, Maryland, (HSWC) to help identify and work with dogs who have the potential to be someone's beloved companion, but need some help getting there. Gold Paw volunteers undergo extensive training in canine behavior so they are prepared to provide these dogs with the help they need.

The following no-cost training is required for all Gold Paw volunteers:

- ✓ Complete the basic shelter volunteer orientation.
- ✓ Complete a one-day training on canine body language presented by shelter staff.
- ✓ Attend and complete a second full-day training on dog behavior, offered by certified trainer Pat Miller, CBCG-KA, CPDT-KA. At the end of this training, volunteers are assessed to determine their home environment and dog handling and behavior modification skills, and a designation is made as to which types of behavior problem dogs may be assigned to them.
- ✓ When a Gold Paw candidate is identified, program staff contacts volunteers who are designated for that type of behavior. When a potential Gold Paw volunteer is selected, the volunteer meets with Pat Miller and the dog; if it's a good match, the volunteer then receives individual training specific to that dog.
- ✓ The volunteer works with the program protocol provided by Pat Miller, provides weekly check-in reports via Internet,

and does in-person check-ins as needed, depending on the individual dog. For some dogs this may be a commitment of several months.

- ✓ Gold Paw foster care volunteers must love dogs and want to help them have a better chance of finding their forever homes. Their home environment and schedule must lend themselves to working with dogs who have special behavioral needs. Those needs will vary from dog to dog, and are instrumental in determining which dog is assigned to which volunteer.

HSWC is committed to using dog-friendly handling, training, and behavior modification methods. Studies have determined gentle, non-coercive training/ behavior modification to be the most effective and least likely to give rise to collateral damage. Unwanted side effects of force-based training include fear, anxiety, and aggression.

Volunteers must be willing to use gentle, dog-friendly tools and handling methods with Gold Paw dogs. The program does not use or tolerate the use of choke chains, prong collars, shock collars, or any other form of physical punishment.

- ✓ Finally, volunteers need to understand that we cannot save them all, as much as we would like to. While we expect a high success rate with this program, there may be occasions when we reach a sad conclusion that a dog is too damaged to proceed with the program. The truly compassionate heart accepts when it's time to let go, as painful as that can be. We promise that we make a full commitment to every dog in our Gold Paw program, and will do everything within our power to help them succeed.

Apprentices continued his training, dropping in on our regular good manners classes as time and space allowed, as did I, on our one-on-one hikes around the farm. During classes he began to demonstrate some reactivity to other dogs; his desire to interact with them, combined with his low tolerance for frustration, manifested as excited barking when he was restrained on leash in their presence. Another behavior to add to his modification list!

## MODIFICATION PROTOCOLS

I started Squid's behavior modification program the day I brought him home, with a protocol designed to reduce his

**A Peaceable Paws Academy student works with Squid on good manners behaviors. We were fortunate to have people available to work with him in a consistent way.**

puppy biting and increase his tolerance for restraint (see below). We practiced this protocol for only brief periods at first, gradually increasing the duration of our sessions as he grew to enjoy touch and restraint. I also made it a point to always carry a soft toy with me, so I could occupy his teeth with the toy to forestall inappropriate grabs to skin, clothing, and leash.

In order to reinforce self-control behaviors, Squid learned "sit" as his default behavior, and we began practicing "wait."



## TOUCH/RESTRAINT DESENSITIZATION PROTOCOL

- 1 Touch dog's shoulder with one hand, feed treat with other hand, remove both hands.
- 2 Repeat multiple times until touch to the shoulder elicits an automatic look for the other hand to arrive with treat.
- 3 Move touch process to various other parts of dog's head and body until a touch anywhere on the dog elicits an auto-look for the delivery of a treat. Pay extra attention to any body part where your touch seems to elicit a more intense response from the dog.
- 4 Start over again at the dog's shoulder, gradually increasing the duration of touch up to five seconds, feeding bits of treat the entire time. Repeat multiple times, gradually reducing the frequency of treat feeding during the five-second touch.
- 5 Move the five-second touch process to various other parts of the dog's body, gradually reducing the frequency of treat feeding at each new touch location.
- 6 Return to dog's shoulder, gradually increasing restraint pressure during five-second touch, feeding bits of treat the entire time. Repeat multiple times, gradually reducing the frequency of treat feeding during the five-second touch.
- 7 Continuing at the dog's shoulder, gradually increase restraint pressure to ten seconds, feeding bits of treats as necessary to maintain positive association with touch and restraint, and to prevent any mouthing behavior.
- 8 Move the five-second restraint process to various other parts of the dog's body, gradually reducing treat-feeding frequency at each new touch location.
- 9 Gradually increase restraint pressure to 10 seconds at various body part locations, feeding bits of treats as necessary.
- 10 Randomize touch, restraint, and duration, touching various places in succession, gradually increasing maximum duration of restraint, always feeding bits of treats as necessary to maintain positive association with touch and restraint.

**It's amazing how quickly high-value treats can transform a frightened dog's attitude about touch or restraint.**

**Within just a few repetitions of brief touch followed by treats, this recently feral dog is beginning to relax.**

*Thanks to Sarah Richardson, of The Canine Connection in Chico, CA, for demonstrating. See page 24 for contact info.*





**Trainer Bob Ryder, of Pawsitive Transformations, uses counter-conditioning and desensitization to modify Squid's budding dog-reactive behavior.**

We taught “wait for your food bowl” as a training exercise, and then had Squid wait for everything we could think of: he waited for kennel and stall doors to open; he waited for his food bowl; he waited to go in and out of the training center; he waited to take his toy; and he waited to have his leash attached. (See “Wait For Your Food Bowl,” above right.)

As Squid began to develop some ability to control his biting, we worked on teaching him to take treats gently. If the bite was unbearably hard, I would say “Ouch” in a calm tone of voice and remove my hand. If it was less hard, I would hold the treat in a closed fist and wait for his bite to soften almost imperceptibly before releasing it to him. Over time, we shaped a softer and softer bite, although as often is common with hard-biting dogs, the intensity of his bite would quickly increase again if he was excited.

Squid was clearly making good progress, but we were still concerned about his level of arousal in the presence of other dogs. He wasn't aggressively reactive, just excited, but it was reactivity all the same, and excitement-based reactivity can easily develop into aggression as the dog matures and arousal increases, if the behavior isn't modified. An upcoming Behavior Modification Academy was the perfect venue to address this behavior.

Trainer Bob Ryder of Pawsitive Transformations in Normal, Illinois,

## “WAIT FOR YOUR FOOD BOWL”

With your dog sitting at your side, hold her food bowl at chest level, and tell her to “wait.” Move the bowl (with food in it, topped with tasty treats) toward the floor 4 to 6 inches. If your dog stays sitting, click your clicker and feed her a treat from the bowl. If your dog gets up, say “Oops!” and ask her to sit again. If she remains sitting, lower the bowl 4 to 6 inches again, click and treat.

Repeat this step several times until she consistently remains sitting as you lower the bowl. Gradually move the bowl closer to the floor with succeeding repetitions until you can place it on the floor without your dog trying to get up or eat it. Finally, place the bowl on the floor and tell her to eat. After she has had a few bites, lift the bowl up and try again, lowering the bowl a little farther this time. Repeat these steps until you can place the bowl on the floor in one motion and she doesn't move until you tell her she can.

Generalize the “Wait” to other training scenarios by controlling the delivery of the reinforcer. For example, for “wait at the door,” have your dog sit and wait while you move your hand toward the door a few inches, click and treat. If she gets up, say “Oops!” and have her sit again while you move your hand toward the door one inch. Click and treat. Gradually move your hand closer toward the doorknob, then jiggle the doorknob, then open the door a crack, then wider and wider until you can open the door without her getting up. If she gets up while you are opening the door, say “Oops!”, close the door, and try again. When she will wait with the door wide open, you can sometimes release her to go out the door, and sometimes go out the door without her.

was assigned to work with Squid for the week. He continued to work with the touch desensitization protocol, wait, and basic good manners behaviors, but was also instructed to make a reactivity counter-conditioning and desensitization program a high priority. Bob set to work giving Squid a strong “Where's my chicken?” response to the presence of other dogs, and by the end of the week the bright little dog was happily and politely controlling his “go see the other dog” impulse in the presence of his academy canine companions.

### SQUID GOES HOME

Squid had been at Peaceable Paws for six weeks of intensive training and behavior modification by now, and it showed – he had become quite civilized. My husband Paul and I had grown very attached to the little guy. If it weren't for Scooter's intense dislike of him, he might have stayed. But we knew it would be impossible to integrate him into our household. It was time to find him a forever home.

