

The Whole Dog Journal™



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A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

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FEATURES

3 Gear of the Year

Some of our favorite toys, treats, leashes, and more for 2012.

6 Sour Greats

Raw, organic apple cider vinegar and other vinegars have numerous uses for maintaining healthy dogs.

11 Emergency Health Exam

Can't decide if you should take your dog to the emergency veterinary hospital, or wait until morning? Do these five things, and then call the vet.

12 Grown-Ups Are Good . . .

But no dog is perfect from Day 1 forward. Here is how to help your newly adopted dog fit into your family fast!

16 Lend a Paw

Dogs give us so much; how can we give back? Here are some suggestions for creative philanthropy for needy dogs.

18 Panting with Purpose

Is there a reason for your dog's panting? Let us count the whys.

Good stuff
The many gifts of apple cider vinegar
page 6



Toy Time
Keep your dog mentally active
page 3



Adult Dogs Rock
But even the best ones need time to learn the family rules
page 12

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editor's Note
- 22 Letters From Readers
- 24 Product and Expert Resources



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Respect

There is no single "right" way to manage our dogs, from feeding to training and everything in between.

BY NANCY KERNS

Every so often, a little flame war will erupt in WDJ's Letters to the Editor, comment section on the WDJ website, or WDJ's Facebook page. People will get mad. Other people will try to humor (or correct!) the angry ones. Some subscribers will cancel their subscriptions; others will pledge their support in the face of these tribulations and buy subscriptions for their friends.

I try to remain calm. The strong expression of every opinion seem to be a symptom that our feverish country is running these days, whether the topic is politics or dogs.

And the fact is, I appreciate the passion that our readers feel for dogs; I'm glad they care enough to get upset. You certainly can't say that for many dog owners – like the ones who allow their dogs to breed indiscriminately, who think it's stupid to buy anything but the cheapest dog food at Wal-Mart, and who wait a week before looking for their lost dog at their local shelter. In my impoverished, rural corner of this great state of California, I'm surrounded by many of these apathetic dog owners. It makes me appreciate the caring, concerned owners I know – and it makes me *really* appreciate those of you who are devoted enough to your dogs to seek out educational resources like WDJ. *Thank you* for your commitment to your canine companions.

Yes, I'm even thanking *you*, the person who wrote a contentious note (or post or email) about something in WDJ (or on our Facebook page) that rubbed you the wrong way. I respect your opinion.

I have a favor to ask, however: Let's *all* be respectful of each other when expressing our

opinions. The fact is, there is always more than one way to achieve anything. And what works for one person or dog might not work for the next. Conversely, what might send my dog running away from you in fear (say, a hearty two-handed chest thumping) might just get your dog psyched and ready to run an agility course.

We do express opinions here at WDJ; we get to take a stand on topics like the use of physical or emotional punishment (we're against it); the inclusion of certain synthetic vitamin K supplements in dog food (we haven't yet seen any compelling evidence to worry about it); or the practice of conducting titer tests annually in lieu of automatic revaccination (we're strongly for this). We try to support our views with substantive evidence and input from experts we respect.

But are we always *right*, for you and your dog? We couldn't possibly be. Nor could you be right about every other dog. We'd be interested in hearing your view, anyway.

So let's refrain from insults or knee-jerk judgments, and politely consider each other's opinions – keeping our dogs' well-being foremost in our considerations. Sound good?

NK

MISSION STATEMENT: WDJ's mission is to provide dog guardians with in-depth information on effective holistic healthcare methods and successful nonviolent training. The methods we discuss will endeavor to do no harm to dogs; we do not advocate perpetrating even minor transgressions in the name of "greater good." We intend our articles to enable readers to immediately apply training and healthcare techniques to their own dogs with visible and enjoyable success. All topics should contribute to improving the dog's health and vitality, and deepening the canine/human bond. Above all, we wish to contribute information that will enable consumers to make kind, healthy, and informed decisions about caring for their own dogs.

Gear of the Year

Some of the best dog-training and -care tools, toys, and treats we've tried.

BY NANCY KERNS

Every year we come across a few dog-related items that make an immediate and/or lasting impact on our dogs or our dog-care regimen, and we feature them here. This year, we also asked our readers, via the Whole Dog Journal Facebook page, for their nominations for "Gear of the Year." Some of the items here are their selections.

NINA OTTOSSON DOG ACTIVITY TOYS

Swedish dog owner Nina Ottosson first marketed some of her puzzles and games for dogs in Sweden in 1993; we first heard about them (and reviewed the original wood versions) in 2008. Since then, probably in a defensive response to a number of cheap plastic knockoffs of her designs, Ottosson has developed a line of high-quality plastic toys, though the original, beautiful wood models that are made in Sweden are still available. The wood ones are sturdy and gorgeous – and more expensive. The plastic ones are also quite rugged, holding up to all sorts of clawing and even being picked up and dropped and continuing to work perfectly.

We tested one of the knockoffs, as well as Ottosson's plastic "Dog Twister" model; there was no comparison. Our dogs were finished with the knockoff in minutes; but many designs of the Ottosson toys, like the Dog Twister, are designed with several levels of difficulty and continue to provide a challenge for dogs after months of play. In addition, Ottosson makes more complex toys and simpler toys; as her website says, "Whether you have a 'Forrest Gump' or an 'Albert Einstein', there is a Nina Ottosson game design to suit every dog!" (Even our young cats got into the action, using their claws to manipulate the pieces; Ottosson indicates which of the toys are appropriate for cats!)

These toys are great for occupying puppies, giving non-ambulatory or post-surgical dogs something to do, or just amusing yourself while amusing your dog!

We purchased from Amazon.com, but the toys are available from a number of online retailers, listed on the website below.

DOG TWISTER, PLASTIC – \$42

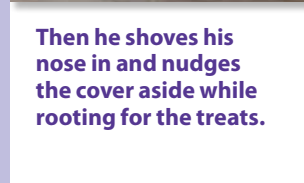
Nina Ottosson Dog Activity Toys
 Karlskoga, Sweden
 46-586-30034
 nina-ottosson.com



Dog Twister: Stash treats in the center compartments; the dog needs to slide the covers from side to side to reach the treats. Once he is adept at this, the game can be made more difficult by the insertion of bone-shaped stoppers that limit the direction that the pieces can be moved to gain the treats. The stoppers can be inserted at right angles to make it easy for a dog to extract them, or snuggled into the slots to make it more difficult.



Peanut's strategy is to use his claws to start the movement of one of the compartment covers . . .



Then he shoves his nose in and nudges the cover aside while rooting for the treats.



Otto prefers to take the entire toy somewhere else, so he can work on it in private. (He's also had some minor success at dropping it and having a few treats fall out.)





Antlers are actually “made” of the same tissue as bone, with a fatty marrow interior.

ANTLERS

We’re always looking for items that satisfy our dogs’ need to chew – and that are as safe as possible. The animal hooves that are sold in pet supply stores are often too hard (risking broken teeth); and many rawhide, tendon, and “pizzles” chews present a risk of being swallowed in large enough chunks that bowel obstruction becomes a concern. We’re not fans of any of those green chews, which contain a ton of wheat byproducts. But antlers have become a recent obsession with our dogs. They are hard, but not quite as hard as cow hooves, and they last a lot longer than any rawhide-type chews. Best of all, they have that animal-product appeal for dogs – and the animals that provided them don’t have to die (deer and elk shed their antlers annually, and they are collected for this purpose).

There are a number of companies selling deer antler chews. We suggest looking for those that are sourced in the U.S., from animals that have been organically raised. Always take away any chew item from your dog when it is chewed down to a size that could be swallowed.

We purchased from Amazon.com, but antler chews can also be purchased directly from the Chasing Our Tails website.

DEER RACK SNACK – \$9

Chasing Our Tails, Inc.
Hudson, New Hampshire
(866) 967-0152
chasingourtails.com

Our dogs like the fleecy, quilted fabric of the Solvit car seat cover – it’s warm and grippy, not slippery.

CAR SEAT COVERS

The last time we bought a car seat cover meant especially for protecting the car from the wear and tear (and moisture and dirt and hair) of dogs, **IT** smelled so bad that we returned it without ever trying its fit in the car. (We did let it air out, fully unfolded, for *two* days on a clothesline ; it *still* stunk.) We’ve been reluctant to try another model since then; instead, we’ve habitually covered the back seat with a large bed sheet.

A few months ago, we tried again. We purchased the Solvit Deluxe Bench Seat Cover, a machine-washable (polyester with a suede-like finish) cover with a water-resistant backing. It installed easily, with adjustable straps that go around the headrests, and lined openings for the seat belts to pass through. (There are some other straps and hooks under the cover that are meant to pass under the cushions and fasten under the seat somewhere, but our car’s seat is fastened right to the floor. We didn’t use those straps, and yet it doesn’t seem to matter; the cover stays put anyway.)

We *love* it. First, because it didn’t smell bad. Also, no moisture from our wet, muddy dogs passes through to the seats. Hair and stickers stick to the cover, rather than the car – and yet, when we took the dirty cover out of the car and shook it, most of the hair and stickers flew off. The cover looked so presentable after the shaking, that we didn’t wash it that first time; we just put it back into the car!

We purchased from Amazon.com, but a list of other retailers can be found on the Solvit website.

SOLVIT DELUXE BENCH SEAT COVER

– \$33

Solvit Products
Arlington, Texas
(866) 676-5848
solvitproducts.com





LEEDZ

We're obsessed with leashes. Our favorites are simple, strong, and well-made of quality materials. And they have to feel good in the hand. Leedz leashes meet all those criteria – especially the feel in the hand. They are made of a particularly silky synthetic rope that stays smooth even after lots of daily use. Each has a generously sized loop handle.

Leedz are made by Purple Pebble (a pet products company that also offers some very nice fleecy "Cuddle Mats" for use alone or in a crate). They are offered in two diameters: the 5/8" is recommended for big dogs and comes in 2', 4', and 6' lengths; the 3/8" length is available with either a snap on the end or a slip noose. The 3/8" comes in a 6' length with a snap end or a 4' length with a slip end.

LEEDZ – \$23

Leedz are available in the four UV-resistant colors seen here, with swivel snaps or slip ends.

