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The Whole



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Loyalty

Pledge allegiance to your dog.

BY NANCY KERNS

A friend sent me a long email message recently about some problems he was having with his dog. He and his partner adopted the little dog from a shelter some months ago. Not long after, the dog bit my friend's mother when she tried to take a stolen Kleenex away from the dog; I got a long email about that incident, too!

I wasn't that concerned about the first incident that my friend wrote to me about, but I'm worried now. The dog has gotten increasingly aggressive in certain situations (on-leash in busy environments), and has threatened to bite a number of different people. (To be more specific, he *has* actually bitten their clothing or something they were carrying. I used the word "threaten" because a dog who can grab a sleeve or hem or rip a hole in a bag that someone is carrying is certainly capable of biting that person, and yet he has chosen not to. Yet.)

I counseled my friend to engage the services of an experienced and highly recommended positive trainer, and he did so. The first few sessions went well in some ways; the dog quickly learned a number of desirable behaviors, and seems to enjoy training. But the aggressive behavior has escalated.

I asked a lot of questions about the training sessions. At some point, my friend told me that the dog also stayed with the trainer for a several-day board-and-train visit. And when I asked whether anything else had changed with the dog, he said he and his partner both

think that the dog got worse after boarding. They didn't blame the trainer; they thought the dog was "mad" at them for leaving.

I don't think dogs are sophisticated enough to act out for weeks to punish their owners for having a nice vacation without them. The more information we exchanged, the more clear it seemed to me that the trainer – by every account a dedicated, well-educated, well-regarded, positive trainer – was not only failing to improve matters with this dog, his training tactics were getting progressively more punitive. And the dog's behavior was getting progressively worse.

No trainer can succeed in every case. Some have a special affinity for some types of dogs or enjoy teaching only certain types of classes. I think that this trainer has been pushed past his area of expertise. I strongly advised my friend to put an end to these sessions, and start looking for a new trainer.

My friend was reluctant; he liked the trainer and didn't want to be disloyal or hurt the trainer's feelings.

That set me back on my heels. What about hurting the dog? He's not only failed to improve, he's gotten worse. He's the one

my friend needs to be loyal to. And so should the trainer. He should be the first to admit that this dog is pushing him out of his comfort zone, and that another trainer might have a different approach that would be more effective.

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.

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Stop! Thief!

Five things to do when your dog grabs stuff and runs away.

BY PAT MILLER, CPDT-KA, CDBC

Your dog grabs your stuff and runs away either because she knows you're going to take it from her and she doesn't want you to, or she's inviting you to join in her a fun game of "Catch me if you can." In either case, chasing after her is usually the *least* effective way to get your stuff back. Besides the obvious "management, to prevent her access to your stuff," and "exercise (mental and physical) to keep her happily otherwise occupied," here are five suggestions that will maximize your chances of getting your precious thing(s) back quickly, relatively unscathed.

1 Run the other way: *Really.* Chasing after your dog almost guarantees she will run away. If her motivation for stuff-grabbing is to get you to play, she may be just as happy to chase *you*. Let her chase you into a reasonably small space, close the door, and then employ Suggestion #3, 4, or 5 to convince her to give you your stuff back. (If her motivation is to get and *keep* stuff rather than get you to chase after her to play, this one probably won't work. Go on to Suggestion #2.)

2 Quietly follow her: If your dog wants to *keep* your stuff rather than play with you, any noise and fury on your part will cement her intentions and make it infinitely harder to get the thing away from her. You risk triggering aggression in a dog who already guards, or teaching it to one who doesn't yet. Be calm and cheerful. I know; it's hard to be calm and cheerful when your dog has your valuable heirloom keepsake. Do it anyway. When the opportunity presents itself, engage in Suggestion #3 or 5, but *carefully*. Suggestion #4 *may* work, but is less successful when your dog's motivation is keeping rather than playing. Because the dog in this scenario is likely to be guardy, any pressure on your part may cause her to hold onto the item more intensely, or



even bite you. Don't corner or trap her; that could increase the risk of aggression. If she takes the item into her crate, do *not* reach in to get it until you have successfully negotiated her out of her crate.

3 Trade for treats: Now that she's not running away, your best chance at getting your thing back unshredded is to have your dog give it up willingly. If you try to grab it you're likely to end up in a game of tug, and your stuff will suffer. To trade, simply convince your dog to drop your thing in exchange for something irresistible. Every room in my house has a container full of "something wonderfuls" just in case I need them. My favorites (and my dogs') is Canz "Real Meat Treats." I get them from dogcatsupply.com; (860) 236-5587. They are top quality ingredients, moist and meaty, and need not be refrigerated.

If your dog won't trade for a treat in your hand, drop some treats on the ground. When your things are safely back in your own possession, vow to *train* your dog to give up objects happily on cue.

4 Throw a toy: If your dog is more into tennis balls or plush toys than treats, engage her in play with *her* toy

to get her to let go of *yours*. Keep at least one very favorite toy on a shelf in every room. The sound of her squeaky toy, or the mere sight of her beloved ball or tug rope, is usually enough for a toy-fanatic to drop your possession so she can go after hers. After all, she just wanted to play in the first place. Be sure to play for a while, so she doesn't get wise to your scheme.

5 Use diversionary tactics: What else does your dog love to do? Go for a walk? Ride in the car? Eat dinner? Get the squirrel? If you have stock phrases you use with your dog that will trigger an immediate, wildly enthusiastic response, try one of those (you have to sound genuine!) to see if you can get her brain to switch gears. At the sound of an excited "Get in the car!" she may well drop your thing and head for the door. Of course, then you are obligated to take her for a ride. If you lie to your dog, sooner or later your karma will come back to bite you! 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is WDJ's Training Editor. Miller lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Pat is also author of several books on positive training. See page 24 for more information.

Update on “low uric acid” Dalmatians

Good dogs are dying, while improved genes remain unacceptable to some breeders

A few months ago, I wrote about the British Kennel Club’s registration of two special Dalmatians over the objections of the breed clubs there (WDJ June 2010). These two dogs were the result of a breeding project begun in 1973, in which a single outcross to a Pointer was made in order to reintroduce the normal gene for uric acid back into the Dalmatian bloodline.

Fourteen generations later, more than 99.98 percent of the offspring’s genes are identical to those of a purebred Dalmatian. The one critical exception is that, unlike every other dog registered by both the British and American Kennel Clubs, these dogs are no longer at risk of forming urate bladder stones, a painful and potentially deadly condition caused by a genetic mutation carried by all Dalmatians.

Since that article was written, there have been some new developments. First, an update on what has been happening in Britain: Fiona (Fiacre First and Foremost), the first low uric acid (LUA) Dalmatian registered with the Kennel Club, has been winning at shows. While naysayers claimed her first win was “fixed,” Fiona’s group win the following week proved that these dogs are indistinguishable from other Dalmatians, and worthy of inclusion in breeding programs.

Meanwhile, back here in the States, the American Kennel Club (AKC) Health & Welfare Advisory Committee submitted a report with the following recommendation:

“Because the introduction of the low uric acid dogs into the AKC registry gives Dalmatian breeders a scientifically sound method of voluntarily reducing the incidence of the condition, this committee strongly recommends some controlled program of acceptance



Armstrong, a therapy dog who suffered horribly from a urinary stone disease common in Dalmatians, was euthanized in November.

Armstrong, who is seen here visiting a child in a pediatric cancer ward, was just seven years old.

of these dogs. Where the strict health and welfare of the breed is the overriding concern, no other argument can be made.”

Despite these findings from its own committee, the AKC board voted in November to defer a decision until after June 2011, when a vote of the Dalmatian Club of America’s membership would be held. Since the breed clubs in both Britain and the U.S. have remained staunchly opposed to registration of LUA dogs, it seems unlikely that this vote will show them putting the welfare of their breed above their concerns of genetic purity. While AKC says it will “consider this vote, along with other factors in reaching its final decision,” don’t hold your breath in hopes that they will do the right thing.

In the meantime, another dog has paid

the ultimate price for the breeders’ short-sightedness. Armstrong, a seven-year-old Dalmatian who worked as a therapy dog at the children’s cancer unit at the Primary Children’s Medical Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, was put to sleep due to uncontrollable urate stones.

Armstrong had previously undergone multiple surgeries to remove stones, followed by a urethrostomy, where the dog’s urethra is rerouted away from the penis to a new, surgically created opening. Even after such a drastic measure, Armstrong continued to form stones, requiring two more surgeries just five months apart.

His owner, Shelley Gallagher of Sandy, Utah, had been feeding Armstrong a low-purine diet, giving him extra fluids to help dilute his urine, letting him out to urinate every few hours (including every night at 2 am), and obsessively monitoring him – all, ultimately, to no avail.