But how? Even given his excellent progress, he needed to go to an above-average owner who would be able to continue his lessons and keep him on the straight and narrow path to adult

canine civility. It would have to be an exceptional placement to meet with the high standards of the Miller Adoption Agency! I emailed his information to Jack Russell Terrier Rescue and the organizers posted information about him on their website. I also posted information about Squid on Facebook.

I received a number of applications, but none of the potential adoptors were perfect for a dog with Squid's energy and issues. Then I received a response from positive reinforcement trainer Lydia DesRosche, in New York City. She had a client, she said, who would be perfect for Squid. Claudia Husemann had just recently lost her well-loved Doberman to old age, and was looking for a smaller “apartment-sized” dog to fill the empty place in her heart and her home.

“New York City?” Paul protested. “But Squid's a country dog!” Nevertheless, Claudia travelled the 275 miles from New York to Fairplay, Maryland to meet Squid, and immediately fell in love. Of course! Yes, she wanted to adopt him. Her application was impeccable, and she had the added credential of already having a relationship with a committed positive trainer.

Claudia returned to the Big Apple to



**Squid (imitating a gargoye from a New York city skyscraper) and his proud owner, Claudia Husemann.**



await the shelter's background check and adoption decision, already making plans to move Squid into her life. Several days later, adoption approved and neutering done, Claudia drove the nine-hour round-trip again, to pick up her new boy. Squid was moving on. With tears in our eyes we bade him a sad farewell, knowing we would miss the big presence of this little dog, and knowing he was in good hands. In mid-May 2011, Squid became

Squid. She keeps us posted on his exploits in Central Park. We treasure the videos that Claudia and Lydia post on Youtube and Facebook, allowing us to watch as Squid learns to ring a bell, ride

“New York Squiddy,” and traded the fields of Fairplay for the haunts of Central Park.

Happily, Claudia has stayed in close contact and has provided the perfect home for

a skateboard, use the Manners Minder, play with a flying disc, and more. The behaviors that caused him to fail his shelter assessment are long forgotten. Live long and prosper, little Squid! 🐾

*Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is WDJ's Training Editor. She lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, where she offers dog training classes and courses for trainers. Pat is also author of many books on positive training, including her newest, Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First-Class Life. See page 24 for more information.*

## COUNTER-CONDITIONING AND DESENSITIZATION FOR REDUCING DOG REACTIVITY

Counter-conditioning involves changing your dog's association with a scary or arousing stimulus from negative to positive. Desensitization is starting with a very low-level intensity of aversive stimulus until the dog habituates to (or changes his association with) the aversive, and then gradually increasing the strength until the dog is comfortable with the stimulus at full intensity. The easiest way to give most dogs a positive association and to help them become comfortable with a stimulus is with very high-value, really yummy treats. I like to use chicken – canned, baked, or boiled; most dogs love chicken. Here's how the CC&D process works.

- 1** Determine the distance at which your dog can be in the presence of another dog and be alert or wary but not extremely fearful or aroused. This is called the threshold distance.
- 2** With you holding your dog on leash, have a helper present a neutral dog at threshold distance X. (Alternatively, station yourself and your dog at a location where people pass by with their dogs on leash at threshold distance X.) The instant your dog sees the other dog, start feeding bits of chicken, non-stop.
- 3** After several seconds, have the helper remove the dog, and stop feeding chicken to your dog.
- 4** Keep repeating steps 1-3 until the presentation of the dog at that distance consistently causes your dog to look at you with a happy smile and a “Yay! Where's my chicken?” expression. This is a conditioned emotional response (CER) – your dog's association with the other dog at threshold distance X is now positive instead of negative.
- 5** Now you need to increase the intensity of the other-dog stimulus. You can do that by decreasing distance by several inches; by increasing the amount of time the neutral dog stays in sight; by increasing movement of the other dog at distance X; by increasing the number of dogs (two or three dogs, instead of one); or increasing the visual “threat” (a large dog instead of

a small one, or allowing the neutral dog to make brief eye contact). I'd suggest decreasing distance first in small increments by moving the reactive dog closer to the location where the neutral dog will appear, achieving the CER at each new distance.

**6** Then return to distance X and add intensity of the neutral dog, gradually decreasing distance and attaining CERs along the way, until your dog is delighted to have the neutral dog reasonably close.

**7** Now, back to distance X, increase intensity again, by having your helper move more quickly with the neutral dog, have the dog do more vigorous behaviors – roll over, catch a ball, etc.

**8** Repeat until you have the CER, then gradually increase the length of time you have your dog in the presence of the increased-intensity neutral dog, until he's happy (but not aroused) to have it present continuously.

**9** Begin decreasing distance in small increments, moving the dog closer to the stimulus, obtaining the CER consistently at each new distance.

**10** When your dog is happy to have the higher intensity neutral dog stimulus close to him, you're ready for the final phase. Return to distance X and obtain your CER there, with a full intensity neutral dog – zigzagging toward him, then approaching head-on. Gradually decrease distance until your dog is happy to be in the presence of other dog, regardless of that dog's behavior. He now thinks the other dog is a very good thing, as a reliable predictor of very yummy treats.

The more intense the reactive dog's response, the more challenging the behavior is to modify. A fear response is more challenging to modify than an excitement response. True anxieties and phobias generally require a greater commitment to a longer term and more in-depth modification program than less intense fear-based behaviors.

# Brush Up

*It's time you learned about your dog's teeth: What healthy teeth look like, and how to get them healthy if they aren't.*

BY NANCY KERNS

**I**t's funny: We share our homes with another species of animal, whose most dangerous feature is its teeth – and most of us know little or nothing about those teeth, other than the fact that we should probably be brushing them. It's time to correct this situation.

First, some canine dental basics. Most animals (including humans) have teeth that reflect the diet they subsisted on as they evolved. Though we humans have a few mildly sharp teeth in the front of our mouths that we can use for tearing, most of our teeth are built for grinding plant-based foods so that we can better digest them. Conversely, most of the teeth in a dog's mouth are built for tearing animal-based foods, with just a few teeth that crush their food before they swallow it.

Dogs' teeth are not as sharp as cats' teeth, but their teeth and jaws are much stronger. Their dental anatomy enables them to grab and kill prey animals that may be much larger than themselves, tear through thick hides, slice and pull flesh from bones, crack open small bones in order to consume the marrow inside, and gnaw on bigger bones to strip away and consume every bit of meat and connective tissue.

Most adult dogs have 42 teeth, though

our genetic manipulation of the species has resulted in dogs with fewer or more. Reportedly, the gene that is responsible for hairlessness in the hairless breeds, such as the Chinese Crested, also modifies dentition, often leaving these breeds with fewer teeth. Doberman Pinschers often are missing molars.

Most adult dogs have six incisors (front teeth) on the top jaw and six on the bottom; two canine teeth (the largest “fangs”) on the top and two on the bottom; eight premolars on the top and eight on the bottom; and two molars on the top and *three* molars on the bottom.

The dog uses his front teeth – the smallest and most fragile teeth – for his most delicate operations. He uses these teeth to groom himself, pulling burrs and insects from his skin and coat. He also uses them when scraping edible tissue from the surface of bones. (This is likely the evolutionary basis for the behavior that many dogs engage in when they strip the “fuzz” off of tennis balls. Some dogs do this so persistently that they wear down the incisors if not prevented from access to tennis balls.)

While the term “canine teeth” is admittedly somewhat confusing (aren't *all* the teeth in a dog's mouth canine teeth?) the appellation is somewhat understandable when you realize that the dog's “fangs” are the most distinguishing



**From front to back: Incisors are the little teeth in the front of the dog's mouth. Immediately behind these are the canine teeth (fangs); behind them are the premolars and then molars. Note how the dog's premolars and molars are mostly peaked, not mostly flat like ours.**

feature of his species. Whether it's a Chihuahua or Great Dane, a dog's canines are the ones that look most impressive when bared, and leave the deepest holes in a person they've bitten.

Few of us look far enough back in our dogs' mouths to appreciate this, but dogs' premolars and molars are far pointier than human molars. Many of us imagine that dogs are chewing and grinding their kibble much as we chew cereal, but in fact, dog premolars and molars can't actually grind. Grinding requires an animal's jaws to move sideways; think about how a cow or llama grinds its food, with extreme sideways jaw action. Dog jaws can't move sideways! Instead, the dog's strong jaws and large peaks on the premolars and molars are used to crush large chunks into smaller ones. Not much more physical processing of their food occurs in the dog's mouth.