Purple Pebble
West Milford, New Jersey
(201) 444-7439
purplepebble.com

FREEZE DRIED MEAT TREATS

There is a short list of attributes that we look for in a treat: It should be mostly or all-meat (that's the definition of high-value, in the opinion of most dogs); it should be dehydrated or freeze-dried (to make it convenient and not greasy in a pocket); it should be small (so we can feed a lot of them without filling up or boring the dog). That's it!

Bravo!, maker of top-quality frozen raw diets, recently introduced a line of freeze-dried meat treats that meet all of our selection criteria. They come in four varieties: all-beef "hot dogs," turkey, buffalo, and "Trail Mix," which contains those three plus tiny cubes of freeze-dried cheese. We like the latter best, because the variety seems to hold our dogs' attention longer. Bravo! uses only domestic sources of responsibly raised meats. We purchased from a local pet supply store; retailers are listed on Bravo's website. Bravo! treats are also sold by online retailers such as cleanrun.com.

BRAVO! TRAIL MIX – 4 oz. \$10

Bravo!, LLC
Vernon, Connecticut
(866) 922-9222
bravorawdiet.com



We've never had a dog turn down these training treats.



The bags are 8 x 10 inches and thick enough to be quite sturdy. We've never broken one in the process of picking up or carrying poo.



NON-PLASTIC POOP BAGS

Dog poop presents the environmentalist with a real problem. We would hazard a guess that most of us do the worst possible thing: use a plastic bag to pick up poo, and then throw it in a garbage can, bound for a landfill somewhere.

Here is an environmentally responsible alternative: bags made of polyvinyl alcohol, which you use to pick up poop and dispose in a toilet. Flush Puppies feel and perform like plastic, but when immersed in water (as they would be if flushed down a toilet), they completely degrade into water and carbon dioxide in about four days. They are safe and approved in waste water treatment systems and septic tanks. Flush Puppies contain no petroleum products (like plastics), so if you are closer to a trash can than a toilet, you can feel better about disposing them instead of a plastic bag, which takes much longer to biodegrade.

We really like these large, sturdy bags – and so did all the dog-owning friends we gave them to as stocking stuffers! The only complaint we heard was that it was difficult to tie a knot in the bags. The maker actually advises against knotting the bags if you intend to flush them; the knot takes much longer to break down in water. We found that the bags contained poo odor sufficiently to finish our walks if we just twisted the neck of the bag and held it by the twisted section. We purchased from Amazon.com; retailers are listed on the Flush Puppies website.

FLUSH PUPPIES – 60 bags for \$9

Pawesome Pet Products, LLC
Boca Raton, Florida
(855) 766-7224
flushpuppies.com

Sour Greats

Apple cider vinegar and other vinegars have many uses for healthy dogs.

BY CJ PUOTINEN; PHOTOS BY STEPHEN NAGY

People have been using vinegar for thousands of years, and while most of it goes into salads and condiments, vinegar can be used as a household cleanser, cosmetic aid, and health treatment. Many dog lovers add vinegar to their pets' food or apply it topically to their best friends. Advocates call vinegar, especially unpasteurized organic apple cider vinegar, a wonder food. Is vinegar really a health-improving supplement, a natural preservative, a nontoxic cleaning product, a disinfectant, a source of important nutrients, and an effective topical treatment for canine ailments?

Some of the claims made by vinegar proponents are supported by research while others are not. Here are some facts about apple cider vinegar (ACV) and other vinegars to help you decide whether and when to use it for yourself and your dog.

WHAT IS VINEGAR?

Its name comes from the Latin words *vinum* (which means wine) and *acer* (which means sour). Vinegar can be made from any liquid that contains sugar, which includes everything from fruit juice to plain sugar water. Within a few days of being exposed to air, naturally occurring or added yeasts cause the sugar to ferment, turning it into alcohol. If not interrupted,

fermentation continues in response to naturally occurring or added acetic acid bacteria until all of the alcohol becomes acetic acid. This is how wine, beer, and ale are used to create wine and malt vinegars. Some vinegar factories shorten the fermentation process to just two or three days by using modern bacterial cultures and special pumps, but traditional vinegars valued for their culinary use are still made the old-fashioned way.

However it's made, vinegar has a distinctive fragrance and a low pH. On the pH scale, water is

neutral at 7.0, tomato juice is acid at 4.1, distilled white vinegar is more acid at 2.4, and the pH of lemon juice is 2.2. Apple cider vinegar tends to be less acidic, with a pH between 4.25 and 5.

One of the earliest known vinegars was made 5,000 years ago in Babylon from fermented dates. In ancient Rome, fermented rye, figs, grapes, and dates were popular ingredients. Today's vinegars are made from corn, barley, and other grains; grapes; apples; and other fruits.

According to the Vinegar Institute, an international trade association representing vinegar manufacturers and bottlers, worldwide vinegar sales are now approaching \$225 million annually, with the fastest growth in organic vinegars. Nearly half of the vinegar sold in North America is balsamic, with red wine vinegar the next most popular at 13 percent and cider vinegar tied with rice wine vinegar at 8 percent each.

Only 1 percent of sales go to distilled white vinegar. However, distilled white (usually made from corn) and distilled apple cider are the most familiar supermarket vinegars. These inexpensive vinegars are filtered and pasteurized to make them sparkling clear. Better-quality wine, cider, or malt vinegars are often aged for years in wooden barrels to improve their flavor and left unfiltered and unpasteurized.

To vinegar connoisseurs, there's a world of difference between distilled or rapidly produced vinegar and traditionally made vinegars that are brewed slowly in small batches and aged to perfection. Some gourmet vinegars cost over \$200 per 100 milliliters (about 7 tablespoons).



APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Traditionally made organic apple cider vinegar is widely sold and far less expensive than gourmet balsamics, but it too is valued for its culinary uses. Some popular brands, such as Bragg, Spectrum, Eden Organics, Solana Gold Organics, and Dynamic Health, are made from organic apples that are crushed to make cider, then aged in wooden barrels.

Because it is raw and unfiltered, this vinegar is not clear like distilled vinegars. Instead, it contains a dark, cloudy substance that resembles dusty cobwebs. This substance, called the “mother” or “mother veil,” consists of naturally occurring pectin and apple residues whose protein molecules are connected in strand-like chains. As the Bragg website explains, “The presence of the mother shows that the best part of the apple has not been destroyed. Vinegars containing the mother contain enzymes that other vinegars may not contain due to over-processing, filtration, and overheating.”

Apple cider vinegar is usually light golden brown or orange in color. While the acidity of homemade cider vinegar varies, most manufacturers maintain a 5-percent acetic acid level, which is recommended for the safe pickling and preserving of low-acid foods.

BIOCHEMISTRY BENEFITS

Vinegar has been used medicinally since ancient times. Roman soldiers valued vinegar and water as an antiseptic health drink. Hippocrates, the famous Greek physician, prescribed vinegar as medicine.

Advocates credit apple cider vinegar as a nutritional powerhouse, containing an array of vitamins, minerals, and bioflavonoids, but this is inaccurate. The USDA considers all of those nutrients as absent from ACV, with one exception: potassium. Raw cider vinegar contains about 11 mg potassium per tablespoon (the Daily Reference Value for potassium is 4,600 mg).

One way in which vinegar promotes health is through its effect on digestion. By itself vinegar may not contain significant vitamins and minerals, but when combined with foods that do, it helps the body assimilate those nutrients. Acetic acid, like other acids, can increase the body's absorption of calcium and other minerals. Some nutrition experts, including Donna Gates, author of the *Body Ecology Diet*, recommend sipping



Alternate generous sprays of hydrogen peroxide and vinegar for a very effective, inexpensive, and nontoxic antibacterial, anti-viral food and kitchen disinfectant.

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar in a glass of warm water while eating protein in order to stimulate the body's production of hydrochloric acid for enhanced digestion.

Vinegar has important antiseptic properties that help prevent the growth of harmful bacteria and viruses in the digestive tract. As a bonus, it does not interfere with the body's beneficial bacteria, which are the immune system's first line of defense against harmful microbes.

In 2010, the *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism* published a study showing that vinegar's antiglycemic properties reduce blood sugar levels that rise after meals in healthy adults. These results agree with a 2006 Japanese study that showed that the consumption of vinegar with food prevented blood sugar level increases.

A 2005 study at Arizona State University tested patients with type 2 diabetes, prediabetes, or no symptoms of diabetes, as they consumed a breakfast containing 87 grams of carbohydrates just after drinking a glass of water containing either 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar or a placebo. Vinegar consumption slowed the rise of blood sugar in all three groups, up to 34 percent. Based on studies done with rats or in test tubes, the researchers speculate that vinegar interferes with the absorption of high-carbohydrate foods.

No one is suggesting that vinegar cures diabetes, but the studies mentioned above encourage researchers to further examine the effect of vinegar on blood sugar levels.

FIGHTING GERMS

In 2007 the well-known food magazine *Cook's Illustrated* compared four ways

of cleaning produce to determine which is most effective for removing bacteria: washing with antibacterial soap; washing with a solution of 1 part vinegar and 3 parts water; scrubbing produce with a brush; and simply rinsing produce in clean water. The “dilute vinegar solution” worked best, removing 98 percent of bacteria.

In 2003 researchers at the University of Florida tested several disinfectants on strawberries contaminated with *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and other germs. They found that gently swishing the strawberries for 2 minutes in a 10-percent vinegar solution (about ½ cup vinegar per quart of water) reduced bacteria by 90 percent and viruses by 95 percent.

Researchers at the University of Arkansas Food Safety Consortium studying methods for manufacturing natural or organic cured pork products found that mixtures of vinegar with lactate and vinegar with lemon powder inhibited bacterial pathogens such as *Listeria monocytogenes*.

In a 2010 Danish experiment, chicken broiler meat was inoculated with *Campylobacter jejuni* and marinated with different food ingredients, including wine vinegar. Only the vinegar maintained its antibacterial activity during three days of storage, reducing the *C. jejuni* population.

A Spanish study published in 2007 examined the antimicrobial activity of several products, including vinegar, against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella enteritidis*, *E. coli* 0157:h7, *Shigella sonnei*, and *Yersinia spp.* Vinegar showed the strongest antibacterial activity.