If you’d like to let the Dalmatian Club of America know how you feel about this, email its president, Meg Hennessey, at president@thedca.org. For those interested in LUA Dalmatians, they are currently registered in the U.S. only with the United Kennel Club (UKC). – Mary Straus

For more information:

luadalmatians.com

thedca.org/LUA/DalmatianExecSummary.pdf

akc.org/pdfs/about/board_minutes/1110.pdf

Unauthorized Message to Blame for Misrepresentation

Nulo says it's not opposed to feeding human food to pets

In the November issue, we ran a news item about a press release we received from a pet food company warning dog owners about “the dangers” of feeding human food to pets. We were highly indignant that a pet food company that describes itself as blending “giddy devotion with sound nutritional principles” would blame human food for causing pet obesity and other health problems. It seemed like a throwback to the sort of messages promulgated for decades by the mainstream, “corporate giant” food makers, who routinely preach against “upsetting” pets’ tummies with table scraps or “unbalancing” their diets by augmenting pets’ meals with human food. And it was especially shocking coming from a new company seeking to compete in the “premium” or “holistic” segment of the market.

As it turns out, the message actually came from a public relations company hired to represent the food maker – Nulo – and Nulo’s founder and CEO Michael

Landa says the message absolutely does *not* reflect Nulo’s opinions or philosophy. “The Nulo marketing team absolutely did not authorize that particular message and would never have approved the language that the PR representative used; it is simply incorrect and inconsistent with our beliefs,” says Landa. In fact, Landa terminated Nulo’s relationship with the PR firm immediately upon learning about the anti-human-food messages.

“Nulo is not against feeding human food to pets,” says Landa. “Certainly extra calories from excessive table scraps can contribute to weight gain, something we are working tirelessly to combat through education. Also, we believe some commercial pet foods are similar to ‘fast food’ in that

they contain byproducts, corn, wheat, soy, sugar, salt, and can be devoid of proper nutrients that dogs and cats deserve... [The PR firm] mixed our messages and positioning into an e-mail that was not only inaccurate, but also unauthorized.”

We’re glad to hear this, and apologize for “taking a tone” against Nulo on the basis of the misguided message. If we reacted too strongly, I’d blame our disappointment on the fact the message seemed to emanate from a new company whose products we were actually looking forward to promoting – products that meet our selection criteria for top-quality, healthy foods. See nulo.com and our upcoming food reviews

for more information about the company’s products. – *Nancy Kerns*



Parents: Pay Attention

Study shows that young, unsupervised children are most at risk for dog bites

A new study shows that unsupervised children are most at risk for bites, and that the culprits are usually family pets. The study, by Vikram Durairaj, MD, of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, also found that if a dog bites once, it is likely to bite again, with the second attack often more brutal than the first.

The study looked at 537 children treated for facial dog bites at The Children’s Hospital on the University of Colorado’s Anschutz Medical Campus between 2003 and 2008. Durairaj found that 68 percent of bites occurred in children 5 years old or younger with the highest incidence in 3-year-olds. In most cases, the child knew the dog through the family, a friend, or a neighbor. And more than half the time, the dog was provoked when petted too aggressively, startled, or stepped on by the child.



Durairaj found that mixed breeds were responsible for 23 percent of bites followed by Labrador Retrievers at 13.7 percent. Rottweilers launched attacks in 4.9 percent of cases, German Shepherd Dogs 4.4 percent of the time, and Golden Retrievers 3 percent. The study was done in the Denver area where pit bulls are banned.

“What is clear from our data is that virtually any breed of dog can bite,” Dr. Durairaj said. “The tendency of a dog to bite is related to heredity, early experience, later socialization and training, health, and victim behavior.”

He stressed that familiarity with a dog is no guard against attack and if a dog bites once, it will likely bite again with the second attack often more vicious than the first.

Dr. Durairaj, an associate professor of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, presented his study in October 2010 at the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s annual meeting. He said dog bites are especially devastating to children because they are smaller and their faces are within easy reach of the animal’s mouth.

We agree with Dr. Durairaj on this point: Young children should never be left unsupervised around any dog, even for just a moment. – *Nancy Kerns*

For more information:

<http://www.ucdenver.edu/about/newsroom/newsreleases/Pages/DogBiteConcern.aspx>

Say My Name

Why your dog should know – and like hearing! – his name.

BY PAT MILLER, CPDT-KA, CDBC

There's a new dog coming into your life who needs to learn her name. A puppy perhaps? Or maybe an adult rescue "do-over" dog? You might even have a dog who's been with you for a while, but just doesn't respond to her name as promptly as you'd like. If you're eagerly anticipating the arrival of a new canine family member, be sure to put "teaching the name response" on top of your dog to-do list. And if you're frustrated that your current dog doesn't appear to know who she is, don't fret; it's never too late to teach this very important behavior.

What's in a name?

We humans develop a personal attachment to our own names at a very early age. I am Pat Miller. Your WDJ editor is Nancy Kerns. Even a young child, when he hears his name, registers a "that's me!" response. Our dogs, probably not so much. Although we can't know for sure unless and until

some day we can actually get inside their heads, it's likely that a dog just learns to associate the sound of her name with (we hope) "good stuff" in the same way she associates other things (a ball, a leash, the car keys, the clicker) with good stuff.

Looks can be deceiving. When I say "Lucy!" only our Corgi gets excited. If I call "Scooter!" our Pomeranian does the happy dance. Our Scottie comes running if I call "Dubhy!" while we're doing barn chores, while the rest of our dogs continue about their business. It sure seems that they know who they are! However, the simplest and most likely explanation, is that each of them, over time, has learned that good stuff happens for *them* when they hear *their* name sound, but not the other name sounds. That doesn't mean they grasp the "I am my name" concept that we humans seem to instinctively understand.

Here is the key to teaching your dog to respond to her name: Name = good stuff. It's *almost* as simple as that. While

What you can do . . .

- Consider carefully and choose wisely if you are naming (or renaming) your dog.
- Commit to giving your dog a very consistent, very positive association with the name you choose. Name = good stuff. Always.
- Protect that positive association for the rest of your dog's life so her name never becomes "poisoned" by you or by anyone else who comes in contact with your dog.



How beautiful! This is our goal: A dog who hears her name and responds alertly with focus and relaxed attention. We can spoil this response, however, if we use our dogs' names in a scolding or angry tone.

teaching your dog that her name means good stuff, you also need to be careful not to send her a mixed message. If you sometimes use her name to yell at her in anger, she's likely to stop and weigh her options. "Let's see... I wonder if a good thing will happen this time, or if a bad thing will happen. Hmmmmm."

If she has to stop and think about it, it's too slow. You want that unpoisoned, instantaneous, automatic "Yay! Good stuff!" response when she hears her name-sound. So, as you go forward teaching your new dog her name, be sure to keep it always positive. If you *must* yell at your dog, do it without using her name. If you think your dog's name is *already* poisoned, consider giving her a new one, and then teach her that the new name is the best sound in the world.

Teaching the name response

Remember that your dog's name does *not* mean come. It simply means "Look at



This foster dog is highly distracted, even in this empty training center. Starting this exercise in the comfort of her foster home would make it easier on her to succeed.



That said, she's keen to earn treats and responds with a whiplash head turn when she hears her new name from Cindy Rich, KPA CTP, of The Canine Connection in Chico, California.



Because Chaco was recently feral and is spooky, Cindy keeps her movements slow and her body language quiet. With your own dog, you might celebrate her success with more exuberance.

me and wait for further instructions.” It’s important to make this distinction. There will be times when you want your dog’s attention but you don’t necessarily want her to come running to you. If she’s on the other side of the room and you want her to lie down there, you might say, “Lucy,” and when she looks at you, say “Down.” The more you aspire to advanced levels of communication and training with your dog, the more important it is that each cue has a very clear and specific meaning.

In order to train your dog you must be able to capture and retain her attention. Teach your dog to respond to her name by associating it with a click (or a verbal marker such as “Yes!”) and a food reward. At first, when your dog is already looking at you, say her name, click, and offer her a treat. Do this several times to create an association between the sound of her name and the resulting click-and-treat.

Teach her to *continue* to focus on you by clicking and giving her a reward several times, for time periods that gradually increase in length, as she continues to look at you.

You’ll have the most success with this if you start off with a high-value treat. If I wanted you to look at me instantly when I say “Fribbit,” I might say “Fribbit” and hand you a one hundred dollar bill. That would get your attention! If I give you a one hundred dollar bill every time you hear me say “Fribbit,” you’ll probably become pretty consistent about looking at me for “Fribbit.” In time, even if you don’t get a hundred dollars for *every* “Fribbit,”

you’re still going to look, in hopes that *this* “Fribbit” might be a winner.