As much as dogs can be said to chew, most of the chewing action is provided by the premolars. The molars, located at the far back of the mouth – where the dog has the most jaw strength, like the base of a pair of pliers – are mostly used for extreme crunching.

## ERUPTION

We can use the timing of the eruption of puppy teeth and adult teeth to help us estimate the age of a young dog, but after he's about eight months old and has all his adult teeth, we have to use other clues to estimate his age, such as the amount of staining, wear, and accumulation of tartar on his teeth.

Puppies are born without teeth. The “deciduous” or “puppy” teeth start emerging when pups are about 4 weeks old. First to arrive are the front teeth (incisors, six on top and six on bottom), which emerge when the pup is 4 to 6 weeks old; the canines (two on top and two on bottom) erupt when the pup is about 5 to 6 weeks old; and the premolars (six on top and six on bottom) erupt at about 6 weeks. There are no deciduous molars.

The deciduous teeth are incredibly sharp. It has been speculated that the sharpness of puppy teeth serves to further two important developmental processes: weaning and bite inhibition. Too-vigorous biting, during nursing or play, causes an abrupt end to the previously gratifying activity, teaching the pup, through trial and grievous

## A DOG'S GOTTA CHEW

Many people think of chewing as “just a puppy thing” but the fact is, canines in the wild spend quite a bit of time every day chewing on bones, in order to extract every last calorie and mineral they need. Our dogs have a ready food supply, so they don't have to spend every spare moment in pursuit of every last nutrient, but the chewing behavior is hard-wired in them, anyway. Encouraging the chewing habit by providing a steady supply of appropriate chew items can promote a dog's mental and emotional health.

Chewing also helps keep the teeth and gums clean and strong, and encourages the flow of cleansing, antibacterial saliva through the dog's mouth.

Pups who are given the private space and leisure time to chew on a raw, meaty bone or food-stuffed toys will quickly develop the habit of spending time by themselves, chewing contentedly – and are less likely to develop separation distress or anxiety.

When pups are raised from the earliest age with ample opportunity to chew on raw meaty bones, most learn to take their time and chew in a casual manner, without damaging their teeth or bolting down over-large bone fragments. There are always outliers, however – dogs who, despite being raised with a ready supply of raw meaty bones, chew so aggressively that they are in danger of breaking teeth or swallowing dangerous chunks of bone. (The behavior is far more common, though, in dogs who were denied the pleasure of bones early in life.) If your dog is an aggressive chewer or greedily bolts any fragment of bone he can break off, he should be given a safer alternative to bones, such as a food-stuffed rubber toy. This will allow him to experience the zoned-out bliss of chewing and licking bits of food out of a safe facsimile of his hereditary chew item.



error, to restrict the severity of his bite. (For more about the development of bite inhibition, see “A Light Bite: Teaching Bite Inhibition,” WDJ June 2010.)

Soon enough (although perhaps *not* soon enough for most puppy owners), the pin-sharp puppy teeth begin to fall out – or, rather, are pushed out by the eruption of the adult teeth. The puppy teeth are generally lost in the order in which they arrived; and the adult teeth erupt in the same order: first the incisors,

then the canines, and then the premolars. There is more variation in the timing of the eruption of the adult teeth, a wider window through which they may first be glimpsed. The adult incisors generally erupt between 3 to 5 months; the canines usually appear between 4 to 6 months; and the premolars between 4 to 5 months. The molars emerge between 5 and 7 months.

Sometimes a single tooth or a few deciduous teeth fail to shed even as the adult teeth erupt, resulting in a crowded-looking mouth. When this happens, it's best to have your veterinarian extract the unshed



**This pup still has her deciduous canines (the teeth people think of as “fangs”), and some of her deciduous incisors (front teeth). Some of her adult incisors are emerging, though. She's probably about 3 months old.**

## COULD A RAW DIET REPLACE THE NEED TO BRUSH?

Many raw diet proponents claim that the nutrients and/or chemical composition of a raw diet keeps dogs from developing gingivitis or periodontitis. We're not aware of any studies that have proven these claims, but the persistence of the anecdotal evidence of this phenomenon (to say nothing of its evolutionary success) suggest that there *are* dental benefits to a diet that includes raw, meaty bones.

Interestingly, it's not just the physical action of the chewing; many owners, who fear the potential for bone fragments to impact or perforate their dog's intestines, use commercial food grinders to grind raw meaty bones into a fine paste before feeding them to their dogs. Many of them report the same dental advantages as those who feed whole raw meaty bones to their dogs.

Again, there are likely to be outliers – dogs whose teeth and gums develop disease even when fed a supremely healthy raw diet.

However, it's been our experience that people are either open to the idea of feeding a raw diet (whether commercial or home-prepared) or not; the condition of their dog's teeth may be a contributing motivation, but not the sole factor guiding the decision.

puppy teeth, to prevent them from allowing the adult teeth to develop in an improper position.

This entire process of tooth eruption, loss, and eruption, lasting for many months, keeps the puppy's mouth in constant torment, and he *has* to chew on things to relieve the sensation – hard things, soft things, chewy things, gummy things, crunchy things, anything, and everything! Knowing this, the wise puppy owner makes certain that the pup has lots of “legal” chew toys, and toys in every category (hard, soft, gummy, chewy, crunchy, and everything in between). If you fail to be thorough in providing chew toys of all textures, he'll be sure to explore anything that you *don't* want him to have that provides that missing, novel chewing experience.

### BRUSHED OFF

Here's what most dog owners really want to know about their dogs' teeth: “Do I *really* have to brush them?”

Although veterinary dental specialists would prefer that *all* owners brush

**This poor dog's dental hygiene has been severely neglected. The thick layer of tartar on her teeth has led to severe gingivitis (note the swollen, purple gums). Her incisors are practically falling out, and she's likely to feel chronically ill from the bacterial burden she's bearing.**

their dogs' teeth, the fact is that some dogs need it more than others. Whether it's due to their genes, diet, chewing habits, and/or the chemical composition of their saliva, some dogs go to their graves with clean, white teeth and healthy gums with absolutely no effort put forth by their owners. Others develop tartar (also known as calculus) at an alarming rate.

The accumulation of plaque (a “bio-film” on the teeth that contains bacteria) and tartar (a mineralized concretion of plaque) is not just unsightly, it's unhealthy. Tartar buildup at and under the gum line enables the entrance and growth of bacteria under the gums. Most dogs who have bad breath also have gingivitis – swollen and inflamed gums, usually bright red or purple, and which bleed easily. Unchecked, these bacterial

infections in the gums slowly destroy the ligament and bony structures that support the teeth (periodontitis). Because of the ample blood supply to the gums, infections in the mouth can also poison the dog systemically, potentially causing disease of the heart, kidneys, and/or liver.

If your dog's teeth are free of plaque or tartar, and his gums are tight and free of any signs of inflammation, you are one of the lucky ones. If, however, his gums are noticeably more red at the gum line and he has any visible tartar buildup on his teeth, you need to have his teeth cleaned by a veterinarian and then maintain the health of his teeth and gums with regular brushing and veterinary cleaning.

If you are one of the unlucky ones, and your dog's teeth and gums need your intervention to stay healthy, how often do you *really* need to brush your dog's teeth? Put it this way: the more you brush, the less frequently you'll need to pay for a veterinary cleaning. Whether you would prefer to invest your time in patiently training your dog to enjoy having his teeth brushed or would prefer to invest in your veterinarian's time is up to you!

A few toothbrushing tips:

■ Start out slow, and be patient. Don't try to brush all of your dog's teeth on the first day. Use a circular motion, gently scrubbing plaque away from the gum line. Reward your dog frequently and richly with treats and praise.

■ The “brushes” that you wear on your fingertips don't tend to work as well as brushes with softer bristles – and they make it much easier for your dog to accidentally bite down on your finger. Look for very soft-bristled brushes with long handles, so you can make sure you reach the molars. For larger dogs, soft brushes meant for adult humans work fine;



baby human toothbrushes work well for smaller dogs.

■ If your dog will tolerate it (or you can positively and patiently teach him to accept it), electric toothbrushes work great! For some dogs, however, these whirring, vibrating brushes are a deal-breaker, no matter what kind of treats you offer.

■ Use a toothpaste designed for dogs. They come in flavors that are meant to appeal to dogs (meaty, not minty) – and they are free of fluoride, which can be toxic to dogs. (Remember, dogs don't know to spit the toothpaste out!) Look for products that contain antibacterial enzymes, which help discourage bacterial growth and resulting gingivitis.