Vinegar isn't the only inexpensive household product with disinfecting properties. Hydrogen peroxide (the 3 percent solution sold in supermarkets and pharmacies for wound healing) is another. In the 1990s, when the 0157:H7 strain of *E. coli* first sickened thousands around the world, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University food scientist Susan Sumner, PhD, discovered that spraying vinegar and hydrogen peroxide on raw meat, vegetables, cutting boards, and other kitchen surfaces disinfected them more effectively than chlorine bleach or any commercial kitchen cleaner. Applying one after the other (in either order) with a mist sprayer killed virtually all *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, and *E. coli* bacteria on heavily contaminated food and sur-

faces. The one-two punch was 10 times more effective than using either vinegar or hydrogen peroxide alone, and more effective than mixing the two substances together in one sprayer, which is not recommended.

On most foods and kitchen surfaces, no rinsing is necessary. Spraying the vinegar first, then the hydrogen peroxide, is an easy way to reduce or remove vinegar's fragrance if necessary. (Note that vinegar's acid can etch marble and natural stone, so it is not appropriate for all surfaces.)

PET USES

Vinegar has long been used as a first-aid treatment. Many natural health experts prefer raw organic apple cider vinegar for topical applications, including muscle aches and bruises; sunburn, windburn, abrasions, insect bites, and stings; and hair care (controlling dandruff and improving condition and static control).

Nearly all of vinegar's human uses can be applied to pets. Because puppies and some dogs have sensitive skin, test a small area by applying vinegar or a vinegar-based herbal tincture (liquid concentrate) recommended for topical use. Check the area every few hours for up to 24 hours. If redness or irritation develops, dilute the vinegar and try again or discontinue use. This type of patch test is not necessary when applying vinegar that will be washed or rinsed off within a few minutes.

■ INSECT REPELLENT

- Plain vinegar and herbal tinctures containing cider vinegar repel insects, including fleas and mosquitoes. Spray the neck, torso, tail, underbelly, and overall coat (avoid the eyes, nose, and mouth) and let dry.

- For a nontoxic flea dip, cover your dog or puppy with ACV (spray, sponge, or simply pour it on), working it into the skin and coat. Avoid the eyes, nose, and mouth. Let stand for several minutes before washing with gentle shampoo.

- Dab full-strength cider vinegar or a cider vinegar herbal tincture behind the ears, near the tail, and on the dog's coat. Because herbal tinctures and cider vinegar can stain light or white coats, substitute distilled white vinegar for light-coated dogs.



Natural health experts prefer raw organic apple cider vinegar for most applications, using distilled white vinegar only for those topical applications when ACV might stain a pet's white coat, or for house-cleaning and disinfecting.

■ PET STAINS AND ODORS

- Mix 1 part distilled white vinegar with 3 parts water. Pour onto carpet or other stained areas and blot with fabric or paper towels. Do not rub.

- Refresh and deodorize pet bedding by spraying it with vinegar or by adding vinegar to laundry when washing bedding.

- Clean and disinfect pet toys by spraying lightly, then brushing or wiping clean.

- Vinegar is often recommended as a pet deodorizer. Apply diluted or full-strength vinegar to any stinky coat and let the dog air-dry.

If your dog rolled on well-rotted mammal parts or got sprayed by a skunk, mix 1 freshly opened quart of 3-percent hydrogen peroxide in a plastic container with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking soda and 1 teaspoon liquid soap. Wearing protective gloves, cover the dog while avoiding the nose, eyes, and mouth, then rinse with plain water. If any fragrance lingers (as it did when my Labrador recently rolled on a decomposing carp), apply vinegar to complete the process.

■ SKIN AND COAT

- After shampooing, give a final rinse with 1 cup vinegar diluted in 2 to 4 cups water. Experiment with different dilutions for best results.

- Reduce dander by massaging full-strength cider vinegar into the coat before shampooing.

- Apply full-strength or diluted ACV to calluses, rough skin, sunburn, or skin irritations.

- Combine skin-friendly herbs like calendula blossoms, St. John's wort blossoms, and/or comfrey leaves with ACV to improve its healing effects on cuts, wounds, abrasions, etc.

- Wendy Volhard, author of *Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog*, recommends spraying itchy skin and developing hot spots with apple cider vinegar. "Any skin eruption will dry up in 24 hours," she says, "and will save you having to shave the dog. If the skin is already broken, dilute ACV with an equal amount of water and spray on."

■ ITCHY FEET OR EARS

- Dogs with seasonal allergies can develop itchy feet in response to pollen exposure. Soaking the paws in full-strength or diluted ACV can help reduce the itching.

- Plain apple cider vinegar or a vinegar-based herbal tincture can help keep a dog's ears clean and healthy. Place a few drops in each ear and gently massage, or apply with a cotton swab. For a more medicinal ear drop, make or buy a cider vinegar tincture containing ear-friendly herbs like garlic and mullein blossoms.

■ MUSCLE SPRAINS

- Apply cider vinegar to sore muscles with a sponge or cotton. Do the same for bruises, abrasions, sore paw pads, and other discomforts. Reapply as needed.

FOOD AND WATER

If you feed a raw home-prepared diet and are concerned about harmful bacteria in your dog's food or on kitchen surfaces, use the alternating vinegar-peroxide spray treatment described above.

"I always add raw apple cider vinegar to vegetables when I puree them for my dogs," says veterinary technician Adele Delp of Helena, Montana. "Vinegar is a natural preservative and the vegetables last several days longer in the refrigerator, which is convenient."

There are pros and cons to adding cider vinegar to a dog's drinking water, with the recommended dose usually 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon per 50 pounds of body weight. "People often talk about adding ACV to water bowls," says canine health researcher Mary Straus. "My feeling is that if so, you should also offer plain water, just in case your dogs don't want to drink the water with the ACV in it. You wouldn't want to risk their drinking less water and possibly becoming dehydrated."

Is a daily dose of apple cider vinegar good for your dog? Unless your dog is allergic to apples, he or she isn't likely to suffer a serious reaction, and within a month you should be able to tell whether the addition is helping. Commonly reported benefits include improvements in skin and coat condition, a reduction of itching and scratching, the elimination of tear stains on the face, fewer brown or yellow urine spots in lawns, increased mobility in older dogs, reduced flea populations, and an improvement in overall health.

HERBAL TINCTURES

Rosemary Gladstar, a well-known herbalist, educator, author, and dog lover in East Barre, Vermont, values raw organic apple cider vinegar for its use in herbal tinctures. "These highly concentrated liquid extracts of herbs are easy to make, simple to administer, and convenient," she explains. "Their prolonged shelf life makes them easy to keep on hand."

Alcohol is the most widely used

tincture solvent because it extracts fats, resins, waxes, most alkaloids, some volatile oils, and other plant components, which it preserves indefinitely. Vegetable glycerin, a sweet, syrupy liquid, dissolves mucilage, vitamins, and minerals but does not dissolve resinous or oily plant constituents. Apple cider vinegar extracts sugars, tannins, glycosides, bitter compounds, alkaloids, vitamins, and minerals.

"Cider vinegar is not as strong as alcohol and does not break down all of the plant components," says Gladstar, "but there are advantages to using it. Vinegar is a food, 100 percent nontoxic, and tolerated by almost everyone. It helps regulate the acid/alkaline balance in our bodies and is an excellent tonic for the digestive tract. Vinegar tinctures are a fine alternative for those who are sensitive to alcohol and they can safely be used for children and pets. Add a little honey to your vinegar tonic for a nice flavor. Though vinegar tinctures may not be as concentrated as alcohol tinctures, I trust in the body's ability to discern what it needs and to use it effectively."

Although most herbal literature warns that vinegar tinctures have a shelf life of only six months before deteriorating, Gladstar disagrees. "My personal experience," she says, "and that of many of my peers has been that vinegar tinctures will last, if stored in a cool, dark place, for several years. I have vinegar tinctures that are up to four years old and they are still in excellent condition."


In her book *Herbal Recipes for Vibrant Health*, Gladstar describes the traditional or simpler's method of tincture making, which she prefers. All you need are herbs, the appropriate menstruum (alcohol, vinegar, or glycerin base), and a jar with a tight-fitting lid. "This extremely simple system produces a beautiful tincture every time," she says.

1 Chop herbs finely. Fresh herbs work best but high-quality dried herbs are next best. Place them in a clean, dry jar. If using dried herbs, fill the jar only half way to allow for expansion.

2 Heat raw organic ACV to a warm

What you can do . . .

- Explore the uses of raw organic apple cider vinegar and distilled white vinegar for improved health and household applications.
- Spray kitchen surfaces, raw meat, and produce with vinegar and hydrogen peroxide (spray separately one after the other) for thorough disinfecting.
- Use apple cider vinegar as a nontoxic flea dip.
- Add apple cider vinegar to shampoo or final rinse for coat conditioning and deodorizing.
- Apply full-strength or diluted cider vinegar to cuts, wounds, abrasions, calluses, bruises, sore paw pads, or muscle strains.
- Make your own herbal tinctures with cider vinegar for improved digestion or topical application.



The Whole Dog Journal

(not hot) temperature. Pour in enough to completely cover the herbs with a margin of 2 or 3 inches. Seal the lid.

3 Leave the jar in a warm spot and let the herbs soak for 4 to 6 weeks – the longer, the better. Shake the bottle daily.

4 Strain the liquid through a stainless steel strainer lined with cheesecloth or muslin. Place in dark cobalt or amber glass bottles, label, and store away from heat and light.

Herbs such as burdock, chamomile, dandelion, echinacea, ginger, mullein, nettle, sage, slippery elm bark, valerian, and yellow dock added to food can help dogs improve their overall health, enhance digestion, and deal more comfortably with stress.

Gladstar recommends a garlic/dandelion vinegar tincture as a general tonic and to help dogs repel parasites. Use fresh or dried dandelion leaves, roots,



Cover fresh or dried herbs in a clean jar with ACV to make a powerful tincture.

and blossoms with an approximately equal amount of garlic. (If using dried dandelion, leave ample room for expansion.)

Add this tincture in small amounts to your dog's food, gradually increasing to approximately ¼ teaspoon per 20 pounds of body weight per day. The dandelion is a tonic for the entire body (it helps improve digestion, cleanses the blood, and supports kidney function), while garlic repels internal and external parasites and acts as a digestive and circulatory tonic. If desired, make a double-strength tincture by straining the completed tincture into a new jar of freshly chopped garlic and dandelion, repeating the process. Reduce the dosage accordingly.