Now think about your response if, instead of a hundred dollar bill, I gave you a *penny* every time I said “Fribbit.” You probably wouldn’t care much, if at all. You’d quickly get bored with pennies and look for something more rewarding and interesting to do. *Find your dog’s equivalent of a one hundred dollar bill.* It might be dried liver, cheese, anchovies, bits of canned chicken . . . try a variety of foods to find the one that immediately captures your dog’s rapt attention.

You can also use life rewards for teach-



The same exercise with a much more confident dog. When working with very small dogs, it’s helpful to get down on their level.

ing the name response. If your dog is a tennis ball nut, say her name, and when she looks, toss her the ball. Life rewards tend to slow down the repetition process (it usually takes longer to deliver repeated life rewards – you have to get the ball back before you can do it again), but if it’s something your dog really loves you can make up for lost repetition time with the enthusiasm of the response and the faster positive-association time.

When you think the association has been established between your dog’s name and the high-value treat, wait until she glances away, then say her name. (You might have to hide the treats behind your back, stop making eye contact, and wait a while to get her to look away.) If she looks back at you right away when you say her name, click and give her a treat.

If she doesn’t look at you immediately, don’t say her name again; instead, make a “kissy noise” (very technical dog training term) to get her to look at you; then click and treat. If you have to make the kissy noise several times in a row as you repeat the exercise, back up and spend more time creating a stronger association between the name and the click-treat *while* she’s looking at you, before trying again when she looks away.

Adding distractions

When you’re getting a very prompt and consistent “snap” of your dog’s head back to you at the sound of her name, you’re ready to start adding distractions. Start with small distractions at first; you want to set

up your dog to succeed, not flunk the first test. Ask a family member to make a small noise on the other side of the room. When your dog glances in that direction, say her name, and when her head snaps back, click and give her a treat.

If she doesn't look back at you immediately, use your kissy noise to get her to look. When she looks, click and treat. If you have to "kiss" to get her to look several times in a row, go back to working without distractions again for a while, and/or find a higher-value reinforcer.

When you're getting a reliable snap-back name response with low-level

distractions, gradually increase the amount of environmental interference. First, increase distractions in your own home environment with more sound and/or movement of other family members, including four-legged ones, then up the ante by taking the show on the road. Play the name-response game when you're taking your dog for a walk around the block, hanging out at your son's soccer game, and playing at the dog park.

If you lose your dog's response at any step of the process, back up to your last level of success, spend some more time working at that level, then move forward

again, perhaps in smaller steps. Eventually you'll have a rock-solid name response from your dog that, along with reinforcement for increasing length of attention, will serve you both well as you live and learn together for many years to come. 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is WDJ's Training Editor. Miller lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Pat is also author of several books on positive training, including her latest: Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance for a First Class Life. See page 24 for more information.

Choosing a Good Name Can Improve Your Dog's Training!

As a child, I was enchanted by T.S. Eliot's *The Book of Practical Cats*, especially his poem *The Naming of Cats*. I had the whole thing memorized at one time, and can still recite parts of it, starting with, "The naming of cats is a difficult matter – it's not just one of your everyday games. And you may think I'm as mad as a hatter when I tell you a cat must have three different names."

Eliot may have thought naming cats was difficult, but I think naming dogs is infinitely harder. The wrong name can be a self-fulfilling prophecy of doom, while the right one can steer a dog onto the road to success. "Killer" and "Stupid" are obviously poor name choices, while "Champ" and "Hero" are clear winners.

But it's not always as clear cut as that. The owner who gets a new puppy at Christmas and names her "Noel" or "Snowbird" may realize too late that the unfortunate inclusion of the sound "No" in her dog's name can create a strong negative name-association rather than the positive one we strive for – especially if it's an owner who hasn't fully bought into positive training and uses a strong aversive "No!" reprimand. Check your prospective dog name choices for any negative sounds and toss out any that might have a bad association.



Ike, Mike, and Spike? Don't even think about doing something like that! They won't ever know who is who!

In a multi-dog household, it's best to avoid redundant name sounds. We made the mistake of naming our Scotty "Dubhy" (pronounced "Duffy") while Dusty, our aging Pomeranian, was still with us. Although we vowed never to do that again because of the confusion it caused, we currently have a "Missy" and a "Lucy" – close enough that it can also create "mistaken identity" incidents between the two.

Multi-syllabic names are usually shortened to nicknames, so that's not a problem: "Footloose and Fancy Free" becomes "Lucy," and "Bonnie Wee Lass" is just Bonnie. Even nicknames are fine – a dog has no problem with happy associations with many different name-sounds. "Lucy" is also "Lulu"; "Dubhy" is "Doodles"; "Bonnie" can be "Bon-Bons"; and "Scooter" is also quite happy to respond to "Scootie Man."

Clients often ask me about changing a dog's name. Of course, many shelter and rescue dogs arrive without names. They may be given temporary names by staff and volunteers, but adopters often choose a different name once they get their dogs home – and dogs do just fine with that. Some people spend hours trying out different names to see if the dog responds to any of them, but that's not necessary. In fact, if you have reason to suspect your new dog may have any kind of *negative* association with the name he came with – abuse, neglect, or harsh training methods – you are better off changing it.

Like many dog owners, we like to select names for each of our four-legged family members that have some special significance. We had a cat for 18 years named "Gewurztraminer" because that's the kind of wine we were drinking when we found him. "Dubhy" means "dark" in Gaelic – appropriate for our Scottish dog. My husband, Paul, wanted to name our current Pomeranian "Harley," because we have great times together on our motorcycle. "But," I said, "He's too little to be a Harley. He's more the size of a scooter." So "Scooter" he is.

I'll bet that WDJ readers have some good dog-naming stories too. Send us yours! We'll pick some of our favorites to publish in a future issue, and our top three will win signed copies of my book, *Do-Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance for a First Class Life*. Send your story to WDJEditor@gmail.com or Whole Dog Journal, 1655 Robinson Street, Oroville, CA 95965, before January 31.

No Bones About It

The best books on home-prepared, bone-free diets for dogs – and which books to avoid.

BY MARY STRAUS

Interest in homemade diets has never been greater, especially since the huge pet food recall of 2007. Last month, I reviewed books that explained how to feed a homemade canine diet based on raw meaty bones (RMBs). This month, I'll look at books about boneless diets – by far the largest category of books.

Unfortunately, I found a lot of bad books out there. Many of the recipes provided in the books are nutritionally inadequate! There's no harm in using them from time to time, or to replace a small portion (up to 25 percent) of a commercial food diet, but anyone who relies on these books to feed their dogs a homemade diet is likely to end up with issues that could range from dry skin to crippling orthopedic conditions.

Calcium, in particular, is often mentioned only in passing or left out of recipes entirely. As just one example of the problems this can cause, I heard from one person who relied on four popular

homemade diet books, none of which stressed the importance of added calcium, to create a diet for her puppy. As a result, her pup developed nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism, a metabolic disorder caused by lack of calcium that can lead to bone deformities and spontaneous fractures. At one point, her puppy's bones were so soft that when an X-ray was being taken, the technicians actually bent the leg bone. I'm happy to say that the pup appears to have made a full recovery once she began adding calcium to his diet, but this *could have* resulted in irreparable damage.

In contrast with the RMB books, the books reviewed here provide recipes rather than just diet guidelines. Most of the food is cooked; only two books suggest using raw meat (and only one requires it). Some recipes are simple, consisting of a few, basic ingredients, while others are indistinguishable from human recipes, with multiple ingredients, seasonings, and preparation steps. All diets include grains,

What you can do . . .

- Never rely on a book that doesn't tell you how much calcium to add to boneless recipes.
- Read the text before starting out, don't just follow the recipes.
- Be sure that the recipes meet guidelines for puppies or for all life stages before using them for growing, pregnant, or nursing dogs.



though the percentages of meat, grains, and vegetables varies considerably.

Whichever one you choose, please read the whole book, not just the recipes. All of the books I recommend contain essential information in the text about substitutions, supplements, and more. Using the recipes without reading the rest could lead to critical errors in the overall diet.

Unless a book says specifically that the recipes are approved for puppies or for all life stages, assume that they are meant for adult dogs only. Puppies and pregnant or nursing females have special nutritional requirements; if you want to feed them a homemade diet, you must make sure it will meet their needs.

Except where noted, all of the books listed below are available from Amazon.com and other bookstores. Many are also available from Dogwise (dogwise.com; 800-776-2665).

These reviews are directed at home-made diets only. Many of the books contain additional chapters on such topics as herbs,



When following a book's directions for a home-prepared diet for your dog, read the whole book; don't just follow the recipes. Otherwise, you may miss important information about substitutions, supplements, and contraindications.

homeopathy, grooming, and more. My recommendation of a book's diet does not mean that I endorse anything else that the book may say.