■ Dip the brush in water frequently as you brush, to help rinse the plaque away from your dog's teeth, and to facilitate a thorough application of the antibacterial enzymes in the toothpaste.

## GET THEE TO A VETERINARIAN

It can be painfully expensive, but the value of having your dog's calculus-encrusted teeth cleaned at your veterinarian's office is *incalculable!* The only way *all* of his teeth (even the molars) can be scrubbed completely of the tartar, above *and* below the gums, is under general anesthesia. This *must* be done at a veterinary clinic.

Whether due to the cost or the perceived risk of anesthesia, people want *so much* to believe that there is another way to get the dog's teeth clean. Once a dog has a lot of tartar on his teeth, though, the only effective treatment is a professional cleaning under anesthesia. Once his teeth are clean, you can prevent the need for further veterinary cleaning only through scrupulous home care (brushing) – but you just *can't* brush a tartar-encrusted mouth back to health. For one thing, you can't (and shouldn't try) to brush under the dog's gums; this area is cleaned at the vet's office with sterile instruments and with the use of a fine mist of water, which washes the bacteria out of the dog's mouth. The ultrasonic (vibrating) tools available to the technician are also much faster and more accurate than any tool you would have access to.

What about "anesthesia-free" cleaning? Witnessing a veterinary cleaning, with the dog under anesthesia, is pretty

much all you need to realize that *no one* is capable of doing what needs to be done to get a fully conscious dog's teeth really clean. The most cooperative dog in the world just isn't going to lie down on a table under necessarily super bright lights (so the technician can thoroughly examine the teeth for any signs of chips or painful fractures) and allow a vibrating, misting tool to be employed on his molars.

Further, in most states, it's illegal for anyone to use a scaler on an animal's teeth except under the supervision of a veterinarian. While there are many technicians and groomers who may be capable of removing *some* dental calculus from your dog's teeth, only a veterinarian is qualified and equipped to recognize, diagnose, and treat any related (or unrelated) conditions the dog may have, such as fractured teeth or oral cancer. If his periodontal disease is advanced, x-rays will be needed to evaluate the supporting structures of the teeth.

Of course, in order to safely anesthetize your dog, your veterinarian will likely require a blood test in advance of the cleaning appointment, to evaluate your dog's kidney and liver function. If his function is reduced, extra precautions and perhaps a different anesthetic protocol can be used.

Depending on your dog's age and condition, your veterinarian may also administer intravenous fluids to your dog during the procedure, which can help regulate the dog's blood pressure. The presence of an IV catheter and proper hydration levels also make it possible for a veterinarian to immediately administer life-saving medications in case of an adverse reaction to the anesthesia. In an emergency, the use of calcium, epinephrine, and/or atropine needs to occur as quickly as possible; having an IV in place makes this possible.

Finally, veterinarians can prescribe and dispense antibiotics to help your dog fight off any bacteria that was dislodged by the cleaning and absorbed into his bloodstream, as well as provide any sort of consultation or aftercare needed. The price tag of all of this can be large – and it can vary a *lot* from vet to vet, ranging from \$400 to \$1,400 (or even more if the dog requires tooth extractions).

After all this, you'll probably be motivated to give that toothbrushing a try. Do it now, while you're good and motivated; it could add years to your dog's life. 🐾

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# Variety Show

*A varied diet helps these dogs thrive.*

BY MARY STRAUS

**B**ill and Marin Corby of Romeo, Michigan, feed a homemade diet to their two rescued Cockapoos. Max, estimated to be anywhere from 6 to 9 years old, has been with them for three and a half years. Max weighed 32 pounds when first adopted, but his current weight is a healthy 20 pounds. Mickey was four months old and very sick when they first brought him home, as he had problems digesting his food. The Corbys switched Mickey to a raw diet, and he's now thriving at 20 months of age and 16½ pounds.

The Corbys feed a raw diet with a lot of variety. They make the food in large batches, then freeze it in 7-cup containers that hold a few days' food each and are thawed as needed. Amounts shown below are for the complete batch, which lasts 34 days. Most ingredients are pureed in a food processor, then mixed with meat, Sojo's, and spices in a large, shallow Rubbermaid storage container.

Each dog gets 8.5 ounces of this recipe per day (the amounts shown in parentheses are the daily amounts per dog):

- 17 pounds meat (4 ounces), comprised of the following:
  - ✓ 15 pounds ground beef (27 percent fat), OR ground turkey (7 percent fat), OR 10 pounds venison plus 5 pounds ground beef
  - ✓ 1 pound heart (turkey or venison)
  - ✓ 1 pound liver (beef or venison)
- 1 dozen eggs with shells (⅓ ounce)
- 32 ounces plain, low-fat yogurt (½ ounce)
- 6 cups Sojo's Original Dog Food Mix (about 7 grams or ¼ ounce)
- 10 pounds vegetables (2.4 ounces), including sweet potato, green beans, kale, broccoli, spinach, yellow squash, zucchini, butternut squash, acorn squash, and carrots. Each batch contains 2 pounds each of five different vegetables. The starchy foods (sweet potato, winter squashes, and carrots) are cooked.
- 5 pounds fruit (1.2 ounces), including bananas, berries, melon, and pears.
- Supplements:
  - ✓ 1 cup molasses (¾ teaspoon)
  - ✓ 1 cup organic apple cider vinegar (¾ teaspoon)
  - ✓ 1 Tablespoon each turmeric, garlic, and ginger
- Each dog also gets one raw, skinless duck neck daily (averaging 3 to 4 ounces each), and a squirt (about ½ teaspoon or 2 grams) of salmon oil.



## FIRST LOOK

I was pleased to see that this diet includes a wide variety of foods, with appropriate proportions of the various food groups: approximately 30 percent raw meaty bones, 33 percent meat (including 2 percent liver), 5 percent eggs and dairy, 20 percent vegetables, 10 percent fruit, and 2 percent supplements. It provides each dog with about 550 calories daily.

I winced, however, at the high-fat ground beef. Many homemade diets, particularly raw diets, are much higher in fat than most pets need. While dogs don't suffer from clogged arteries the way people do, too much fat can lead to obesity, digestive upset, and even pancreatitis

**Bill and Marin Corby's Cockapoos, Max (left) and Mickey, are thriving on their home-prepared diet, which includes a healthy variety of raw meats and other foods.**

in susceptible dogs. It can also reduce the dog's total nutritional intake because portions must be reduced to keep the dog from becoming obese.

I like to look at grams of fat per 1,000 calories (kcal), abbreviated GFK. A diet with 25 GFK, which is about 10.5 percent fat on a dry matter basis (DM), is considered low fat, suitable for dogs prone to pancreatitis or fat intolerance. A working sled dog might eat as much as 81 GFK (about 50 percent fat DM). Most pet dogs do well with 30 to 50 grams of fat per 1,000 calories (around 13 to 25 percent fat DM), depending on their activity level, how easily they gain weight, and whether they have any problems tolerating fat.

An analysis of this diet showed it to be over 57 GFK (30 percent fat DM), which is too high. Using 85 percent lean ground beef would drop the GFK to 51 (26 percent fat DM); 90 percent lean beef would decrease it to 48 GFK (24 percent fat DM).

The only food group missing is fish. Fish supplies vitamin D, which must otherwise be supplemented using cod liver oil or a multivitamin. The National Research Council (NRC) recommends about 100 IUs vitamin D daily for dogs weighing 20 pounds. The recommended amount of vitamin D for humans has been increasing in recent years; the same will likely happen for dogs in the future as well.

## TINKERING WITH THE DIET

Adding 4 pounds (drained) of canned pink salmon or jack mackerel (about 1 ounce per dog daily) to the recipe would provide enough vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids so that no supplementation is needed. These fish are also relatively low in fat, so 85 percent lean ground beef could be used with the recipe. Sardines are higher in fat than salmon or mackerel, so if sardines were used, I'd suggest combining them with 90 percent lean ground beef. I also recommend rinsing the canned fish if the amount of salt is a concern, and using sardines packed in water, not oil.

Using leaner beef reduces the calories in the recipe. To keep the daily calories the same, the Corbys need to increase the amount they feed by about 30 percent, to 11 ounces per dog daily. Caloric needs are always an estimate, so it's important to keep an eye on the dogs' weights and adjust the amount fed as needed to keep them slim and trim.



I don't advise feeding whole eggs with shells. If the shells are needed to supply calcium, they should be ground to a powder in a clean coffee grinder to ensure that the calcium can be absorbed. One large eggshell makes 1 teaspoon of eggshell powder, which provides about 2,000 mg calcium. If the shells are not needed to supply calcium, it's best to leave them out in order to avoid giving the dog too much calcium. Adult dogs have the ability to regulate their uptake of calcium, so excess amounts won't cause the kind of orthopedic problems one might see in large-breed puppies, but calcium binds other minerals, so too much can reduce the nutritional quality of the diet.