An effective liniment warms and relaxes joints and muscles, increases circulation to the area, relieves inflammation, improves flexibility, and speeds healing. Traditional recipes combine skin-warming ingredients and therapeutic herbs with cider vinegar. For example, combine 1 pint (2 cups) apple cider vinegar with 1 teaspoon powdered cayenne pepper, 4 tablespoons dried (or ¼ cup fresh) rosemary, and 2 tablespoons dried (or ½ cup fresh) comfrey leaf or root that has been cut or broken into small pieces. Massage into tight muscles, bruises, or sore joints, or simply soak a cloth or bandage in the liniment and hold it on the affected area for as long as possible. Keep this liniment away from the eyes and mucous membranes.

Gladstar's favorite cider vinegar tincture is an herbal cosmetic, Queen of Hungary's Water. "Legend has it that the early Gypsies formulated it and claimed it to be a cure-all," she says. "It is an excellent astringent for the face and a great rinse for dark hair. It combines gentle, common herbs in a masterful way, it's easy and inexpensive to make, and it's very versatile. The Gypsies claimed it was good as a hair rinse, mouthwash, headache remedy, aftershave, foot bath, and who knows what else!"

To make it, combine 6 parts lemon balm, 4 parts chamomile, 1 part rosemary, 3 parts calendula, 4 parts roses, 1 part lemon peel, 1 part sage, and 3 parts comfrey leaf. After aging and straining, add ½ to 1 cup rose water or witch hazel to each cup of herbal vinegar. Store in dropper or spray bottles. This product does not need refrigeration and will stay fresh indefinitely. (Because it stains, this

RESOURCES

❖ **MAKERS OF RAW, ORGANIC APPLE CIDER VINEGAR INCLUDE:**

Bragg, Inc., (800) 446-1990, bragg.com
Dynamic Health Laboratories, Inc., (800) 396-2114, dynamichealth.com
Eden Organics, (888) 424-3336, edenfoods.com
Solana Gold Organics, (800) 459-1121, solanagold.com
Spectrum, Inc., (800) 434-4246, spectrumorganics.com

❖ **USDA NUTRIENT DATA BASE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/

❖ **THE VINEGAR INSTITUTE, ATLANTA, GA**

(404) 252-3663, versatilevinegar.org

❖ **HERB SUPPLIES FOR TINCTURE MAKING**

Jean's Greens Herbal Tea Works, Schodack, NY
(888) 845-TEAS or 518-479-0471, jeansgreens.com

Mountain Rose Herbs, Eugene, OR

(800) 879-3337 or (541) 741-7307, mountainroseherbs.com

Dried calendula blossoms from Wilderness Family Naturals, Finland, MN

(800) 945-3801 or (218) 226-3985, wildernessfamilynaturals.com

RECOMMENDED READING

❖ **APPLE CIDER VINEGAR: MIRACLE HEALTH SYSTEM**

by Paul and Patricia Bragg, Bragg Health Sciences, 2012.
Paperback, 42 pages, \$10 (or \$5 online e-book from Bragg.com)

❖ **THE BODY ECOLOGY DIET: RECOVERING YOUR HEALTH AND REBUILDING YOUR IMMUNITY**, by Donna Gates and Linda Schatz.

Hay House, Revised Edition, 2011. Paperback, 256 pages, \$16.

❖ **ROSEMARY GLADSTAR'S HERBAL RECIPES FOR VIBRANT HEALTH**

by Rosemary Gladstar. Storey Publishing, \$17

❖ **HOLISTIC GUIDE FOR A HEALTHY DOG**

by Wendy Volhard and Kerry Brown, DVM. Howell Book House, 2nd edition, 2000. \$17

blend is not recommended for light or white hair.)

HOUSEHOLD USES

As Patricia Bragg says, "We don't endorse white vinegar or dead vinegars for human or pet use, internally or externally! But it's great for a variety of household, workshop, and pet cleanup chores. White vinegar is a safe, effective, and inexpensive household cleaner, deodorizer, and disinfectant, which replaces commercial household cleaners that are full of chemicals and additives that are harmful to Mother Nature and you. Remember:

use only the healthiest vinegar, like Bragg raw organic ACV (with 'mother enzyme') for all human consumption and for use on skin, hair, and your pets."

Because dogs contact household surfaces directly and indirectly, chemical exposure is always a consideration. Distilled white vinegar is so versatile that some reports list more than 400 household applications. 🐾

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.

Home Health Exam

Five things to do before you call your veterinarian about your sick dog.

BY NANCY KERNS

Who among us has not fretted over a seemingly sick dog, wondering whether we bring him into the emergency vet clinic – or wait until morning? Pretty much every dog owner has done it at some point. And most of us have probably frustrated the heck out of the vet’s receptionist. Telling her that the dog is “just not himself!” doesn’t give her a lot to go on; it leaves her no choice but to advise us to bring the dog in! It’s far more helpful to all concerned if you first examine your own dog, gathering solid information about his condition, before calling the vet.

1 TAKE THE DOG’S TEMPERATURE. If you don’t know how to do this, you should. Purchase and keep an appropriately sized rectal thermometer on hand; there are small sizes available for small dogs and larger ones for large dogs. Have some Vaseline or KY Jelly to put on the thermometer; this makes its insertion more comfortable for the dog.

Note that while ear thermometers are less invasive for the dog, they are also less accurate (unless you are an experienced user and the dog is very cooperative, most people tend to get readings that are lower than the actual internal temperature of the dog). Digital models may be easier to read than the reliable old glass-and-mercury models. Plus, they have the added benefit of a built-in timer, so you don’t have to count to make sure you’ve had the thermometer in long enough. On the other hand, the glass models don’t have batteries that can die, rendering the thermometer useless.

If you’ve never taken your dog’s temperature, ask your vet or groomer to show you how. It’s not that difficult – for you or your dog.

2 NOTE THE DOG’S TEMPERATURE! When your dog is not feeling well and you’re upset, you may not remember the temperature you just observed. Write it down, along with the time. Keep in mind that “normal” for dogs varies a bit,

from about 100.5° F. to about 102.5° F; it’s good to know your dog’s normal temperature, so take it sometime when he’s completely well and resting.

3 CHECK THE COLOR AND WETNESS OF THE DOG’S GUMS. Familiarize yourself with the color of your dog’s gums when he’s well so you know what’s “normal” for him. Some dogs have black or bluish gums, some are pink, and some are mottled. If, when he’s *not* feeling well, his gums appear abnormally pale



A quick look at your dog’s gums gives your vet a lot of vital information.

or white, he may be in or nearing shock. Brick-red gums can indicate a fever or heat stroke; yellowish gums may mean the dog is jaundiced.

When a dog is healthy, his gums should be glossy and wet. If they are sticky or dry, he may be dehydrated.

4 CHECK HIS CAPILLARY REFILL TIME. Sounds technical, but it’s easy. Capillary refill time is how long it takes for the blood to rush back into a spot that you press on his gums; it’s a quick and fairly accurate indicator of his blood pressure. To check, firmly press a spot on his gums for about three seconds; when you release the pressure, the spot should be pale where you pressed the blood out of that tissue. The spot should quickly disappear from view as the tissue refills with blood – within about a second. If the spot remains pale for *several* seconds, your dog’s blood pressure may be dangerously low.

Make sure you tell the veterinarian or her receptionist everything that you observed about your dog’s gums.

5 MAKE SURE YOU ARE ABLE TO DESCRIBE ANY DEVIATIONS IN YOUR DOG’S DIET, ELIMINATION PATTERN, AND DEemeanOR. Make sure you know the brand and type of food you’ve been feeding your dog (you’d be surprised how many people don’t know). If you feed commercial food, make sure the bags, cans, or pouches are available in case there is a recall and you need the lot numbers. You should also know how much the dog is usually fed, the time of his last meal, and the quality of his appetite (usually and lately). In addition, you should be able to discuss his most recent bowel movement (when it happened, the quality of the stool, whether that was different than usual) and urination (what time, how much, color).

Your ability to report all of this information will help your vet’s receptionist decide whether the dog should be brought to the hospital immediately, or whether she should simply schedule a visit for the next day; the latter, of course, will save you a few hundred dollars. Most of us will spend that if we need to, but it’s nice to have criteria other than “He’s not himself!” to help clinch the decision. 🐾

Grown-Ups Are Good . . .

***But no dog is perfect from Day 1 forward!
Here's how to help your newly adopted dog
fit into your family fast!***

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

So, you've recently adopted an adolescent or adult dog, or you're planning to adopt one from a rescue group or shelter in the near future. Good for you! It generally takes adult dogs a lot longer to get adopted than those irresistible, pudgy puppies – even when they are calmer, better-socialized, house-trained, and past the “chew everything in sight” stage. Shelter staffers often shake their heads as families pass up ideal, kid-friendly adult dogs in favor of pups of some highly inappropriate breed or type, just because they are puppies.

There are a multitude of benefits when you bring an adult dog into your family. You don't have to deal with those nasty-sharp puppy teeth. And because your dog has her adult teeth, she is less likely to chew everything within her reach. If not already housetrained (and many are), a mature dog at least has the physical *ability* to hold bowels and bladder for longer periods of time, and can usually learn appropriate bathroom habits quickly, with proper management and training.

Plus, an adult needs to be fed only twice a day, whereas young puppies need lunch as well as breakfast and dinner. And healthy, mature dogs are capable of more physical activity than puppies, so if you're looking for a ready-made exercise partner, you don't have to wait months for your running buddy to accompany you as you prepare for your next 10k run. As an added benefit, you have that feel-good feeling that comes with adopting a dog who might otherwise not find her forever home.

I do not, by any means, intend to imply that adopting an adult dog is all

The parents of these boys came to the shelter looking for a puppy . . . but to everyone's good fortune, they wisely selected this lovely child-loving adult dog. He may have some behavior flaws, but the value of his comfort with and enjoyment of kids will strongly outweigh the minor inconvenience of any training he may need.



smooth sailing. Many shelter dogs settle into their new homes without a ripple, but some arrive with minor behavioral challenges, and others carry with them a significant amount of baggage. Don't despair! If you're grounded in the reality that no dog is perfect from the get-go, and you're prepared and poised to help your new dog learn your household rules, conventions, and codes of conduct starting on day 1, his potential for success in your family is very good.

CAVEAT EMPTOR

Most shelters do some sort of behavior evaluation of the dogs in their care, so you may be warned about potentially inappropriate behaviors. This may come in the form of answers on a questionnaire (if your new dog had been surrendered to the shelter by her previous owner), or notes from a staff member or a volunteer based on their observations. If you don't allow yourself to get distracted by the shelter's commotion, you'll have the opportunity to make your own observations about the potential adoptee during an introduction session. Behaviors like lifting his leg in the get-acquainted room, counter-surfing to snatch toys or treats off the table, or leaping into your lap when you sit on a chair are likely to be repeated in his new environment.