I'm saving the best for last: three books that have analyzed all recipes to ensure that they meet the latest NRC guidelines. Each of these books offers recipes for diets with and without raw meaty bones, so whichever type of diet you want to feed is covered. Two of the books focus on raw, grain-free diets approved for all life stages (cooking is permitted), while the third offers cooked and raw recipes, with and without grains, designed for adult dogs only. This review will be published in an upcoming issue.

Home-prepared pioneer

Dr. Pitcairn was an early advocate for homemade diets for dogs, publishing the first edition of *Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs & Cats* way back in 1981.

The latest edition (2005) offers several improvements. The recipes have been revamped; most are moderately higher in both protein and fat and lower in carbs than before. For example, the Doggie Oats recipe increased the amount of meat from two to three pounds and decreased the amount of oats from eight to five cups. The amount of bone meal to add to each recipe has been clarified, as different products vary in how much calcium they contain.

A wide variety of foods are recom-

mended, including various meats, liver, eggs, dairy products, grains, legumes, vegetables, and fruit, along with garlic, yeast, and flavorings as soy sauce. Some ingredients, such as liver and fish oil, are discussed in the text but are not included in the recipes. Supplements include vegetable oil; bone meal; vitamins A, D, and E; and Healthy Powder (a mixture of yeast, lecithin, kelp, vitamin C, and bone meal).

Pitcairn stresses the need for variety and suggests substitutions for meats and grains in his recipes. Four of the recipes are vegetarian, but they use eggs and dairy products for protein, which is acceptable. While his recipes are higher in carbs than I prefer, with 36 to 61 percent in the regular meals, they have an adequate amount of protein, ranging from 23 to 33 percent. According to Pitcairn, "You may also feed any of the basic cat recipes to dogs," a good choice if you want to feed meals that are higher in protein and lower in carbs. Special recipes are provided for dogs with kidney disease, allergies, and weight loss; the latter are high in carbohydrates (not ideal).

Despite the high carbs, this is still one of the better homemade diet books around. You can rely on these recipes to provide complete nutrition for your dog.

Another updated classic

The 2000 edition of *Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog* has been completely reorganized, but the diet presented in the book is

virtually identical to the original version. A single recipe is provided, split into two meals: a cereal meal that makes up 25 percent and a meat meal that makes up 75 percent of the diet. Cottage cheese is substituted for meat one day a week, and there is a half-day fast (modified cereal meal only) one day each week. The diet is 35 percent protein, 17 to 20 percent fat, and 34 to 39 percent carbs on a dry matter basis.

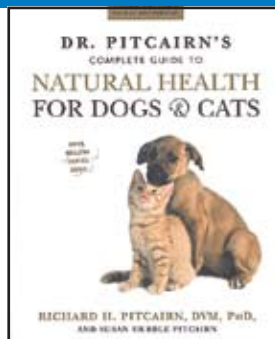
Much information is unclear in this book, including the amount of bone meal to use, which appears to be too high. The problem is that bone meal can vary greatly in how much calcium it contains. I finally found the brand of bone meal used buried in Appendix 2. I looked it up online and discovered this particular brand has just 720 mg calcium per teaspoon, half the amount found in many products. With no guidance in the text, however, I'm sure many people would get this wrong.

Volhard recommends feeding only beef meat, as she says "testing thousands of dogs through kinesiology for over 20 years has shown me that the majority of dogs prefer beef." Variations are provided only for dogs who cannot tolerate or will not eat the regular meals. There's simply no reason to avoid variety, and many reasons not to.

There are other errors and ambiguities in the text, such as the statement that corn oil "contains only a tiny amount of linoleic acid." You are advised to use blood tests

Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs & Cats, by Richard H. Pitcairn, DVM, PhD, and Susan Hubble Pitcairn

2005 (3rd edition), Rodale Books, \$22. 464 pages, including index (118 pages on diet). Includes 19 recipes – 10 that are complete, 3 for supplementing kibble, and 6 recipes for special needs. Raw meat is recommended, but cooking is allowed. Nutritional analyses are provided for all recipes showing dry matter percentages of protein, fat, carbohydrates, ash, calcium, and phosphorus, along with number of calories and amount of vitamin A. Tables compare nutritional factors for various meats, grains, and legumes. Portion sizes are given for five weight categories. Book also includes information on health and other issues outside the scope of this review.



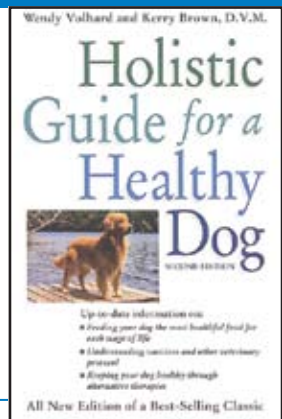
Pros: Complete diet, including supplements, in easy-to-use form. Recipes can be used for all life stages, plus there are some for special needs. Stresses variety, offers substitutions for each recipe. Nutritional analyses included.

Cons: Diet is high in grains. Recipes are easy to follow, but you must read chapter 3 for additional details.

Rating: Recommended.

Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog, by Wendy Volhard and Kerry Brown, DVM

2000 (2nd edition), Howell Book House, \$17. 314 pages, including index (105 pages on diet). Includes 1 recipe, with separate meals for breakfast and dinner, and minor modifications two days a week. Raw meat is required. A nutritional analysis for the complete diet shows dry matter percentages of protein, fat, carbohydrates, ash, linoleic acid, calcium, and phosphorus, plus calories per pound. Portion sizes are given for eight weight categories. Also includes information on health and other issues outside the scope of this review.



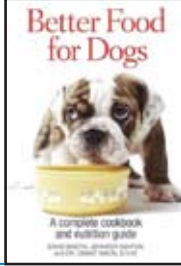
Pros: Complete diet, including supplements. Nutritional analysis provided.

Cons: Recipe is complicated, with 20 different daily ingredients. Amount of calcium used is unclear and could be excessive. Nutritional analysis is unclear. Rigid rules, little variety.

Rating: Recommended, with reservations.

Better Food for Dogs: A Complete Cookbook and Nutrition Guide, by David Bastin, Jennifer Ashton, and Grant Nixon, DVM

2002, Robert Rose, Inc., \$20. 224 pages, including index. Includes 4 recipes each for dogs of various weights, with variations provided as well. A nutritional analysis for each recipe shows the number of calories and grams of protein, fat, and carbohydrates. Tables provide a complete average nutritional analysis of the four recipes in each weight class compared to 1985 NRC minimum requirements.



Pros: Recipes provide a reasonable amount of protein and are not too high in carbs. Average nutritional analyses are provided.

Cons: No organ meats. Supplementation is complicated.

Rating: Recommended, with reservations.

Natural Food Recipes for Healthy Dogs: Everything You Need to Know to Make the Greatest Food for Your Friend, by Carol Boyle

2006 (3rd edition), Pyr Press Publishing Group (self-published, available from naturaldogfood.com), \$20 (including shipping). 206 pages, including index. More than 100 recipes divided into sections: appetizers, soup, chicken, meat, main course, vegetable, and starch. Three treat recipes are also included. These are human-style recipes, meant to be shared with your dogs.



Pros: Practical approach to feeding dogs. Ratio of meat to carbs is appropriate. Wide variety of foods used.

Cons: Very little information on supplements. No nutritional analysis done.

Rating: Recommended.

to monitor the diet, but blood tests will not show nutritional deficiencies or excesses unless they are extreme (and often not even then). Many people have had success with this diet, but some dogs don't like the cereal portion, and the supplements are complicated.

A tad complicated

Better Food for Dogs is one of the better books that use human-style recipes, though that says more about the quality of the competition than about this book itself. Recipes average 40 percent protein, 45 percent carbohydrates, and 15 percent fat on a dry matter basis, which is acceptable.

Variety is stressed, with variations for some recipes provided, but I have a number of reservations about the recipes. Neither liver nor heart is included. Canola oil is added but no omega-3 fatty acids. Some recipes are overly complex.

I like the fact that tables are provided showing the average nutritional analysis for each set of recipes compared to NRC minimum requirements. However, they expect you to use these tables to calculate the amount of bone meal and other vitamin and mineral supplements to add.

As with many books co-authored by veterinarians, you are frequently urged to consult with a professional. I find many of these recommendations unnecessary or impractical, such as, "Giving your dog omega-3 fatty acid supplements should only be undertaken with the guidance of your veterinarian." and "When purchasing [a daily multivitamin-and-mineral supplement intended for humans], use the charts in Chapter 7 and consult with your pharmacist to ensure that you are adding the proper supplementation without reaching toxic levels."

All in all, I think this is a better book

than those whose diets are higher in carbs and omit calcium, but the recipes and supplements may be more complicated than some people want to deal with.

Eat with a friend

I first read Carol Boyle's book, *Natural Food Recipes for Healthy Dogs*, in 2007, when she participated in the sample cooked diets portion of my series of homemade diet articles ("Reality Cooks," WDJ July 2007). I liked Boyle's approach to sharing your own meals with your dogs so much that I began incorporating some of her ideas into the diet I feed my own dogs.