There is no need to add calcium to this diet, since the duck necks supply more than enough. Without the raw meaty bones, they would need to give each dog 500 mg calcium daily.

The amount of Sojo's mix in this diet is not significant; it would be fine to use oatmeal or other grains instead.

Poultry is high in linoleic acid, an omega-6 essential fatty acid, so there is no need to add plant oils to this diet. The amount of salmon oil that the Corbys feed is about twice what their dogs need. When fish is added to the diet as described above, there is no need for added salmon oil at all. This would improve the ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids in the overall diet and lower the GFK.

All the homemade diets I've analyzed have been low on vitamin E, and added oils increase vitamin E requirements, so this vitamin should always be supplemented. Recent human research, however, has shown that high doses of vitamin E may be counter-productive, negating its antioxidant benefits. I recommend giving 10 to 20 IUs daily to dogs weighing 20 pounds. This is most easily done using a canine multivitamin.

Despite the excellent variety and proportions in this diet, an analysis indicates it's slightly low in a few minerals (zinc, copper, and selenium) when compared

to NRC recommendations. I'm never sure how significant this is, since the NRC bases their guidelines on commercial diets that are high in grains, and grains contain phytates that bind certain minerals. The amounts recommended by NRC may therefore be higher than are needed when feeding a homemade diet that is relatively low in carbohydrates. To be safe, though, it would be easy to give a canine multivitamin and mineral tablet to each dog daily. Most will meet requirements for vitamin E and the minerals listed above.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED CHANGES

- Use 85 percent lean ground beef (90 percent lean if using sardines) in place of 27 percent fat.
- Add four pounds of canned fish (drained and rinsed) to the recipe and eliminate the added fish oil.
- Leave out eggshells.
- Increase total amount of recipe fed to 11 ounces per dog daily (new recipe should last 30 days). Adjust as needed to keep the dogs at their proper weights.
- Add vitamin E or a multivitamin and mineral supplement.
- Revised diet has 47 GFK (about 23 percent fat on a dry matter basis). 🐾

Mary Straus is the owner of DogAware.com. Contact her via her website if you would like to submit a diet to be critiqued.

### What you can do . . .

- Use lean meats to keep the overall amount of fat in your dog's diet to a reasonable amount.
- Limit the amount of oils, including fish oil, that you add to the diet.
- Supplement the diet with vitamin D if you don't feed much fish.



The Whole Dog Journal

# Will You?

*Planning for your dog's care past your death is the ultimate in responsible ownership.*

BY CJ PUOTINEN

**B**ecause only one out of five Americans has an up-to-date will and only 20 percent of those include provisions for pets, an estimated 500,000 dogs and cats are euthanized every year when their owners die and they have nowhere to go. Is your dog at risk?

Unless you make effective plans for your dog's welfare in case you die or are incapacitated, the worst could happen.

But preparing for your pet's future can seem a daunting task. Wills, trusts, and financial instruments are complicated enough. Add caretakers, backup caretakers, specific instructions, and veterinary care. No wonder so many of us just hope we'll outlive our pets.

"Lifetime care planning for pets doesn't have to be complicated, expensive, or overwhelming," says estate-planning attorney Heidi Goettel of Helena, Mon-

tana. "Pet owners have many options, and the peace of mind good planning provides is worth the effort."

## DON'T LEAVE IT TO CHANCE

If you assume that a friend or relative will love Fluffy as much as you do or that someone will always be there for Fido, think again. Every animal shelter in the country deals with orphaned pets. They arrive for one reason: their owners didn't plan to die or become incapacitated. That didn't prevent them from having heart

attacks or accidents, and now Fido and Fluffy are homeless.

Worse, they may be alone, starving, and frightened. Does anyone know they exist? Do they need medication? Are they on special diets?

Accidents can happen anywhere at any time, but the following are risk factors for your companion animals:

- You live alone.
- You are a senior citizen, or getting close.
- You have health problems.
- Your pets are elderly or have health problems.
- Your pets are shy or don't do well when their daily routines are disturbed.
- Even a temporary incapacity – you are hospitalized, require treatment away from home, or have to be away for other reasons – can disrupt your pets' lives.

## AN OUNCE OF (LEGAL) PREVENTION

The best way to prevent your pets from being harmed by your temporary or long-term absence, say legal experts, is through careful planning.

A **will or testament** is a legal declaration by which a person names one or more people to manage his or her estate and transfer its property at death.

You cannot leave money or property to an animal, but you can leave assets to a person who agrees to care for your pet. Even if the person who agrees to take your pet can afford to pay for the animal's upkeep, you may want to leave both the animal and a sum of money to that individual.

If a financial inheritance will be a hardship for your dog's new owner (for example, if the money makes that person ineligible for financial assistance from



**When setting up a pet trust, it helps to work with an attorney who is familiar with what pets need. Estate planning attorney Heidi Goettel reviews pet trust details with author CJ Puotinen and Seamus, her husband's Cairn Terrier. PHOTO BY STEPHEN NAGY**



**Baillie, a therapy dog belonging to Marilyn Grant of Helena, MT, will always have a forever home thanks to carefully selected friends who will care for him should she not be able to. Estate planning experts say that finding a willing caregiver is the most important step in planning a pet's lifetime care. PHOTO BY CJ PUOTINEN**

Social Security or another agency), or if the person might not be able to manage a lump sum inheritance, you can leave your pet to the caretaker and the money to another person with instructions for reimbursing the new owner for dog-related expenses.

Because wills are not acted upon immediately – there is a waiting period before wills are read and property changes hands, and, should legal disputes arise, final settlements can be prolonged for months or years – a will cannot guarantee that an animal's needs will be met in a timely manner. A will that includes specific instructions for an animal's care cannot be enforced. Wills do not allow the disbursement of funds over a pet's lifetime. Courts can change the provisions of a will that is challenged by relatives or other interested parties.

These potential problems do not mean wills should not include provisions for pets. Instead, they reflect the need for additional arrangements.

**Pet trusts** are just such plans. They involve a **trustee**, which can be an individual, a bank, or a non-profit organization such as a humane society, which handles the finances; a **beneficiary**, who is the person you choose as your dog's new owner and caretaker; and you, the **settlor**, the dog owner who is setting up the trust.

"Technically," says Goettel, "the animals are the beneficiaries of pet trusts. The caretaker definitely benefits from there being a trust for the animal, and the funds go to the caretaker for practical purposes, but when the beneficiary is defined as the animal or for the benefit of the animal, the trustee, who may also be the caretaker, is legally obligated to use the trust funds for the animal's care."

**A traditional pet trust**, which is legal in all 50 states, instructs a trustee to help a beneficiary by paying for the pet's expenses according to the settlor's directions as long as the beneficiary takes proper care of the pet. Traditional pet trusts provide the owner with significant control over the animal's care, such as by



specifying who will be the trustee, who will be the beneficiary/caretaker, what pet-related expenses the trustee will pay, what type of care the pet will receive, what will happen if the caretaker can no longer care for the animal, whether the animal will be buried or cremated after death, and where the pet's remains will be interred or stored.

**A statutory pet trust**, which may also be known as an **honorary pet trust**, is valid during the pet owner's life as well as after his or her death. This type of trust controls the disbursement of funds, which can occur prior to the owner's death, and it can include specific instructions for the animal's care. As of 2010, all states within the United States except for Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, and West Virginia allow this type of trust, which is more flexible than the traditional trust and does not require the pet owner to make as many decisions regarding its terms. State law "fills the gaps," making a simple provision in a will or other document (such as, "I leave \$3,500 in trust for the care of my dogs, Ranger and Rover") effective.

"When state law 'fills the gaps,'" explains Goettel, "the owner's intentions are followed even if they are hand-written on a sheet of paper. This is the simplest arrangement you can make for your pet. It works best if you and your designated

caretaker have already discussed your plans and that person understands and agrees with your wishes."

**A revocable living trust** allows you to avoid probate, the legal process for transferring property after death. A living trust lets you make changes or amendments to the trust document; allows the transfer of your personal assets to remain private rather than public; and eliminates most of the family disputes and challenges that a standard will can create. However, revocable trusts provide minimal asset protection, they can generate planning and administrative expenses, and assets must be transferred into the trust name (which won't affect your access to them).