Again: Don't let these sorts of minor transgressions dissuade you from adopting the dog. All of these are typical for untrained dogs – and absolutely expected from untrained puppies!

What if your new adoptee *does* seem perfect? While that would be nice, it's also possible that you will experience a "honeymoon period" with your new family member, one that may range anywhere from a few days to several months. Unforeseen behaviors may manifest over time, as the dog tests new behavioral strategies and discovers which ones are reinforced (by you, by other family members, by visitors, or by the environment), or as she recovers from the recent traumas in her life. She may become bolder about engaging in behaviors that were temporarily shut-down by the stress of her recent life experiences.

If you're prepared for unwanted behaviors to surface, it will be easier to work through them. If tempted to give up when poor manners emerge, keep in mind that your adoptee's previous owner(s) already gave up on her at least once, if not several times.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The first, almost universal answer to the question of handling behavior problems is *management*, hand-in-hand with a medical exam.

These days, many shelter dogs come with a free "well-pet exam." Commonly, private veterinarians in practice near a shelter generously offer their services at a discount for dogs adopted from the shelter or rescue. Take advantage of the offer as soon as possible. If your dog doesn't come with a free check-up, make an appointment for the veterinarian you've interviewed and selected to be your dog's doctor.

It's not uncommon for a previously undetected health problem that could lead to behavior issues to be identified at this time. For example, my husband and I adopted an adult Pomeranian, who lifted his leg and peed in the house – a lot! The veterinarian who provided a reduced-cost exam diagnosed a bladder stone, the removal of which quickly resolved Scooter's house soiling behavior.

Management's role is also critical in modifying your adopted dog's behavior. The more often she gets to practice (and be reinforced for) an inappropriate behavior, the harder it is to modify that behavior down the road. The behavior becomes a well-practiced habit; she'll be convinced that it will pay off if she just tries hard enough, or often enough. Don't wait "to give her time to settle in." Start reinforcing the behaviors you like the most (such as polite sitting) ASAP.

COMMON (MIS) BEHAVIORS IN ADOPTED ADULT DOGS

Here are some common misbehaviors you might find in adult shelter dogs, along with some tips on how to work with them. If you have to prioritize a list of undesirable behaviors that came with your adopted dog, I'd suggest you start with the first two that follow: house soiling and separation anxiety, as they are two that are most likely to cause your dog to lose her happy home, yet again.

■ **HOUSE SOILING** – Some adult shelter dogs are already housetrained. Some are not. Depending on how house-proud you are, house soiling may be a minor annoyance, or a major affront to your sensibilities. When you bring your shelter dog home, assume she isn't housetrained, and put her on an express

puppy housetraining schedule: Under constant supervision (with the help of baby gates, closed doors, and leashes) or in a crate or exercise pen. Of course, you must crate train her if she isn't already, in order to take advantage of this valuable management tool. If you just toss her in her crate and leave, you risk teaching her to hate her crate. (See "Crate Expectations," January 2011.)

Take her outside every hour on the hour for the first day or two, and reward and praise on the spot when she eliminates. If she seems to be getting the idea, over the course of a few days, gradually give her more house freedom and extend the time between trips outside. If gradual freedom results in house accidents, go back to more supervision (and clean the soiled spots well with an enzymatic cleaner designed for cleaning up animal waste).

If you catch her mid-accident, cheerfully interrupt her with an "Oops! Outside!" Take her to her potty spot – and make a mental note to amp up your supervision and increase her bathroom opportunities. Do not make a big deal, or you risk teaching her it's not safe to go in your presence. Good luck getting her to go to the bathroom on leash if that happens!

At first, don't crate your dog for more than four hours at a time. That might mean hiring a dog walker if no one in the family can come home and let her out at lunchtime. Eight hours at night is acceptable, as long as she is crated where you can hear her (preferably in your bedroom) if she wakes up and asks to go out. If your dog soils her crate or exercise pen during a reasonable period of confinement, you have a bigger challenge ahead of you. You may need to reverse crate train, which means putting her in the crate for short periods, only when you know she is "empty," and having her under your direct supervision when she's not crated.

If your dog is having inexplicable accidents despite your excellent management, head back to the vet to determine if she has a urinary tract infection (which makes it impossible for her to hold her urine for very long), loose stools (which would make it impossible to hold her bowel movements for long), or some other condition that makes it difficult or impossible for her to be housetrained.

"Marking" is a different behavior from simple housesoiling. It is sometimes



(but not always) resolved by neutering. Persistent marking can be caused by stress. If that's the case with your shelter dog, removing as

much stress as possible from his life may help. You may need to engage the services of a qualified behavior professional who uses positive reinforcement methods. Belly-bands and "PeeKeepers" (see peekeeper.com) are useful house-preserving tools to use on your dog while you try to modify marking behavior. (For more about dogs who "mark" indoors, see "Missing the Mark," September 2009.)

■ **SEPARATION ANXIETY** – Full-blown separation anxiety can be an extremely challenging behavior to live with, manage, and modify. For starters, most dogs with significant separation or isolation issues don't tolerate a crate well, so the "confine them to keep them out of trouble" option isn't available.

The good news is that many of these dogs actually have separation (have to be with the one person the dog has connected to) or isolation (doesn't like to be left alone) *distress*, rather than true anxiety. The intensity of canine behavior with these conditions is on a continuum from low level intensity (unhappy, but calms down after a reasonably short time, without destroying the house) to extreme panic (dog injures himself, vocalizes non-stop for hours on end, and causes massive destruction to household). If your shelter adoptee is demonstrating anxiety on the extreme end of the continuum, a trip to the veterinarian for anti-anxiety medications is in order. This will make life easier for her, and for you, while you work to modify her behaviors. (For more information about separation anxiety and separation distress, see "Scared to be Home Alone," July 2008.)

Dr. Karen Overall's very detailed, "Protocol for Relaxation" is useful for modifying separation/isolation distress (dogscouts.org/Protocol_for_relaxation.html). A downloadable, auditory version can be found at championofmyheart.com/relaxation-protocol-mp3-files.

■ **VOCALIZING** – There are many different kinds of canine vocalizations: barking, whining, howling, yelping, growling, and more. You may not want

to stop all of your dog's noisemaking, but there may be some you'd prefer to minimize. It's important that you learn and understand what each one means before simply trying to make them all go away. There may even be some you decide you'd like to reinforce! (For more about training your dog to be quieter, see "Positively Quiet," July 2007.)

■ **CHEWING** – If you think adopting an adult dog is guaranteed to save you from chewing disasters, think again. While puppies are the masters of chewing behavior, dogs really do chew throughout their lives. If a dog has been well managed, he will develop appropriate chew-preferences and be reasonably trustworthy around your possessions. If he was allowed to run amuck as a pup and chew whatever he wanted, then nothing in your home is safe.

Of course, you have no way of knowing which you may have, so until she proves otherwise, you'll need to assume that your new dog might chew anything she can get her teeth into. While you're supervising and managing her behavior for housetraining purposes in her early days with you, keep an eagle eye out for indications of inappropriate chewing (while, of course, providing her with appropriate chew objects).

In relatively short order you should figure out if you're home free on the chewing issue, or if you'll need to completely overhaul her mouth behavior management and redirection. For a long-term chew-training protocol, see "Chew, Chew, Train!" in the August 2007 issue.

Note: If chewing is accompanied by other undesirable behaviors such as general destruction, barking, and aversion to crating, consider separation or isolation anxiety as possibilities.

■ **JUMPING UP** – Remember, your dog's jumping up has *nothing* to do with dominance. (See "Alpha, Schmalpha," in the December 2011 issue). She's probably either trying to greet you, get you to pay attention to her, or perhaps seeking reassurance, if she's stressed or frightened.

The answer to this training challenge is to make sure that *no one* reinforces her for jumping up. Make sure that every person who wants to greet the dog is prepared to turn his or her back and step away from her when she jumps.

Next, reinforce "sit" very generously, with high-value treats, to help this polite

deference behavior become her default choice (her first behavior option – the one she chooses when she isn't sure what to do) and make sure everyone gives her attention for sitting. (See "Keeping Four on the Floor," May 2008.) If she's jumping up for reassurance, determine what is stressing her and make that stressor go away until you can help her become comfortable with it.

■ **PULLING ON LEASH** – Lots of dogs pull on leash. As annoying as it might be, don't take it personally – and don't blame dominance for this one, either! Dogs who pull just want to get where they want to go, and they want to get there faster than you do. If you want her to walk politely on leash, reinforce her generously when there's no tension on the leash, and stop moving forward when the leash tightens.

If there are times when you know you won't have time for the "stop and wait for loose leash" dance – for example, if you want her to jog with you – use a different kind of collar or harness that will let her know, "In this outfit you are allowed to pull."

For more information about teaching your dog to walk on a loose leash, see "Good Dog Walking," March 2007.

THERE MIGHT BE MORE

There's a good chance you will encounter other behaviors that we haven't covered above. In every case, there is a solution to be found that can help your dog become the well-behaved companion you want her to be. You can read good books and search for answers online (and in the WDJ online archives!).

Remember to look for *positive* solutions; you want your new dog to like you, trust you, and want to be with you. You may need to consult a qualified positive behavior professional to help you find answers. As you research the behavior and search for answers, keep these important reminders in your head at all times: Be gentle. Be clear. Be consistent. Be persistent. Be positive. Most of all, for your adopted dog's sake, be her forever person. 🐾

Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is WDJ's Training Editor. Author of numerous books on positive dog training, she lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, where she offers dog training classes and courses for trainers. See "Resources," page 24, for more information.

EVERY ADOPTION IS LIKE A BOX OF CHOCOLATES . . .

The first adult dogs I adopted after beginning my animal protection career at the Marin Humane Society was Mandy, a tri-color Rough Collie who was surrendered to the shelter by her owner at eight years of age because she was leaking urine – she had spay incontinence. I am a sucker for Collies (my childhood companion and confidante was a Collie), and I offered to foster her, brush out her matted fur, and medicate the urine burns on her legs. She came home with me and laid down on the living room floor as if she'd lived there forever. Medication for her incontinence quickly resolved her leaking problem, and she stayed with me for the rest of her life, until she died of a stroke at age 13.