Rereading the book now, I'm still impressed. Boyle has a practical, common sense style that makes home feeding seem simple. She calls it "the scatter-shot theory" of good nutrition, using variety, moderation, and balance over time to ensure that her dogs' nutritional needs are met. She recommends feeding a diet that is two parts protein to one part carbohydrates by volume, with added servings of sweet potato, dairy, and eggs. She recommends feeding two to three meals a month of liver, and the same for canned fish.

It's important to read Boyle's text and not just look at the recipes, which are for individual foods rather than for meals.

Boyle gives guidelines as to how to combine these foods into meals to create a complete diet. She also stresses the need to add calcium at the rate of 1,000 mg per pound of meat, and gives instructions on using ground eggshells to supply calcium. Note that some recipes include onions, which Boyle advises be removed before serving to dogs.

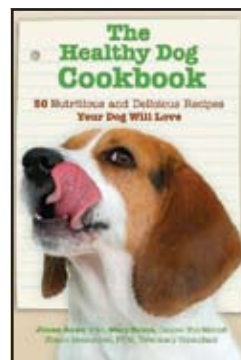
Boyle suggests feeding a percentage of your dog's body weight daily. She provides little guidance on supplements, advising that you add vitamins C and E, fish oil, and possibly a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement.

Boyle's book is a good choice for those who enjoy cooking. You may find it even helps you improve your own nutrition!

Fifty recipes

My name is on the cover (as a contributor) of *The Healthy Dog Cookbook*. Isn't there just the tiniest conflict of interest having me review my own book? Fair point – except it's not really "my" book.

In 2007, I heard from an editor in England who had been contracted by TFH Publications to produce a homemade diet book for dogs. The editor asked if I would be willing to provide recipes for the book. I declined, as I prefer to give diet *guidelines*



The Healthy Dog Cookbook: 50 Nutritious and Delicious Recipes Your Dog Will Love, by Jonna Anne with Mary Straus and Shawn Messonnier, DVM

2008, TFH Publications, \$20. 128 pages, including index. Includes 36 cooked meal recipes, plus 13 treat recipes. A nutritional analysis for each recipe shows the number of calories and grams of protein, fat, carbohydrates, and fiber per cup.

Pros: Recipes use appropriate proportions of animal proteins and carbs, and some include organ meats as well. Each specifies how much calcium to add.

Cons: Nutritional analyses were not compared to NRC guidelines. Portion sizes are too high.

Rating: Recommended, with reservations.

rather than recipes. The editor asked if I would write the introduction, and I agreed, provided that the recipes met my criteria: at least half animal products (meat, eggs, fish, dairy); organ meat (particularly liver) included in small amounts; no vegan recipes; and an appropriate amount of added calcium. To my surprise, they agreed.

In the end, I wrote not only the introduction, but also the information presented with each recipe, which included portion sizes (which I now feel are too high) and the amount of calcium to add. My introduction includes sections on the need to provide calcium, variety, and balance over

time; protein, fat, and carbohydrates in the diet; food preparation; amount to feed; and supplements. I was paid a fee for my contributions; I do not receive royalties from its sale. I was not aware that they called me a “canine nutritionist” until after the book was published or I would have asked them to change it.

The recipes in this book use what I consider to be appropriate proportions, include a variety of foods, and aren’t complicated to make. Ingredients include various types of meat and fish, liver, heart, eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese, pasta, oatmeal, barley, quinoa, brown rice, potatoes, sweet

potatoes, yams, pumpkin, spinach, carrots, green beans, peas, asparagus, beets, tomatoes, peanuts, and fruit, plus herbs (parsley, dill, mint, thyme).

While this is not the book I would create myself, I think it’s better than many of the recipe books available, particularly those that do not include calcium.

Do as she does, not says

I found myself intrigued by the diet that Joan Weiskopf, author of *Pet Food Nation*, feeds her own dogs. In her introduction, she describes breakfast five days a week of chicken liver, heart, and gizzards, sau-

Not Recommended Due to Inadequate Guidelines on Calcium

The first thing I check for when I look at a homemade diet book is whether it offers appropriate guidance for adding calcium. If not, the book gets a thumbs down, no matter how much other good information it might offer. Leaving out, glossing over, or giving incorrect information on something that is guaranteed to cause serious nutritional deficiency is simply unacceptable. Calcium guidelines in the following books range from inadequate to missing altogether. (In fact, three of these books are ones relied on by the owner of the puppy who developed nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism due to lack of calcium in the diet.) None of these books are recommended.

■ ***The Whole Pet Diet: Eight Weeks to Great Health for Dogs and Cats***, by Andi Brown. 2006, Celestial Arts, \$17. 240 pages, including index. Includes 5 cooked recipes (one vegan). Andi Brown is the founder of Halo, Purely for Pets, maker of Halo Spot’s Stew (she sold the company in 2006). As such, she certainly must understand the importance of calcium in a dog’s diet, yet none of the recipes in this book make any mention of it.

■ ***Barker’s Grub: Easy, Wholesome Home Cooking for Your Dog***, by Rudy Edalati. 2001, Three Rivers Press, \$15. 208 pages, including index. Includes 33 cooked recipes. Rudy Edalati’s instructions for adding calcium are completely inadequate. She tells you to mix ground eggshell with flaxseed oil and kelp or seaweed powder, and then “add a small pinch of the mixture to your dog’s fresh food.” Depending on the size of your dog, and the size of your “pinch,” this could provide either too much or far too little calcium.

This book contains misinformation, the strangest of which is that a high-fat diet will “calm” aggressive dogs. Her “Aggression Reduction Meal” is dangerously high in fat, enough to cause pancreatitis in susceptible dogs, and her claim that flaxseed oil can reverse kidney disease is bizarre.

■ ***The Ultimate Pet Food Guide: Everything You Need to Know about Feeding Your Dog or Cat***, by Liz Palika. 2008, Da Capo Press, \$16. 274 pages, including index. Includes 23

cooked recipes plus 3 raw recipes (no bones). Liz Palika’s basic guidelines of 75 percent animal protein, 15 percent vegetables and fruits, and 10 percent grains are fine, and her recipes are refreshingly simple, but there is absolutely no guidance on how much calcium to add. While every recipe repeats the same list of supplements, including calcium, nowhere are you ever told how much to give. Note that some special-needs recipes are inappropriate, particularly the one for kidney disease.

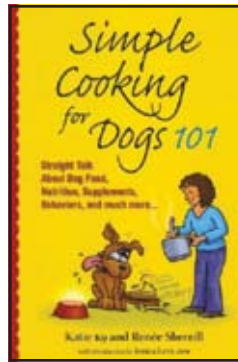
■ ***Woofing It Down: The Quick & Easy Guide to Making Healthy Dog Food at Home***, by Patricia O’Grady. 2007, AuthorHouse (self-published), \$13. 124 pages. Includes 28 cooked recipes. While the recipes in this book are relatively simple and the ratio of meat to carbs acceptable, the guidelines for adding calcium are inadequate. Only two of the recipes include calcium, and none use organ meats. Much of the information in this book is wrong, contradictory, or simply makes no sense.

■ ***Food Pets Die For: Shocking Facts About Pet Food***, by Ann N. Martin. 2008 (3rd Edition), NewSage Press, \$15. 200 pages, including index (27 pages on diet). Includes 20 cooked recipes, including 1 vegetarian, 1 puppy, and 5 special diets. *Food Pets Die For* is well-known for its condemnation of commercial foods, but it also includes two chapters on homemade diets for dogs.

Martin’s text is a confusing hodgepodge of information taken from a variety of different sources. Recipes have been gathered from books, dog breeders, and pet owners. Martin does not advise adding calcium to the diet, but rather suggests using natural food sources, and the amounts she says dogs need are inadequate. Only the vegetarian and three of the special diet recipes include calcium. Martin’s guidelines are often unclear, and the amount of oil she says to add may be too high for some dogs. The suggested ratio of meat to carbs is low. Organ meats are never mentioned in the text, although a couple of the recipes do include liver. Buy this book if you want to read horror stories about what goes into commercial foods, but if your goal is to feed your dogs a homemade diet, look elsewhere.

téed in coconut oil. She adds string beans, zucchini, yogurt, and a fish oil gelcap, plus grains in winter. Two mornings a week, she feeds eggs for breakfast. Lunch consists of a raw chicken neck. Dinner is meat, including fish two days a week, plus seasonal vegetables, and sometimes rice or grains as well. So far, so good.

Unfortunately, it was downhill from there. Weiskopf's book is disorganized, with similar but not always consistent information scattered among different chapters. Weiskopf recommends a diet that is 65 percent protein and 35 percent grains, vegetables, and fruits. Recipes are designed for dogs weighing 20 pounds; she gives no other guidance on portion sizes.