**A testamentary trust** is less expensive because it does not take effect until after you die and your will is probated (declared valid by a court). This type of trust does not provide funds for the care of a pet during the period between your death and when your will is probated, nor does it protect your pet if you become disabled and unable to provide care.

## **FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

"The most important and challenging factor in providing lifetime care for your dog is finding a 100-percent committed caretaker," says Goettel. "The owner is in the best position to identify a care provider. Equally important is that the

Seamus says, "I'm worried. I don't see anything about my raw meaty bones guarantee!" It's important to review all the details, and build alternatives into the plan in case some aspects of your ideal scenario are not feasible for your pet's caretaker. PHOTO BY STEPHEN NAGY

identified caretaker and care plan are in writing and are found when needed, so that the care provider is notified before the animal is surrendered to a shelter or euthanized at the direction of an uninformed third party. It often happens that people do have a plan, but no one knows of it. That is especially tragic."

Even if a friend or relative promises to take your pets in, promises can't always be kept. Today's uncertain economy is hard on pets, who are adversely affected by unemployment, divorce, home foreclosures, and relocations.

Even if your friend or relative remains willing and has a stable home, additional pets can be a source of stress, not to mention expensive. This is especially so if the animals are elderly, on special diets, on prescription medication, require frequent veterinary visits, and have challenging symptoms like incontinence, seizures, severe arthritis, or confusion. Puppies and young dogs place a different kind of stress on caretakers, including their need for training and exercise.

Your caretaker will be your dog's new owner. Transferring ownership through your will or the establishment of a trust is important because without this provision, your pet will go to your residuary beneficiary (the beneficiary who inherits everything that's not taken care of by the rest of your will); or, if you don't have a will, your pet will go to your next of kin, as determined by state law.

Once you find a willing caretaker, it's important to sit down with that person and review everything that's important to you. Does your dog eat a home-prepared diet containing special ingredients? Compete in agility? Have a job? Get monthly massages, chiropractic adjustments, hydrotherapy treatments, or acupuncture? Enjoy a cheese-stuffed Kong after dinner? Require frequent trips to the groomer? Special diets, special treatments, special training, and special activities cost time and money. Well-intentioned friends and relatives who don't share your interests or income may provide a loving home but not necessarily the one you want your dog to have.



Do you have more than one dog? Are they closely attached? Do you know someone who would foster these pets while looking for someone who would adopt them both?

It's essential that any prospective caretaker understand what he or she might have to provide. If that person has a full-time job, young children, other pets, limited space, and limited time, the burden might be impossible even if your estate paid all the expenses. It's much better for you and your prospective caretaker to realize this now, while your estate is still in the planning stage, than to have your caretaker discover that the arrangement won't work after you have passed away. Your dog might be surrendered to the nearest shelter or given to a stranger who knows nothing about you or your pet.

Once you find a willing caretaker, look for another one. Having a backup caretaker can save the day if your first choice loses her job, has to move, is in an accident, falls ill, gets divorced, or is for some other reason unable to accept your pet or continue its care. In fact, having at least two backup caretakers and at least two backup trustees (if you create a trust) is recommended.

Another factor to consider is the size of your estate. The larger it is, the more likely your plans will be challenged by relatives, individuals, organizations, or tax collectors. The legal literature describes many cases in which courts sided with plaintiffs who considered an

animal's share of an estate to be excessive or inappropriate. In 2007, real estate billionaire Leona Helmsley died and left \$12 million to her Maltese, Trouble. Because Helmsley disinherited several relatives, her will and the dog's trust were challenged in court, and Trouble's legacy was reduced to \$2 million. In some cases, judges have reduced an animal's share of an estate to nothing.

An experienced estate-planning lawyer can help you establish a trust that's more likely to survive with your instructions intact.

To prevent fraud, pet owners should clearly identify pets that are to receive care under a will, pet trust, or powers of attorney. The most effective identification tools are microchips and DNA samples, but detailed descriptions, photographs, and veterinary records can be helpful.

## **BUT THERE'S A CONTRACT**

If you purchased your dog from a reputable breeder, you probably signed a contract agreeing to return your dog to the breeder if you cannot keep or are unable to provide for the dog. The same arrangement is used by most animal shelters, service dog programs, and rescue organizations.

"The breeder or organization wants to ensure that the dogs they place always have a good home," says Goettel. "By making arrangements ahead of time, you spare them the effort and expense of fostering your dogs and finding new homes for them. Most breeders and orga-

nizations would be thrilled to learn that the owner or adopter is making plans for the animal, and they would likely make a record of the information. If the care provider does not know about the contract, attaching it to the will or care plan for the animal will ensure that the care provider knows of it and follows its terms. To keep everyone informed, attach your original contract and related correspondence to your will or trust documents, and provide copies of these to everyone involved.”

## VETERINARY CARE

Because veterinary care is likely to be the greatest expense incurred by your pet’s new owner, consider the following options for providing the care your dog may need.

If you already have health insurance for your dog, provide funds for keeping it up to date. If your dog does not already have health insurance, consider leaving money for the purchase of health insurance. This option is most appropriate for young dogs in good health as premiums increase as dogs age; some plans exclude dogs age nine and older; most policies have exclusions and limits; and canine health insurance premiums, copays, and deductibles can be just as complicated as they are in human health plans.

You *can* leave money to your vet. This amount will vary according to your dog’s age and condition along with the treatments you are prepared to pay for. The best way to make this arrangement is through discussion with your vet. You can request that any funds left over when your pet dies be given to a relative, charity, or the veterinarian, though this request is not legally enforceable.

Signing a contract in advance with your veterinarian is a third option. In this case, you leave to the veterinarian a specific amount as credit toward expected services. If and when that money runs out, the new owner will be charged for services provided to your dog. If your dog dies before the money is spent, your contract specifies what will be done with the excess.

## IF YOU CAN’T FIND A GOOD CARETAKER

If your dog came from a breeder, shelter, or organization that requires the dog’s return, you have a safety net. But what if you don’t know anyone who could care for your pets for the rest of their lives?

Members of dog organizations, such as kennel clubs, dog sport clubs, therapy dog organizations, and rescue organizations, along with those who take their dogs to trainers, can network with fellow members and trainers to find appropriate temporary care (think foster homes) for your dogs if needed.

Many **veterinarians** are named in wills or trusts as temporary guardians or as the new owners of their clients’ pets. Obviously this arrangement works best when the owner and veterinarian discuss and agree on the details.

The tireless volunteers of **rescue organizations** save the lives of dogs and cats every day. They provide foster homes, medical care, training, spaying or neutering, and anything else an animal needs to become adoptable. To provide for your animal through a rescue organization, contact the organization now to learn what arrangements will work best.

To find such organizations, search online for your breed, such as Labrador Retriever rescue, Poodle rescue, mixed breed rescue, senior rescue, etc. You’ll find national and regional organizations and networks, some of which are 501(c)3 non-profit organizations, independent organizations, or affiliates of national or regional kennel or breed clubs, all of which are dedicated to matching homeless dogs with good homes. Becoming a volunteer yourself can be a satisfying activity that will keep you informed about fostering and adoption.

Your local **animal shelter** may be a good choice, especially if your dog is young, healthy, and well behaved, as these dogs find new homes more quickly. Older dogs and dogs with medical problems are usually harder to place, as are dogs with behavioral problems. Shelter volunteers have an inside view of the organization and its adoption process, and because circumstances vary from one shelter to another, becoming a volunteer or consulting with shelter staff about your plans can be an important step toward your dog’s future care.

**Pet sanctuaries** provide permanent care for the animals they take in. As with conventional shelters, conditions vary from one sanctuary to another, and careful research is a must. Your dog might or might not be happy living for an indefinite time in a sanctuary. Some pet sanctuaries don’t actually provide permanent sanctuary to all of their wards,

but seek to rehome as many animals as possible. Before making arrangements to leave your dog to a sanctuary, you should familiarize yourself with the sanctuary’s requirements, and be sure it will accept your animal.

Some veterinary schools and sanctuaries have continuing pet care programs in which the pets either live the rest of their lives on-site in comfortable surroundings or are adopted out or put in foster care. These programs typically require an enrollment fee (such as \$1,000) and an endowment (such as \$10,000 or more) either at the time of enrollment or as a bequest in your will.

## FUND YOUR PET’S FUTURE

Once you decide what arrangements you want to make, the important question is where will the money come from to support your pets after you die or when you are no longer able to care for them? Trust funding or direct bequests can come from cash, life insurance, annuities, stocks, bonds, or property that can be sold, such as a vehicle, house, or boat.