Few (if any) dogs will arrive in a new home and immediately understand and follow all the house rules, get along with every member of the family (human, canine, feline, etc.), and display perfect health as they consume and perfectly digest whatever food they are given. Rather, all dogs present their new families with unique health issues and behaviors; you never know what you are going to get along with the darling face you fell in love with at the shelter. Your new family member may need medical care, remedial training, and/or socialization in order to adjust and adapt to their new circumstances.



Here are the short stories of our current adult-adoption canine family:

We adopted **Dubhy** (pronounced “Duffy,” means “Dark” in Gaelic) a Scottish Terrier, when he was about 6 months old. He was in a shelter A former stray, he’s now 11 years old. Dubhy actually came with no noticeable behavior challenges, but became reactive to other dogs as he matured.

Lucy (short for “Footloose and Fancy Free”), our Cardigan Corgi, was surrendered by her former owner to my husband’s shelter (Paul

is the executive director of the Humane Society of Washington County, Maryland), when she was about 7 months old. I’m sure it was because her high energy level (in a home with small children) was problematic. I had long wanted a Corgi. She arrived with high energy, borderline canine compulsive behavior (spinning), and a shrill voice she didn’t hesitate to use. Living on a farm, doing barn chores, and going for daily hikes quickly resolved the energy/compulsive behavior issues. Lucy is now about 8 years old. We live with – and manage – the voice.



We call **Bonnie** (Bonnie Wee Lass) a “Scorgidoodle” – we think she’s a mix of Scottie, Corgi, and Poodle. We adopted her when she was about 6 months old; she’s now 6 years old. Bonnie was surrendered to the shelter by her owners because they couldn’t housetrain her.



She was a submissive urinator. Careful management and modification has reduced her urination incidents to a rare occasion.

Missy, our Australian Shepherd, was all of 8 years old when we adopted her; she’s now 13. We were Missy’s fourth home in 12 months. I suspect she had one long-term owner who had to give her up for some reason, and the separation issues she demonstrated within the first 24 hours in our home likely resulted in her being passed from home to home until she landed with us. Fortunately her behavior is at the “distress” end of the scale, not the “anxiety” end; it manifests only as vocalization (barking). Because I work from my home office, and we have no nearby neighbors, we are able to easily manage this behavior.



Scooter, our Pomeranian, was also about 8 years old when we adopted him; he’s now 10. Scooter was on the euthanasia list at our shelter after failing part of his behavioral assessment by the shelter staff; he very fiercely guarded resources. The staff knew I had taken an interest in the little guy, and contacted me after the behavior assessment.



As it turned out, while he may act fierce from time to time, Scooter has superb bite inhibition – which means that it doesn’t hurt when he bites. Having been on the receiving end of his ferocity on more than one occasion, I can attest to the fact that there is no pressure from his teeth when he puts his mouth on your skin. It’s a simple

matter to manage his resource guarding by not pestering him when he has a valuable resource in his possession, or by trading it for a high-value treat if he has something that we need to take away (which rarely happens).

Scooter had another troubling habit when he first arrived in our house; he frequently peed in the house, lifting his leg on anything and everything. Fortunately, a discussion of the problem with our veterinarian and an examination resulted in a quick resolution of this “training problem.” After having surgery to remove a cherry-sized bladder stone, which was preventing him from fully emptying his bladder outside (and causing him to almost stand on his head to pee), Scooter stopped peeing in the house. Can you imagine how tragic it would have been for him if he had been living with someone who punished him for his “stubbornness”? His story is a good reminder to always give a dog the benefit of the doubt – and look for factors beyond the dog’s control – when problematic behavior persists.



COMMUNITY

An adult volunteer brings developmentally disabled students to an animal shelter, where they volunteer! Their usual chores include rotating dirty dog toys for clean ones in the outdoor runs and socializing with friendly dogs and cats: win/win/win.

for caring for the animals. Here are some ideas for services you may be able to provide to help the animals in need in your community:

■ **VOLUNTEER YOUR UNIQUE SKILLS** to your shelter or rescue group. Writers, photographers, and graphic artists can help produce fliers, newsletters, or information packets. Attorneys can offer pro bono work, assist in legal research, or analyze a legal brief. Dog health professionals and groomers can offer free or discounted services. Dog trainers have a lot to offer shelters, including providing seminars for volunteers on basic positive training methods, or teaching shelter staff how to reduce barking in the kennel. Staff members may also appreciate help when dealing with particularly challenging dogs or evaluating dogs who display peculiar behavior.

■ **ALL-BREED AND PURE-BREED RESCUE** groups need volunteers to transport dogs, deliver information packets to shelters, enlist boarding kennels and veterinarians who will discount services to rescue, bring dogs to vet appointments, and visit homes of adoption applicants for adoption approval.

■ **COLLECT AND DONATE DOG** beds, leashes, collars, towels, food bowls, cleaning supplies, crates, toys, food, and grooming supplies to your local shelter or rescue group. Throw a party and request these items from your guests instead of the usual bottles of wines.

■ **FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH LOCAL** and state ordinances or legislation pertaining to dog welfare, including breed bans, vehicle safety, animal cruelty, chaining dogs, or retail dog sales. Write a letter, or email local and state representatives expressing your views. Forward your correspondence to dog-loving friends and family members.

■ **RECOMMEND REPUTABLE DOG TRAINERS** in your area to family,

Lending a Paw

Dogs give us so much... How can we give back?

BY SUSAN SARUBIN, CPDT-KA, PMCT

Author and former president of the ASPCA Roger Caras once stated, “Dogs have given us their absolute all. We are the center of their universe. We are the focus of their love and faith and trust. They serve us in return for scraps. It is without a doubt the best deal man has ever made.” A great deal for us, but what about for dogs? As dog lovers, we know that our end of our “deal” with dogs needs to be more than “scraps.”

How can we give back to the animals that have given us so much? Becoming a volunteer at a local shelter, or donating money to a humane organization, shelter, or rescue group, are two ways to help that immediately come to mind. Shelters rarely have enough volunteers. In addition to walking, socializing, and providing basic training for shelter dogs, volunteer opportunities may include adoption counseling and administrative support. Shelters and rescue groups can always put monetary donations to good use toward food and medical supplies.

Is your life too busy to dedicate time regularly to volunteer at your local shelter? Perhaps you feel you can't emotionally handle working with dogs in need. Maybe you don't have enough discretionary income in this tough economy to contribute as much money as you would like. There are many other ways to help dogs that may be more suited to your interests, skills, or time constraints. Keep in mind that anything that you do for a shelter or rescue group that they don't have to pay someone else to do results in more money left in the budget

friends, and acquaintances when they get a new puppy or adopt a dog. Keep a few business cards of your favorite trainer or training business in your wallet for anyone who needs help with their dog. Every bit of “good manners” training that a dog receives helps him stay out of a shelter. Every owner you steer toward a class or trainer that uses gentle methods of training potentially saves a dog from being subjected to methods based on force and punishment.

■ **ORGANIZE AND RUN A FUNDRAISING** event for your local shelter or rescue group, either sponsored by the organization, or form your own independent nonprofit group and donate the proceeds to several deserving shelters or rescue groups. You can organize something as simple as a bake sale or car wash, or something as involved as an athletic event (a walk, run, or swim) where participants collect donations from sponsors, a dog festival (“Bark in the Park”), or a black tie event (“Dancing for the Dogs”). Not a planner? Volunteer for an event that’s already organized.

■ **START A DOG PARK.** Well-run and monitored dog parks can be wonderful places for dogs to socialize and exercise

in a safe, enclosed area. Dog parks are found on common land in residential communities, in local or state parks, or on land presented by a dog-loving benefactor for use as a dog park (subject to local zoning ordinances and restrictions).

■ **CALL YOUR LOCAL ANIMAL CONTROL** office, humane society, or police department if you see a dog who is too thin; consistently without food, water, or shelter; or appears sick or infested with parasites. Officials are required to investigate if the dog’s owner is breaking local or state animal cruelty laws. Once reported, follow up. Continue to call authorities until the situation resolves. The dog can’t speak; be his voice!

■ **CONSIDER BEING A FOSTER** parent to a dog in need. A home environment is much less stressful to a dog in transition than a noisy shelter where exercise and human attention are limited. Providing a calm and caring environment with some basic good manners training will increase your foster dog’s chances of finding a forever home.

■ **WHEN YOU ARE READY** to add a dog to your family, adopt a shelter or rescue dog! If you have your heart set

on a particular breed, find a reputable breed-specific rescue. Tell your friends and family about your experience, and encourage them to adopt a dog instead of purchasing one.

The number of ways to help dogs is limitless, but one of the easiest ways to give back to dogs is with your very own four-legged furball. No matter how loved, trained, cared for, or pampered our dogs are, we can almost always do better. Is your dog really getting enough physical exercise? What about mental exercise? Do you train new behaviors occasionally, play games, and provide interactive toys for enrichment? Have you been too busy lately to bring your dog to the park or arrange a play date with a best buddy? Your dog will always adore you and never complain, but we owe it to dogs to strive for every one of them to live happy, healthy, enriched lives. What better way to start than with the one who is curled up in a ball at your feet. 🐾

Susan Sarubin, CPDT-KA, PMCT, is owner of Pawsitive Fit, LLC, Puppy and Dog Training in Easton, Maryland. She’s also Maryland State Coordinator for Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc. See “Resources,” page 24 for contact information.

DARE TO THINK BIG WHEN PLANNING FUNDRAISERS

Looking to plan an event that could raise a substantial amount of money to help animals in need? A large, elaborate event is not something to take on as a first-time fundraiser. Big fundraising events require event-planning experience, a lot of support from the community and from volunteers, and often take a year or more to plan and execute. But if you have that experience and are thinking big, think creative as well. The more fun you make your event, the more people will want to be involved or attend, and the more money you take in to help the animals.

Large fundraising events also cost money to plan. Individual benefactors or corporate sponsors will be needed to provide working capital for facility rental, catering, entertainment, graphic design, printing costs, advertising, web design, and police or security for the event. For a more upscale event, such as a black tie fundraiser, even more funds are needed to pay for advertising and services that match the level of the event’s sophistication.

The following event will take place nearly a year and a half after it was conceived, but promises to help a lot of dogs!