Simple Cooking for Dogs 101: Straight Talk About Dog Food, Nutrition, Supplements, Behaviors, and Much More, by Katie K9 and Renée Sherrill, with introduction by Jessica Levy, DVM

2008, self-published, ktk9.com, \$14 + \$3 shipping and handling. 152 pages. Includes 36 recipes: 15 quick meals, 4 breakfast, 6 vegetarian, and 11 dinner. Also includes treat recipes.

Pros: Information is basically good. Calcium guidelines included in text. Food substitutions provided.

Cons: No guidelines on using the recipes to create a diet. No ratio of meat to carbs given. Need for variety and inclusion of organ meats not stressed. Not all substitutions are appropriate. No nutritional analysis done. No index.

Rating: Recommended, with reservations.

While she recommends variety, she does not offer any substitutions in her recipes.

Calcium guidelines are jumbled, and only five of the nine breakfast and dinner

recipes include calcium. Note that chicken necks are listed as “Dog Snack/Lunch” that she indulges her dogs in only if they are “particularly active (and insistent).” Supplement recommendations are similarly unclear. She includes “ $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. probiotic liquid” and “1 fish oil capsule” in her Monday-Friday breakfast recipe and “multivitamin/mineral for dogs” in three of her dinner recipes.

Recipes for dogs with kidney disease are overly restricted in protein. All of the recipes for dogs with health issues are high in fat.

Joan Weiskopf is listed as “MS, Veterinary Clinical Nutritionist,” but she is not a veterinarian. While this book is better than some, due to using appropriate ratios of protein and carbohydrates and including proper amounts of calcium, it is disorganized, sometimes contradictory, does not stress variety, and gives very little guidance regarding supplements. This diet won't harm your dog, but you can do better.

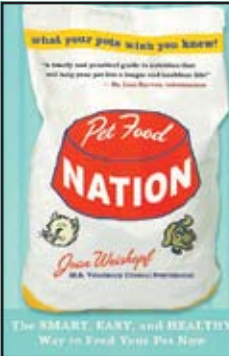
Pet Food Nation: The SMART, EASY, and HEALTHY Way to Feed Your Pet Now, by Joan Weiskopf, MS, Veterinary Clinical Nutritionist

2007, Collins Living, \$16. 162 pages, including index. Includes 13 recipes: 2 breakfast, 7 dinner, 2 for kidney disease, and 1 each for heart disease and cancer.

Pros: Good basic approach to feeding a homemade diet. Recipes are simple. Appropriate ratio of meat to other foods.

Cons: Calcium guidelines are unclear. Information is disorganized and sometimes contradictory. Portion sizes given for 20-pound dogs only. No beef liver. Recipes for kidney disease are too low in protein. Little guidance on supplements. No nutritional analysis done.

Rating: Recommended, with reservations.



For Supplemental Feeding Only

The following books have recipes appropriate for supplemental feeding only; they can be added to commercial foods but are not complete diets. They have no value for those who want to feed a homemade diet, and so none are recommended. Several of these books do not make this clear, and one was even among those relied on by the person whose dog developed secondary nutritional hyperparathyroidism due to lack of calcium.

These books have several things in common. The recipes all bear a remarkable resemblance to those found in human cookbooks (several even suggest you can share them with your dogs). None of them discuss calcium (a huge issue if you plan to feed your dog a homemade diet) or other supplements, and none of the recipes include organ meats.

For those who want to add fresh foods to a commercial diet, you'd do just as well using healthy leftovers (foods you eat yourself, not fatty scraps) rather than cooking special recipes for dogs that are comparable to the food we eat.

- **The Everything Cooking for Dogs Book**, by Lisa Fortunato
- **The Good Food Cookbook for Dogs**, by Donna Twichell Roberts
- **The Natural Pet Food Cookbook**, by Wendy Nan Rees with Kevin Schlanger, DVM
- **Real Food for Dogs**, by Arden Moore
- **Throw Me a Bone**, by Cooper Gillespie, with recipes by Sally Sampson

Could have been simpler

All of the information in *Simple Cooking for Dogs 101* is acceptable, but even more details would have been helpful. Human-style recipes are designed to last a few days to a week. All recipes state how many cups they make, and a table gives portion sizes for dogs in eight weight categories. Calcium is not included in the recipes, but is described in the text with appropriate guidelines. Recommended supplements include Missing Link, garlic, canned pumpkin, fish oil, ground flaxseed meal, yogurt, probiotics, digestive enzymes, and various herbs. Guidance may not be specific enough for a beginner. 🐾

Mary Straus does research on canine health and nutrition topics as an avocation. She is the owner of the DogAware.com website. She lives with her Norwich Terrier, Ella, in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Crate Expectations

A terrific management tool as well as a home away from home.

BY NANCY KERNS

I am a huge fan of crate training for dogs. I think the ability to spend an extended amount of time in an enclosed space quietly and calmly is a valuable life skill for dogs. And it certainly has dozens of benefits for us, too.

Benefits to a *dog* of crate training:

- Dog has safe space where he can't be bothered by other dogs or household pets or people.
- Dog has a safe place to enjoy a bone or food-stuffed Kong, without worrying about having it taken away from him.
- Dog has a comfortable, enclosed place to nap or sleep – somehow reminiscent of the canine's evolutionary den.
- In an emergency or in the case of an injury that requires the dog to be kept quiet, the dog can be safely contained, keeping him out of harm's way in a familiar, comforting environment.

This point is really important to me. In California, I've lived in areas that suffered week-long floods and fires that burned tens of thousands of acres. I was living in San Francisco when the Loma Prieta earthquake struck in 1989, sparking fires that destroyed dozens of homes. I have friends in the Bay Area who had to evacuate their neighborhood after a gas pipeline explosion a few months ago. I haven't *yet* needed to evacuate my pets, but I could if I had to – and I wouldn't have to worry that my dog was traumatized and freaking out because he was put into a crate. I also feel much better knowing that if he's ever confined to a crate for a hospitalization or recovery from an injury, he'll be absolutely content and comfortable.

- If the dog is boarded or has to stay overnight or for an extended stay at a veterinary hospital, he'll be much less anxious if he's well habituated to his crate. My friend and trainer Sarah Richardson, of The Canine Connection in Chico, California, puts it this way: "It's like eating at McDonalds in

What you can do . . .

- When doing early crate-training, don't let your dog out of the crate when he's whining or barking. Even if you're certain he really needs to go potty, try to wait for a few moments of silence before opening the door.
- Use the crate as a rewarding place, not a punishing one! If you use it consistently for "time-outs" rather than "time in with a Kong," your dog will start to resent and avoid it.



a foreign country – a familiar place where they can relax and know what to expect.”

Richardson also operates a daycare and boarding facility. She says there is a striking difference between dogs who are crate-trained and those who are not. “Daycare and boarding can be exciting for a dog, but they can also be stressful. Crate-trained dogs always seem grateful for some rest and relaxation in the midst of a stimulating stay here, and they come out of the crate refreshed and ready to play again. The crate has become their cue for relaxation. It's much more difficult for dogs who aren't crate-trained to fully relax and sleep well when they are in unfamiliar surroundings.”

Benefits to an *owner* of crate training:

- Peace of mind in an emergency (again, fires, flood, etc.).
- Peace of mind that a comfortably crated dog can't destroy one's house or car. As a testament for all the reasons to



When they have been properly introduced, most dogs develop a real love for and comfort in their crates. This is a typical plastic "airline" style crate.

train your dog to perform a rock-solid sit, trainer Ian Dunbar often cites a list of things that a dog can't do when it is sitting, such as jumping up, humping your leg, getting in a fight, etc. The list of things a dog can't do while crated is even longer, and includes chewing through electrical cords, stealing your socks, getting into the garbage, tormenting the cat, and peeing behind the sofa.

Also, I was caring for a friend's dog once, and left him in my car for a short time while occupied with something else. When I came back, I found that he had chewed through every seat belt in the car. I don't leave dogs uncrated in my car any more!

■ Crates are a valuable tool for house-training a dog. Few dogs will soil their crates if they can help it. After each stint in a crate, take them directly outdoors to potty. If they don't go, bring them back inside and pop them right back into the crate. If they do potty, reward them lavishly, and allow them to be free in the house for a while—but only about as much time as it might take for them to need to go potty again. At that point (and it depends on their age, when and how much they eat and drink, and other factors that you will know best), take them back outdoors. If they go potty, reward them again. If they don't, back into the crate they go.

See "Ready, Set, Go!" WDJ February 2007 for more information on a potty training program for puppies, or remedial training for adults.