■ **DIRECT TRANSFERS.** To create a living trust (which you create now, while you’re still alive), you must transfer money or other property to your trust. Your attorney can help you arrange the transfer so that it is properly executed.

To create a trust in your will, which becomes effective after your death, you

### What you can do . . .

- **Think about what your dogs would do if you weren’t there for them, and start planning.**
- **Talk to friends and family to find good caretakers or foster homes should your pets need them.**
- **Write down everything you want future caretakers to know about your dogs’ diet, activities, veterinarian, and other important information.**
- **Decide how to support your dogs financially.**
- **Take your plans to a lawyer for best results.**



The single owner of two dogs with significant behavioral issues (both exceedingly shy Shar-pei), Mary Straus wrote a pet trust to enable and ensure that her dogs could be cared for in her home in case of her death.



will use the property distribution section of your will to specify the amount of money or description of property that fund the trust.

■ **POUR OVER WILL PROVISION.** If you create a living trust, you may add property (a “pour over”) from your estate to the trust.

■ **LIFE INSURANCE.** Pet trusts can be funded by naming your trust as a life insurance policy’s beneficiary. Because life insurance “creates” property when you die, this is an easy way to fund your pet’s future should you not have sufficient assets to do so otherwise. Consult with your lawyer or life insurance agent in order to correctly name your beneficiary.

“Many people believe that naming the caretaker as beneficiary on life insurance or arranging a bequest with just the caretaker’s name and nothing further, is sufficient,” says Goettel, “when they really need to make some reference to a ‘pet trust’ or ‘for the benefit of my pet,’ so the caretaker does not consider the funds an unrestricted gift and so the funds are used as the owner intended.”

■ **PAY ON DEATH ACCOUNTS, ANNUITIES, RETIREMENT PLANS, AND OTHER CONTRACTS.** If you have an annuity, retirement plan, or other contractual arrangement that permits you to name a person to receive the property after you die, you may use those assets to fund your pet trust. Consult with your lawyer, banker, or broker about the correct way to name the recipient of these funds.

■ **A CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUST.** If you transfer property to a tax-exempt charity, it can serve as trustee of the trust and manage or invest the property so it produces income for you. The charity then pays to the trustee of your pet trust a portion of the income for a specified number of years or for the duration of the trust. When the trust ends, the remainder of the property goes to the charity.

Because of its tax advantages, this has become a popular type of trust.

■ **DURABLE POWERS OF ATTORNEY.** This standard financial planning tool authorizes someone other than the pet owner to conduct certain acts on his or her behalf. Such a document can be written to become effective upon the pet owner’s physical or mental incapacity.

### A PET TRUST IN ACTION

In 1995, when she left a long-term relationship with a partner who would have cared for her dogs if something happened to her, canine nutrition expert and WDJ contributor Mary Straus found an attorney who specialized in living trusts for pets. “I was 43 at the time and had no health issues,” she says, “but I’m a worrier and prefer to know that everything’s covered, just in case. At the time I owned two genetically shy Shar-Pei, Piglet and Nattie (Piglet was so shy initially that it took three months before she voluntarily let me touch her). These dogs would not be easy to place and they wouldn’t handle disruptions well. I agonized over what I could do to protect them should something happen to me.”

Straus’s attorney helped her create a living trust. “Basically,” she says, “I left my house to my dogs, with instructions to my successor trustee that someone be found to live there and take care of them as long as needed, with much of my estate covering the cost.”

In addition, Straus prepared a separate, non-legal document covering diet, health history, special needs, likes and dislikes, and other information such as what you might leave for a pet sitter but in more detail. “I included what kind of home my dogs might best fit into,” she says, “such as with other dogs, cats, and kids, whether my dogs need to be placed together, and so forth, in hopes that the right kind of home(s) can be found sooner or later. I also included information

about friends and rescue people I know who might help find someone to stay at my house or find a home for my dogs.” She updates these dog care instructions at least twice a year.

Straus chose a living trust because it allows her estate to avoid probate.

“A trust relies on your trustee,” says Straus. “Since no courts get involved, you have to trust (hence the name) the person you choose to carry out your wishes. My trust is quite simple and most of it is just boilerplate. The pet trust portion is two paragraphs that come after a paragraph that specifies the amount of money or percentage of the trust estate that will fund the trust.”

*Pet Trust. Settlor’s present and future primary concern upon her death is the safety, welfare, and continued care for her pets. The animals which will be living with settlor at the date of her death will be referred to hereinafter as the settlor’s “PETS”. Upon the settlor’s death, the settlor’s residence and usual furnishings shall remain in trust for a period of ten (10) years or until the natural death of the last of the PETS or until such time as the trustee has found suitable, substitute housing, shelter and care for the PETS (whichever occurs first). The retention of the residence and furnishings is for the primary purpose of providing suitable, familiar housing and shelter for settlor’s PETS during the term of the trust. Settlor expects the residence to be rented during the existence of the trust. In keeping with the settlor’s primary concern for her PETS, settlor directs the trustee to screen any and all potential tenants to assure any renter has the same or similar concern and ability to care for settlor’s PETS as settlor has, and that such care shall be compensated in such a manner that any renter shall receive an appropriate reduction in the fair rental value of the residence with is commensurate with the value of such services.*

*The balance of the pet trust estate and all income is to be accumulated (i.e., without distributions) during the term of the trust in a reserve account for the real property maintenance and for the feeding*

and veterinary care of settlor's PETS through the term of the trust. Upon termination of the trust as described above, the balance of the trust estate shall be distributed in accordance with the residue of the trust as described in paragraph C (11) above.

Nattie passed away in 2005 at the age of 16, and Piglet followed in 2009 at 17. Straus now shares her life with Ella, a Norwich Terrier.

"My trust is still in effect," she says, "although my successor trustee knows (and I've included in my instructions) that my current dog, Ella, would do fine in another home, so there would be no need to keep the house for her. I am still leaving money for her care in an arrangement where veterinary bills and other costs would be reimbursed to the new owner rather than giving that person a lump sum. In my instructions I keep a list of people who I think might provide or help find a good home for Ella. My only problem with her is that she prefers

being an only dog, and everyone I know already has dogs!"

## DO YOU NEED A LAYWER?

For the simplest of care arrangements – your best friend, a member of your family, or someone who loves your dog volunteers to care for him if something happens to you – the transfer of ownership and a simple bequest probably don't require a lawyer, assuming you live in one of the 44 states that honor statutory pet trusts.

But if your estate is large or complicated, if relatives are likely to challenge your plans, or if you want to maintain as much control of your dog's future as possible, you need a lawyer.

Some legal firms offer do-it-yourself will-writing software or programs that create pet trusts. "These can be inexpensive," says Goettel, "but will programs are not usually state-specific, and law on estates and trusts varies from state to state. Also, these will programs come with general, but not specific, advice

about estate planning. Although almost everyone believes their estate planning is simple and straightforward, many do not realize they have issues that should be dealt with very specifically. Also, a will document is only a piece of estate planning. Beneficiary designations, joint tenancy ownership, and other property issues need to be coordinated with the planning that is in a will, and the online programs may not be comprehensive in that regard." In other words, it's a good idea to check with a local lawyer who has estate-planning and pet trust experience.

## HELPFUL HOMEWORK

One online resource that comes highly recommended by estate planning attorneys and the animal welfare community is 2nd Chance for Pets, a non-profit organization that helps pet owners provide for their animals' care should the owners die or become incapacitated.

The organization's free eight-page Pet Care Workbook, available online or in print, includes Care Instruction Forms that you can complete, make copies of, and share with everyone involved in caring for your pets. As the workbook reminds us, the components of a lifetime care plan are simple:

**1 IDENTIFY (AND COMMUNICATE WITH) FUTURE CARETAKERS FOR YOUR PETS.**

**2 PREPARE WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS OUTLINING HOW YOUR PETS SHOULD BE CARED FOR.**

**3 SET UP A FUND SPECIFICALLY FOR THE CARE OF YOUR PETS.**

A detailed questionnaire includes everything from caretaker information to pet sitters, boarding facilities, emergency contact information, veterinarian information, trustee information, and details about your pet.