The First Annual Dancing for the Dogs competition to benefit three Maryland county animal shelters (Talbot, Caroline, and Dorchester Humane Societies) will be held at the historic Tidewater Inn in Easton, Maryland, on March 10, 2012.

Held in conjunction with USA Dance Easton Chapter 6099, a local nonprofit organization, the black tie optional event is modeled after the popular ABC TV dance competition, Dancing with the

Stars. Ten local celebrities will be partnered with professional dance instructors, spending 8 to 10 sessions learning their dance routine prior to the event. They will compete for the coveted Rhinestone Disco Paw Award, the winner being determined by judge’s scores, audience votes, and amount of charitable contributions made in the celebrity’s name, both at the event or on the DFTD web site (dancingforthedogs.com) prior to the event. Additional proceeds to benefit the shelters will be raised through corporate

sponsorships, ticket sales, program advertising, and a silent auction at the event.



Panting With Purpose

Why does your dog pant? Let us count the whys.

BY BARBARA DOBBINS

I'm awakened by the exhalation of my Border Collie's warm breath on my face: heh-heh-heh. I slowly open one eye and focus on the nose just inches from my own. I may be anthropomorphizing, but I suspect he's grinning. There it is again – a breathy heh-heh-heh. Wait a minute! Is he just panting or is he laughing at me?

Given the way dogs are designed, panting is a very normal bodily function. Dogs don't have sweat glands throughout their body to expel heat like humans do. The only sweat glands they have are located on the pads of their paws. So what else can this canine body do to cool itself down? Pant.

Panting is the action of opening the mouth, sticking out the tongue, and rapidly, rhythmically breathing through the mouth. It's a dog's personal cooling system. This mode of quick breathing increases the air intake to the mucous membranes of the mouth and upper

respiratory tract, causing evaporation, which in turn helps to reduce body temperature and cool the dog.

When resting, dogs take between 10 and 34 breaths a minute, depending on their size. Panting increases when the environment is warm and during and after exercise. Familiarize yourself with your dog's everyday breathing and panting style so you'll be aware of any changes in the pattern. There are times when this change can be cause for concern or require emergency care. Some of the reasons or situations when a dog's panting may indicate he's in trouble include:

■ IT'S TOO HOT!

Heatstroke can occur in any environment, but is more likely to happen during warm or hot weather, when your dog is becoming over extended during exercise, or if left in a closed car where temperatures can quickly become deadly. Heatstroke (hyperthermia) symptoms include excessive panting, deep red tongue and gums, glassy eyes, weakness, fast heart rate, drooling, seizures, nausea and/or vomiting, diarrhea, and a body temperature over 104° F. This is a medical emergency; a quick response can save his life.

■ PUGS AND BULLDOGS AND PEKINGESE, oh my!

Brachycephalic breeds in particular are more prone to heatstroke and excessive panting due to their facial structure (and they may snore loudly!). This facial structure, comprised of a compressed upper jaw and a short muzzle with abnormally small nasal passages, a distorted larynx and narrow windpipe, makes it difficult for a brachycephalic dog to inhale sufficient amounts of air through his nose; he must often resort to open-mouth breathing.

Dogs with this type anatomy may tend to avoid strenuous exercise and can become short of breath following any mild exertion, excitement, or stress. They tend to be less tolerant of heat as they often can't pant enough to regulate their body temperature and thus can require extra careful monitoring when exercising or in warm/hot environments.

■ HIDE PAIN I WILL

As we know, dogs are Jedi masters at hiding pain. But panting can give them away. Be aware that panting is usually only one of a number of symptoms of pain; look for other signs such as restlessness, enlarged pupils, anxiety, reluctance to lie down, and licking or biting at a particular site.

You have to know your dog and be observant in order to know why he might be panting. For example, this dog was habitually anxious, had a thick coat year-round, and was overweight; any of these could explain his frequent panting. But he also had a cardiac condition, which led to a premature demise.



Panting can also be a symptom of many diseases and chronic illnesses. The key is to note whether there is a change in your dog's panting behavior and, if needed, take your dog to your veterinarian for diagnosis. Panting as a symptom is pervasive throughout a number of conditions; listed below are some of the more frequently seen ailments that could have associated panting.

■ HEART OF THE MATTER

Cardiovascular problems such as cardiomyopathy, congestive heart failure, heart murmurs, heartworms, hypertension (high blood pressure, often a secondary issue caused by another disease), pulmonary thromboembolism (blockage of a vessel by material carried through the blood stream), and congenital heart abnormalities all list aberrant panting as a symptom. With these diseases, dogs can show some of the same symptoms that people do; so watch for these other symptoms, which include breathing difficulties, reduced exercise tolerance, lethargy, and coughing spells (sometimes worse at night).

■ AS THE BLOOD FLOWS

Atypical panting can also be an indicator of hematological problems that reduce the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood. This includes such ailments as hypercapnia, a condition caused by excess carbon dioxide in the blood (which is often secondary to kidney disease, diarrhea, shock, or diabetes mellitus), as well as with anemia and carbon monoxide poisoning.

■ IT'S HORMONAL

Diseases of the endocrine system often result in heavy unnatural panting. For example, hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's Disease) occurs when the dog's adrenal glands produce too much cortisol. Other symptoms of this disease can include excessive hunger and



TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICAL VIEW

From a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) perspective, any medical condition is a symptom of an underlying disharmony within the body. This imbalance can be viewed through the yin and yang model, the base of TCM theory. Both exist within the body at all times. Yin represents the concepts of cooling, fluids, quietness, and passive behavior. Yang represents the concepts of heat, inflammation, outward energy, and aggressive behavior. Healthy animals have a balance between the two; any imbalance is regarded as a disease.

Panting can thus be regarded as an imbalance between the yin (the cooling aspect of the body) and the yang (the warming part). TCM attempts to balance the entire system and tailor treatments to individual patients based on constitution, physical findings, and tongue and pulse diagnosis.

Excessive panting might have a dozen or more different treatment plans depending on the primary cause encompassing a medical condition. For example, a dog with a very bright pink tongue but weak pulses is likely yin deficient. If the tongue is red and pulse surging, the dog is likely to be considered as having excess heat. Both conditions will likely be accompanied by excess panting, but would be treated differently with herbs, stimulation of certain acupuncture points, and food therapy.



Traditional Chinese Medicine can also cause panting! This Border Collie is at the end of an acupuncture session; she still has needles in acupuncture points in her front paws. She begins to pant as the needles trigger a release of endorphins.

thirst, hair loss, and a pot-bellied appearance. The associated panting can occur for a number of reasons: an enlarged liver can put pressure on the diaphragm and thereby limit the ability of the lungs to fully expand; the excessive cortisol stimulates panting; pulmonary thromboembolism is a complication not infrequently seen with Cushing's and it can cause breathing irregularities. Other endocrine abnormalities resulting in panting include pheochromocytoma, a tumor of the adrenal gland that causes too much adrenalin to be produced, and hypothyroidism (deficiency of thyroid hormone). Conversely, the treatment of hypothyroidism – thyroxine supplementation – can also cause panting if excessively medicated.

■ RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS

Panting is part of the respiratory system so it comes as no surprise that disorders in this system can lead to

This dog is actually in labor. Her panting may indicate pain or excitement – or be caused by the dramatic physiological process her body is engaged in.

heavy breathing or panting. Your veterinarian may want to check for upper respiratory problems such as laryngeal paralysis or dysfunction, collapsing/collapsed trachea, nasal or throat growths, pneumonia, lung tumors, infections, or complications that can lead to blockage of the nasal passages.

Lower respiratory tract disorders may not allow for sufficient gas exchange at the level of the lung and result in panting in an attempt to increase the oxygen flow. There are many diseases of the chest cavity that may not allow the lungs to expand properly: pneumothorax (air in the chest), pulmonary edema (fluid in the lungs), pleural effusion (fluid in the chest cavity), mediastinal masses (growths in

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF HEATSTROKE

In cases of heatstroke (hyperthermia), the goal is to *gradually* decrease the dog's body temperature to about 104° F. in the first 10-15 minutes. Once 104° F. is reached, stop the cooling process and get the dog to the veterinarian as quickly as possible.

1. Move dog away from the source of heat.
2. Take the dog's temperature; if higher than 106° F., start cooling the dog.
3. Cool the dog with cool – not cold – water (cold constricts blood vessels).
4. Monitor the dog's temperature every two minutes to observe changes.
5. Place water-soaked towels on the head, neck, chest, and abdomen.
6. Turn on a fan and point it in the dog's direction.
7. Alternatively, rubbing alcohol can be rubbed inside the dog's front and back legs and/or on his paw pads; don't use large quantities (½ pint) as it can be toxic.
8. *Stop* the cooling process once the dog's temperature reaches 104° F. *Do not* wait until the temperature falls to normal because the dog's temperature may continue to drop.
9. If the dog's temperature falls below 100° F., keep him warm by covering with a blanket or towel and placing a two-liter soda bottle filled with warm – not hot – water against him.
10. Seek veterinary care immediately.



Double whammy: This brachycephalic (flat-faced, short-nosed) dog is also quite obese. In a hot or stressful environment, or with just a bit of exercise, she could easily fall victim to heatstroke, since she's far less able to cool herself through panting than a long-nosed or lean dog.

the chest), and diaphragmatic hernias (displacement of the abdominal contents of the chest cavity), cancer, lung lobe torsion, emphysema, and asthma.

■ IT'S IN THE NERVES

The brain and neurological system are responsible for transmitting the necessary signals for bodily function, so any brain tumors or head trauma may affect the respiratory center.

Any conditions that cause dysfunction of the muscles of respiration may contribute to panting. These include myasthenia gravis (a neuromuscular disease caused by an inability of certain nerve receptors to function properly); nerve disorders associated with diabetes mellitus (in which the pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin which is required for the body to efficiently process sugars, fats, and proteins); and laryngeal paralysis associated with hypothyroidism. Seizures and high body temperatures can stimulate the respiratory system and result in abnormal panting.

■ DOGS HAVE FEELINGS TOO

Many behavioral and emotional issues have physical manifestations. Take fear, for example: dogs afraid of thunderstorms usually pant heavily, often walking with a crouch seeking places to hide. Dogs can also have panic attacks; these acute episodes of intense anxiety are frequently accompanied by severe panting, shaking, and trembling with a rapid heart and respiratory rate and dilated pupils.