■ A crate and crate-trained dog ensure that you and your dog will be welcome at most friends' and relatives' homes. I recently stayed at a friend's house over the holidays, *with* my foster dog! She doesn't have enough training or self-control to abstain from chasing a strange cat, eating the cat's food, chewing on the furniture, or stealing food off the table, but none of these things happened, because she was happy to spend all of her unsupervised time in their home in her crate. My friend commented, "We're crate-training our next dog, for sure!"

■ Crates enable me (and others) to foster dogs from the shelter. I can say in all confidence that at least five dogs have found really great homes because I took the time to house and train them, and find just the right family to adopt them. If I didn't have a safe place to put an untrained dog



Wire crates offer more door options. They are also safer for use in hot environments. Dogs can overheat much more quickly in airline-style crates.

at night, or even just while I run to the grocery store, I wouldn't be able to provide this service.

Gather your gear

You'll need a few things to get started on the crate-training project.

First and foremost, you need the right crate. There are three major types that are appropriate for training: plastic (or aluminum) airline-style crates; wire crates (they look like cages); and "furniture" style or "fashion" crates that are disguised to blend in with your decorating motif. Most dog owners choose a utilitarian (and affordable) plastic or wire crate; the aluminum and fashion models cost upwards of \$500. (There are also "soft" fabric crates; these are appropriate only for dogs whose crate-training is rock-solid, since a determined or panicked dog can very easily chew or scratch his way through the mesh and escape.)

Each of the two most popular types offer one major benefit. Plastic crates seem to evoke the "den" feeling for the dog; many dogs accept being in a solid-seeming structure more readily than being in an airy cage. Wire cages offer more flexibility in where you can put them; most have at least two doors and some have three. This helps you position the crate in just about any corner or cranny in your home. Dogs will generally accept either type of crate, if you introduce the dog to the crate properly and don't abuse or overuse crating.

The crate you buy needs to be large enough to permit your dog to comfortably enter, stand, turn around, and sleep in his favorite position. If he can't get comfort-

able, the odds of his acceptance of the crate are poor! Measure your dog's height and length; don't rely on your memory and estimation of his size when ordering. If you're in doubt, get the next size up. More room is always better, with the following exception: buying a crate for your medium-to large-breed puppy.

Knowing that your pup is going to stand 26 inches or so at the shoulder, and weigh 80 or more pounds, you select a very large crate. It's good to plan ahead, right? Yes, but in the here and now, instead of providing a snug little studio apartment, we've supplied that puppy with a vast loft, complete with what he may perceive as a backyard bathroom. In other words, if he has just enough space to feel comfortable, he'll make an effort to "hold it" in order to keep his bed clean. If he has too much real estate, he'll probably start using some of it for going potty.

Most wire crates can be ordered with a divider panel that allows you to "fence off" some of that extra space while the puppy is little, and gradually expand the room he needs. I've never seen a plastic airline crate that offers this feature, although I've known owners who actually bought a small crate for the pup, and a larger one when he was older, larger, and already reliably crate-trained.

Next, find a good place for your dog's crate. It should be situated in a place that is neither too hot (next to a heater vent or in direct sun from a window), nor too cold (on a concrete floor in a chilly room or in a breezy, unheated hall). Remember that the dog will be stuck in that one temperature zone; you are depriving him of the ability

to get up and move to a more temperate location, so the spot should be pretty comfortable.

Consider, also, your dog's temperament and the traffic flow in your home. If your dog gets overstimulated by the sight and sounds of your kids' playing and running with their friends, put the crate somewhere out of the flow of traffic. But if your dog gets a little anxious when he's left alone, put his crate close to the center of action in your home, so he can be reassured as much as possible by the sounds of someone cooking in the kitchen or the television.

Note that if your dog displays serious anxiety when separated from the family, and hurts himself, destroys the crate, eliminates in the crate, and/or vocalizes nonstop, you'll need the services of an experienced animal behavior professional to help properly diagnose and treat the behavior. See "Serious Separation Anxiety Calls for a Different Approach," below.

The next thing you need to do is make sure that the crate is an incredibly cozy and inviting space for your dog. It should be equipped with a thick, comfortable bed or pad – not a thin little towel. The only exception to this would be for dogs who chew, eat, or otherwise destroy their beds; then you might have to experiment to find something that is comfortable but resistant

to chewing. My dog is attracted to chewing up foam-filled beds, so I bought *two* of the thick, fuzzy "EcoNap" mats (not one of the many thin imitations) from West Paw Design (westpawdesign.com; 800-443-5567). Otto is comfortable and the washable beds are still intact and attractive after two whole years.

The only acceptable reason (from my view) for not providing your dog with a thick bed in his crate? Very young puppies and a few adult dogs sometimes prefer peeing on a soft surface; you might have to eliminate padding for them, which means you have to keep the crate somewhere warm (in cold weather). You also should shorten the time you leave these individuals in a crate so they don't feel the need to eliminate in their dens.

The last things you need for successful crate-training are a good supply of safe and attractive chew items and/or food-stuffed toys, such as Kongs or one of the stuffable "Busy Buddy" toys from Premier Pet Products (premierpet.com; 800-933-5595).

Go slow

Start the crate-training program by giving your dog some really over-the-top, delicious treats in the crate. Or, if he won't go in, feed him the treats at the crate's entrance. Slowly lure him into the crate with

these treats, reinforcing each approach with praise – but don't close the door! In his first dozen or so experiences with the crate, he should be free to enter and exit at will. If you slam the door on him before he even knows what it's all about, he'll be double-wary of approaching again. There is no hurry.

As soon as your dog is enthusiastically entering the crate in anticipation of goodies, ask him for a sit or down before you give him the treat. After a few repetitions of this, ask for a sit or down, swing the door closed for a few seconds, and then open it and pop that treat into his mouth. Good dog!

Your goal is to reward him for increasingly longer stays in the crate, but don't increase the length of every visit to the crate. Keep the duration unpredictable, and the rewards variable.

At this point – but in a whole new session, not when he's already stuffed with treats – prepare a really special food-stuffed Kong or other toy. Layer it with several yummy, stinky foods, such as anchovies, cream cheese, and bacon. Show this wonderful concoction to your dog, and then make a show of carrying it to the crate. Place it in the crate, far enough inside that your dog can't snatch it and run out. If your dog enters in a relaxed manner and picks up the toy and starts chewing, go ahead and close the crate door. Stay close, though; it's too soon to leave him all alone in there, even if he's absorbed by the food in the toy at the moment.

If he *doesn't* go right in, close the door to the crate, locking him *out* of the crate and preventing him from eating the delicious food that you stuffed into the toy. In the best case scenario, he walks around the crate, trying to figure out how he can get in and get that treat. If he goes in the next time you open the door (and pick up the toy, and maybe even let him to lick it before putting it back in the crate), great. Close the door and proceed as above. If he still doesn't go in, go back to the high-value treats and the shorter trips in and out of the crate. *At no time should you forcibly drag, pull, or push your dog into the crate.*

Depending on your dog's comfort in the crate, have him go in the crate to enjoy a special treat (such as a big meaty bone, his favorite bully stick, or a food-stuffed toy) for increasingly longer sessions, several times a day. At first, stay close by while he's locked in. Enter and exit the room, but gradually increase the amount of time

Don't Crate Dogs With Severe Anxiety

It's a dilemma: A dog with severe separation anxiety may destroy their homes in a desperate effort to distract and console themselves when he is in the midst of an attack of separation anxiety. He may eat couch cushions, claw his way through drywall, attempt to crash through windows, and/or urinate and defecate all over the house. Sound like a dog you'd like to put in a crate? Actually, probably not.

Some dogs actually suffer worse symptoms when they are not only left alone, but also, when locked in a crate, are deprived of the things that might make them feel a bit better, like lying on your bed or sofa, or being able to look out the living room window from time to time. Most trainers have heard at least one sad story from a desperate owner whose dog mutilated himself – with bloody paws or even broken teeth – in an all-out panic to escape a crate.

"Crating is completely inappropriate for many, if not most, dogs who have true separation anxiety," warns WDJ's Training Editor Pat Miller. "Those with lesser levels of stress behavior about being left alone may be able to tolerate the close confinement of a crate, but for dogs who are truly panicked about being by themselves, crates seem to intensify their anxiety. Crating can *worsen* the separation anxiety behavior, and the dog can injure himself seriously, or even be killed, in his desperate attempts to escape his prison."

A dog whose symptoms of separation distress are this severe will require some professional help, perhaps in the form of anxiety-reducing medication and the help of an experienced veterinary behaviorist.

For a description of the various types of behavior professionals you could hire, see "The Trainer Name Game," WDJ September 2010.

that he's in the crate in a room alone. Build the sessions to the point where you can actually leave your home for short, and then longer errands. As long as he seems happy to enter the crate and comfortable once in there, keep building on these sessions. If he's reluctant to enter, or gets so preoccupied by his captivity that he starts whining or pawing at the gate, keep the sessions shorter, the treats high-value, and stay closer.