The organization also provides Emergency Identification Cards that tell first-responders or medical staff that you have pets, where they are, and who should be contacted if you are in an accident or are incapacitated. 🐾

*Freelance writer CJ Puotinen lives in Montana. She is the author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and other books. See "Resources," page 24 for more information.*

## RECOMMENDED READING

- ❖ **ALL MY CHILDREN WEAR FUR COATS: HOW TO LEAVE A LEGACY FOR YOUR PET**, by Peggy R. Hoyt, J.D., M.B.A. Second edition. Published by the Law Offices of Hoyt & Bryan, LLC. Paperback, 283 pages, \$20.
- ❖ **EVERY DOG'S LEGAL GUIDE: A MUST-HAVE BOOK FOR YOUR OWNER**, by Mary Randolph, J.D. Sixth edition, Nolo Books, 2007. Paperback, 336 pages, \$20.
- ❖ **WHEN YOUR PET OUTLIVES YOU: PROTECTING ANIMAL COMPANIONS AFTER YOU DIE**, by David Congalton and Charlotte Alexander. NewSage Press, 2002. Paperback, 147 pages, \$14.
- ❖ **WHO WILL CARE WHEN YOU'RE NOT THERE? ESTATE PLANNING FOR PET OWNERS**, by Robert E. Kass, JD, LLM, and Elizabeth A. Carrie, JD, LLM. Carob Tree Press, 2011. Paperback, 208 pages, \$25.

## RESOURCES

- ❖ **FREE PLANNING FORMS AND EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION CARDS** from 2nd Chance for Pets, 1484 Pollard Road PMB 444, Los Gatos CA 95032; [2ndchance4pets.org](http://2ndchance4pets.org)
- ❖ **FREE INFORMATION ON ESTATE PLANNING BASICS, EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION KIT, AND PET TRUST INFORMATION.** Trusted Pet Partners, [trustedpetpartners.com](http://trustedpetpartners.com)
- ❖ **HEIDI GOETTEL, CROWLEY FLECK ATTORNEYS, HELENA, MONTANA** (406) 449-4165; [crowleyfleck.com](http://crowleyfleck.com) (direct email: [hgoettel@crowleyfleck.com](mailto:hgoettel@crowleyfleck.com))

# Praise for Prebiotics

*Special ingredients support the friendly bacteria that aid digestive health.*

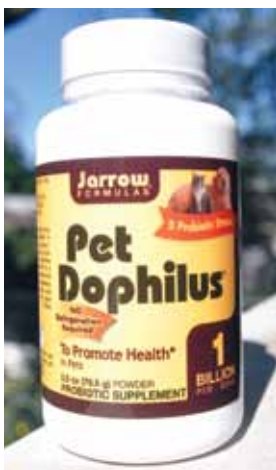
BY MARY STRAUS

**P**rebiotics (no, it's not a typo) nourish probiotics, the beneficial bacteria discussed last month that support digestive health, the immune system, and more. A prebiotic is defined as “a nondigestible food ingredient that beneficially affects the host by selectively stimulating the growth and/or activity of one or a limited number of bacteria in the colon and thus improves host health.”

Prebiotics are soluble, fermentable fiber, a type of nondigestible carbohydrate, also called resistant starch. Fructooligosaccharides (FOS) are the most common, but other oligosaccharides, arabinogalactans, and lactulose are also considered prebiotics. Sources include inulin (a form of FOS extracted from chicory), larch (a source of arabinogalactins), pectins, beet pulp, gums (e.g., guar gum), and wheat dextrin (Benefiber).

Prebiotics are included in many probiotic supplements (the combination is called “synbiotic,” referring to the synergy between the two). Food sources of soluble fiber include legumes (beans, lentils, peas), whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and Jerusalem artichokes (sunchokes). Some commercial dog foods have added sources of soluble fiber, such as chicory. Soluble fiber supplements are also available.

■ **BENEFITS:** Prebiotics support the growth of probiotics, which help keep bad bacteria under control in the dog's gut. By supporting the good bacteria, prebiotics help to prevent disease, improve digestion and nutrient absorption (especially minerals), and enhance the immune system. Dogs fed prebiotics are less likely to get diarrhea caused by the overgrowth of bad bacteria,



and soluble fiber also helps to prevent or treat diarrhea by absorbing water and slowing intestinal transit. Fed to females during pregnancy and lactation, prebiotics provide enhanced immune protection to the puppies through colostrum and milk, and the puppies have an enhanced response to vaccines.

Soluble fiber is fermented by bacteria in the colon to short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), the primary fuel for the cells of the colon. Increased concentration of SCFAs and numbers of beneficial bacteria support gastrointestinal health and the immune system.

Prebiotics may be especially beneficial for dogs with immunosuppression or digestive disorders, and for all dogs following antibiotic therapy. Studies done on rats show that prebiotics may help correct hyperlipidemia (high blood triglycerides or cholesterol) brought about by diabetes and other conditions. Human studies have shown that prebiotics may reduce the risk of colon cancer and irritable bowel disorders.

■ **CAUTIONS:** Prebiotics included in probiotic supplements are unlikely to

**It's labeled as a probiotic, but it contains inulin, a prebiotic that works synergistically with the other ingredients.**

cause any problems. Fiber supplements, however, should be used with caution. Too much soluble fiber can lead to gas and loose stools. Insoluble fiber (roughage), such as cellulose, speeds intestinal transit time (laxative effect) and reduces mineral absorption. Both types of fiber bulk up stools.

It's important that dogs drink enough water when taking fiber supplements (especially insoluble fiber); add water to food if needed.

■ **DOSAGE:** Probiotics and prebiotics are best given together. Follow label instructions when using products made for dogs. When using products made for humans, adjust the dosage based on the size of your dog compared to an adult human (e.g., give about half the human dose to a dog weighing 50 to 60 pounds, or one-quarter the human dose to a dog weighing 25 to 30 pounds). If using a fiber-only supplement, start with low doses and increase gradually. Decrease the amount or switch to a different product if you see signs of gas or diarrhea.

■ **RECOMMENDED SOURCES:**

- Thorne Veterinary's **ArabinexVET**, an arabinogalactan product (800-228-1966; thorne.com)
- **Metamucil Clear & Natural**, an inulin product (metamucil.com; available in grocery stores)
- Jarrow's **Pet Dophilus** contains inulin (310-204-6936; jarrow.com)
- Vetri-Science's **Vetri-Probiotic** contains FOS and arabinogalactan powder (800-882-9993; vetriscience.com)
- Nusentia's **Probiotic Miracle** contains inulin (866-315-2144; nusentia.com)
- Garden of Life's **Primal Defense** contains cereal grasses that act as prebiotics (866-465-0051; gardenoflife.com). 🐾

*Mary Straus is the owner of DogAware.com. Straus and her Norwich Terrier, Ella, live in the San Francisco Bay Area.*

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 RESOURCES 

**TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION**

- ❖ **Pat Miller**, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Train with modern, dog-friendly positive methods. Group and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Trainers can become "Pat Miller Certified Trainers" (PMCT) by successfully completing Pat's Level 1 (Basic Dog Training and Behavior) and both Level 2 Academies (Behavior Modification and Instructors Course). (301) 582-9420; [peaceablepaws.com](http://peaceablepaws.com)
- ❖ **Sarah Richardson**, CPDT-KA, CDBC, The Canine Connection, Chico, CA. Training, puppy classes, socialization sessions, "playcare," boarding. Force-free, fun, positive training. (530) 345-1912; [thecanineconnection.com](http://thecanineconnection.com)

**HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS**

- ❖ **American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association** (AHVMA). PO Box 630, Abingdon, MD 21009. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search [ahvma.org](http://ahvma.org)

**BOOKS AND DVDS**

- ❖ WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of *Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog*; *Positive Perspectives 2: Know Your Dog, Train Your Dog*; *Power of Positive Dog Training*; *Play With Your Dog*; and *Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First Class Life*. Available from Dogwise, (800) 776-2665 or [dogwise.com](http://dogwise.com)
- ❖ *The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats*, by

WDJ contributor CJ Puotinen, are available from Dogwise, (800) 776-2665 or [dogwise.com](http://dogwise.com). Puotinen is also author of several books about human health, including *Natural Relief from Aches and Pains*, available from your favorite bookseller.



**HAPPY ENDING:** Squid (see article on page 5) surveys his Manhattan kingdom.

**WHAT'S AHEAD ...**

❖ **PET FOOD RESEARCH**

*PETA would have you think that any research conducted by pet food companies is cruel – but this is just not true. Here's an inside look at some pet food R&D facilities.*

❖ **DIABETES IN DOGS**

*Types of diabetes, symptoms, causes, treatments (including the best diet for diabetic dogs).*

❖ **PICTURE THIS**

*Want to take professional-quality photos of your dog that reveal his true personality? We share tips from the masters.*

❖ **ROSE: HERB OF THE YEAR**

*How roses can help your dog.*

❖ **TIPS ON RAISING KIDS AND DOGS**

*An expert's guide to bringing up kid-loving dogs and dog-savvy kids together.*