Panting is often associated with cognitive dysfunction, the mental deterioration that sometimes occurs as dogs age. You may find that in addition to panting, other symptoms may include problems with recognizing familiar places or people; spatial disorientation; confusion; issues with the sleep/wake cycle; inappropriate or excessive vocalization; non-productive repetitive behaviors such as circling, pacing, and licking; signs of apathy; irritability; and a reduction in social interaction. Panting is also found to accompany dysphoria (general mood of depression, restlessness, and anxiety).

■ FEMALE TROUBLE

Anecdotal accounts suggest that female dogs pant more than males, but with the following exceptions, there isn't good evidence for this. Of course, dur-



The owner of this Border Collie, Cyclone, knows from experience that the dog's training or exercise session should be ended when she sees Cyclone's tongue start to curl up at the edges as she pants. At that point, she's had all the heat she can handle well.

ing pregnancy, female dogs may pant more than usual as the uterus enlarges, and her blood volume and metabolic demands increase. Females will also pant while giving birth and may continue to do so for a few weeks after due to the contractions of the uterus that stimulate lactation (milk production). Panting can be associated with eclampsia, commonly known as milk fever, a low blood calcium level that can develop in the weeks after giving birth (usually due to an underactive thyroid gland).

■ IT'S THE DRUGS, MAN

Certain medications can produce panting as a side effect, including steroids such as prednisone, benzodiazepines (Diazepam/valium), opioids for pain management such as Fentanyl and Tramadol, and excess thyroxine supplementation (thyroid medication).

■ MISCELLANEOUS CAUSES

At risk of sounding like even the kitchen sink can cause panting, we'll lump the rest of the causes together. **Obesity** can lend itself to panting, as overweight dogs may have a tendency to overheat or the extra weight may put pressure on internal organs. Dogs may pant in order to get sufficient oxygen into their systems at **high altitude**. **Allergies, irritation, and infection** can all lead to

increased panting and related wheezy noisy breathing. A body temperature of over 102.5° F. in dogs is usually considered to be a **fever** (normal being 100.5 to 102.5° F.); fever is an indication of infection and the raised internal body temperature can cause panting.

Cause for immediate concern is the consumption of **toxic substances** which can trigger heavy panting; be aware of what your dog may have ingested so that veterinary treatment can be sought if necessary. **Advanced age** is a factor; older dogs seem to pant more than younger dogs.

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME

Why does *your* dog pant? Be aware of the transient emotional triggers such as fear, stress, excitement, and anxiety. But if you are familiar with your dog's exhalation style, and you notice a sudden or extreme change in the intensity and frequency of his panting, the panting is constant and intense, the tongue or/and gums appear blue or white, or you think your dog is in pain, see your veterinarian immediately.

HEH-HEH-HEH... NO, IT ISN'T ALL ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Sometimes dogs just pant. It could be idiopathic. Or maybe they *are* laughing.

Research done by Patricia Simonet at Sierra Nevada College looked at the vocalizations that dogs produce interacting socially. These breathy exhalation bursts, described as huh-huh-huh sounds, were recorded and examined using spectrograph analysis.

Simonet found that these specific panting sounds have a broader range of frequencies than the regular pant. Her playback experiments in 2005 found that recordings of these vocalizations, deemed dog laughter, would reduce stress related behavior in shelter dogs, such as barking, lunging, cage-biting, tail chasing, and cowering; it also appeared to have a calming effect with an increase in pro-social behaviors.

Like many of us who want to communicate better with our dogs, Simonet tried imitating the sound herself and found it to have a positive effect on dogs hearing it. If you want to try to imitate the sound, try a breathy exhalation with no actual voicing. Try different approaches to see if your dog will respond.

I'm pretty sure my Border Collie was laughing at me while I slept. It was a breathy exhalation, a quick burst of panting. While your dogs may not laugh with you, they may laugh at you. Either way, laughter can induce and is a sign of joy. So go laugh with your dog. 🐾

Author Barbara Dobbins is a dog trainer on hiatus. Her previous article in WDJ was "Chemo Can Be Kind," in the October issue.

What you can do . . .

■ **Pay attention to your dog!** When is she most likely to pant? Does she pant at times when it's difficult to identify a potential cause? If so, consider a veterinary check up.

■ **Equip yourself with a rectal (these are best) or ear thermometer (these tend to give lower than accurate readings). If you don't already know how, ask your vet to show you, and practice taking your dog's temperature.**



Clarifying diagnosis of Addison's disease; Excellent new book

The October and November 2011 issues of WDJ provided in-depth discussion of canine Addison's and Cushing's diseases. The following information should help clarify other questions that may arise about the diagnosis of canine adrenal disorders.

The relationships between adrenal cortisol and sex steroid production is complicated. In chronic illnesses, the body's adrenal glands can become exhausted or fatigued. The adrenal glands may then respond by increasing the output of cortisol, and the intermediate and sex steroids. However, while the role of increased adrenal sex hormones, such as 17-hydroxyprogesterone and androstenedione, in promoting atypical Cushing's disease is established, the role of increased estrogens, such as estradiol, in promoting SARDS (sudden acquired retinal degeneration syndrome) is scientifically unproven.

Part of this problem arises because of the documented differences between these sex steroid pathways in people and dogs. For example, in people, DHEA (dehydroxyepiandrosterone) activity is an important adrenal component in assessing body function and plays a role in obesity; it is frequently used as a supplement. By contrast, the normal levels of DHEA in dogs have not been established, and the potential benefit of DHEA supplements is unclear and may even be harmful.

Similarly, in people, estrogen assays include total estrogen as well as estrogen components, like beta-estradiol and estrone. In dogs, by contrast, the biologically important and regulatory estrogen is beta-estradiol. When the total estrogen concentration is measured in dog serum, it not only measures beta-estradiol but also detects all the metabolic breakdown products of this hormone, thereby leading to an apparent elevation in the total estrogen concentration, when it may not be truly functionally elevated. Thus, *measuring total estrogen activity in dogs will likely give misleading results and lead to erroneous conclusions.*

Likewise, measuring basal or resting cortisol activity in animals is misleading, because the cortisol is released from the adrenal gland continuously in pulsatile fashion over a 24-hour period. A single cortisol measurement is meaningless, regardless if it's low, normal, or high, and is the reason that only dynamic tests of adrenal function (ACTH stimulation, LDDS suppression, and tests for the adrenal steroid intermediate hormones) accurately determine adrenal function.

- Adrenal exhaustion (also called adrenal fatigue) occurs when the adrenal gland (which produces cortisol in response to stress) has been over-stimulated and cannot function properly. Adrenal exhaustion is typically a transient condition and can result in impaired activity of the master glands such as the thyroid gland. Once the reason for the adrenal exhaustion is resolved, thyroid function should return to normal. In the meantime, however, nutritional supplements that offer thyroid support may be indicated and can be beneficial.

- Many physicians and veterinarians resist prescribing thyroid treatment in cases of adrenal exhaustion, because they are not technically treating a thyroid disorder, they are treating a tem-

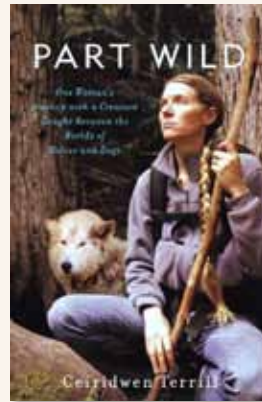
porary adrenal malfunction syndrome. To that, we say that if the patient shows marked improvement with thyroid hormone replacement and/or nutritional thyroid support, then why withhold appropriate and beneficial therapy? The fact remains that you are treating a thyroid responsive disease – and the patient is getting better !

RELIABLE DIAGNOSTIC TESTS OF ADRENAL FUNCTION

Because of the complexity of the adrenal axis and its regulation by the body's master glands, the importance of relying on assays performed only by an established commercial or university-based veterinary diagnostic reference laboratory is paramount. These diagnostic laboratories all participate in the national VLA Quality Assurance Program or the similar CAP Quality Assurance testing to document the accuracy of their laboratory procedures.

For comprehensive adrenal function testing, one of the most respected panels is obtained from the Clinical Endocrinology Service at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (the late Dr. Jack Oliver's program): vet.utk.edu/diagnostic/endocrinology.

W. Jean Dodds, DVM
Garden Grove, CA



I would like to bring readers' attention to an excellent new book that dovetails nicely with my recent article ("Alpha, Schmalpha," December 2011) about canine "dominance."

Part Wild: One Woman's Journey with a Creature Caught Between the Worlds of Dogs and Wolves is a compelling and scientifically accurate recounting of author Ceiridwen Terrill's challenging experiences as the naïve owner of a wolf-hybrid.

An engaging and articulate writer, Terrill sends two strong messages: if you are thinking of getting a wolf-hybrid as a pet, or worse, breeding them – don't. Just don't. And, if you believe the dominance/alpha nonsense spouted by many breeders (of hybrids and otherwise), some dog trainers, and an occasional television celebrity, please open your mind and learn more about the real science of behavior.

Terrill, an associate professor of environmental journalism and science writing at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, weaves her science skillfully and painlessly throughout the book. I couldn't put it down; I've recommended it on my Facebook page and all my training lists. If I had read it before writing "Alpha, Schmalpha" for WDJ, Terrill and *Part Wild* would have rated a very prominent mention in the article. Read it yourself. Then share it with any and all of your dog-owning friends who still buy into the flawed, archaic and obsolete dominance theory garbage and see if they don't become converts.

Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC
Fairplay, MD 🐾

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❖ **Susan Sarubin**, CPDT-KA, CDBC, Pawsitive Fit, LLC, Puppy and Dog Training, Easton, MD. Private in-home instruction, puppies and dogs, all positive methods. (410) 200-0091; pawsitivefit.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

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

❖ **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. Puotinen is also author of several books about human health, including **Natural Relief from Aches and Pains**, available from your favorite bookseller.

WHAT'S AHEAD ...

❖ **DON'T LOOK NOW**

Dealing with a dog who is prone to submissive urination.

❖ **SO YOU WANT TO BE A DOG TRAINER?**

It takes a lot more than the ability to train dogs! Here are some prerequisites for success in this career.

❖ **MY DOG'S ATTORNEY**

From cruelty cases to custody issues, dog law is booming.

❖ **COMPLETE AND BALANCED?**

The owner of two assistance dogs (one working, one retired) wonders why the dogs are losing weight.

❖ **2012 DRY DOG FOOD REVIEW**

What to look for and what to look out for when choosing a food for your dog.