Here's an important point: When you let your dog out of the crate, don't make a big deal out of it. If you treat him like the three-month survivor of a raft at sea, he's going to look forward to getting out of the crate so he can be the star of that particular newsreel. Instead, don't make eye contact as you approach the crate, casually open the door, and ignore him for a few minutes when he comes out. You might even find that he *doesn't* come out; that means you

are *really* on the right track with the whole "comfortable in the crate" project.

What about the dog who barks, whines, or paws at the door during his longer sessions in the crate? You have to use your best judgment. Does he seem completely panicked or just a bit upset? Does he have to go potty immediately, or not at all? If you ascertain that he's putting on a big act – he's not panicked, just not happy, and he doesn't have to go potty – then you will have to steel yourself for listening to a bit of fussing (or even some unpleasant barking). If you let him out in the middle of a frustrated tantrum, you will have just reinforced tantrums, and the next one may well be louder and longer.

Instead, lurk close by so that you can leap to release your dog when his whining or barking stopped for a few moments. Try your hardest to reinforce him for longer and longer periods of silence.

One last point: Don't overcrate your dog. Crates are a great tool, but they can be overused. When you walk toward the crate and your dog suddenly runs the other way, you need to increase the fun of crating, and decrease the time he spends in it. Also, keep in mind that puppies can't "hold it" for all that long. A rule of thumb for pups during the day for up to one hour longer than they are months old. (A three-month old puppy should be able to hold it for four hours.)

I said at the beginning of this article that the ability to calmly spend time in a crate is a valuable life skill. And yet, in an average month, my own dog doesn't spend much time (if any) in a closed crate. Why? Because he spends so much time in his *open*, well-padded crate that I rarely need to close its door! 🐾

Nancy Kerns is the Editor of WDJ.

Crate Safety Considerations

I don't want to scare you away from crating. But if you are going to employ this valuable management tool, you need to do so in a responsible manner. Take steps to avoid whatever hazards that crating may present to your dog.

■ Use an ID tag pouch, or an alternative to conventional, dangling ID tags – but don't forego identification.

If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I would have been skeptical that it could even happen, but my most recent foster dog caught her ID tag in the slats of a plastic crate. It's a testament to her acceptance of the crate that she neither panicked, fought, nor even whined. I opened the crate the other evening and realized she was sitting with an odd, hunched posture. I thought, "Uh oh," but I was thinking about bloat. I patted my leg to encourage her to come out of the crate. She wriggled, but maintained her odd posture. I got down on my knees to take a closer look – and that's when I saw that her ID tag was stuck, wedged in one of the crate vents; she was being tightly held there against the wall. I'm a huge advocate of having ID on a dog at all times, but now I feel that it's best if the dog



wears a breakaway collar, or some sort of alternative to a dangling tag is used. For example, check out "Boomerang Tags" from boomerangtags.com (805-473-5958).

■ **Maintain safe temperatures for your dog.** It's your job to make sure that your dog doesn't roast or freeze in his crate, because there is precious little he will be able to do to help himself get cooler or warmer when he's locked into a small space.

■ **Provide water.** There are only a few reasons to withhold water from a dog in a crate – and no valid reason to keep him



without water for more than a couple of hours. Often, people who are trying to houstrain a puppy don't want the pup to be able to "tank up" and later urinate in their crates. It's safer to set your alarm to let the puppy go outside and pee once in the middle of the night than to prevent him from drinking for eight or more hours in one stretch – especially in hot weather.

If you're concerned about the water spilling and making a mess, try one of those hamster-style water bottles that dogs have to lick to get a drink (available at pet supply stores) – or better yet, give the non-spilling Buddy Bowl a try. Your dog can flip this bowl completely upside down and still the water won't pour out. The Buddy Bowl is widely available at pet supply stores and Internet sites.

Even More Raw

A couple more makers of frozen raw diets, and some of your suggestions and comments on WDJ (keep 'em coming!).

TWO MORE

The chart at the bottom of the page is an addendum to the list of manufacturers of WDJ's approved raw frozen raw diets for dogs that was published in our November issue.

TIMELY

I noticed that the next issue will have an article on canine blood banks. How timely for me. My dog was diagnosed in the middle of September with immune mediated bone marrow suppression, brought on by Phenobarbital use. He had been on Phenobarbital for only six months, to control his psychomotor epi-

lepsy. He has had five blood transfusions to date, every one of them at enormous financial and emotional expense.



At times we have had to access the blood bank in Winnipeg, Manitoba; I am in Ontario. While at a referral hospital in Toronto (he was having a bone marrow biopsy), I asked if I could buy some PRBCs. I could not unless he was admitted to the hospital. This was repeated across the board, teaching hospitals, emergency clinics, etc. My plan was to take the blood back to my primary veterinarian. At that point he had had three transfusions. His PCV at the referral hospital was a dismal 14, and I was sent home with no hope of getting blood. We did manage to track a bag down in the next few days; it was not

his type, but we had to use it.

I have been forced to illegally bring blood over the border. I am very distressed at the lack of co-operation and availability of blood products out there, not to mention the expense. I do realize that it cost a lot to produce and process. I am lucky as I can do most of the work myself, but I really feel for lay people, who do not have that training. I know the odds are against my dog making it, but I want to try everything that I can for him.

Deb Stanton, RVT, and
Gourd the Dog
Via email

The blood bank article appears on the following pages. My best to you and Gourd.

COMPANY INFO	DESCRIPTION OF PRODUCTS, NUTRIENT INFO	HISTORY/ FORMULATED BY	AVAILABILITY
<p>BARFWorld Danville, CA (866) 282-2273 barfworld.com</p> 	<p>Six complete and balanced diets are available. Each contains ground meat, organs, and ground bone from a single species (chicken, lamb, beef, rabbit, goat, turkey) as well as fruit, vegetables, whole eggs, and supplemental foods such as garlic, honey, flaxseed, and more. No vitamins or minerals added. Food is packed into tubs (like frozen cottage cheese).</p> <p>The guaranteed analysis for each diet is published on the company website and on food labels. A complete analysis is available upon request.</p>	<p>BARF World was the first to sell biologically appropriate raw food (BARF) diets to pet owners. Robert Mueller, B.Sc., Pharm. (BARF World co-founder) has been involved in manufacturing and selling raw meat diets for 35 years. He has worked with exotic animal nutritionists while servicing the carnivore collections at the nation's zoological parks for more than 10 years. Mueller, PhD nutritionists, and Dr. Ian Billinghurst (BARF World co-founder) developed the current BARF World diets.</p>	<p>BARF World sells its products nationally, online and through select retail stores. The BARF diet is also available in Japan, marketed through a Japanese distributor.</p>
<p>NW Naturals, Inc. Portland, OR (866) 637-1872 nw-naturals.net</p> 	<p>Six complete and balanced diets are available. Turkey and chicken varieties use dicalcium phosphate for a calcium source; the rest (lamb, beef, bison, and chicken & salmon) contain ground bone. Each contains muscle meat, organs, fruit, and vegetables, and supplemental foods such as garlic, honey, flaxseed, and more. Some vitamins and minerals are added. Food is available in nuggets or 1-lb. bars.</p> <p>Only the guaranteed analysis for each product is published on company website and product labels. Complete nutrient analysis available upon request.</p>	<p>Company family-owned and -operated since 1956; has made frozen raw diets for pets since 1980.</p>	<p>Products available nationally in select independent pet supply stores, health food stores, and vet clinics. Direct sales available to consumers who are not near a retail outlet.</p>

LOVING WDJ

I love you, and I wonder if you even know how rare a publication like WDJ is. On the same day that I got my WDJ, I also got a professional “journal” issue reviewing medical research. Without exception, every article in that magazine was research sponsored by a company that made the product being evaluated. And, surprise! All the research showed wonderful results using their products! I am awestruck every time I read a review in WDJ and it is actual, objective information, not an infomercial.

One comment on “The Right Stuff” toy recommendations (December 2010). Various companies now make some beautiful, lifelike, stuffed animal squeaky toys – realistic squirrels, ducks, skunks. What exactly are they thinking, making lifelike skunk toys?! I don’t want my dog thinking skunks are fun to bite and shake around! Those are high on my list of really, bad ideas.

Keep up the wonderful work. Could I get you to review a few medical therapeutic items for me that I can’t find any objective information on?

Linda Palter
Via email

I thought Christmas was a good time to let you know how much I love the WDJ and all of its timely articles. Some in particular have been extremely helpful, like the extensive dissertation on pancreatitis (WDJ November and December 2008 and January 2009), of which my GSD suffers intermittently, and the one about changed protocols for immunizations. My vet is very approachable and open to a collaborative relationship, especially after working with me in-depth with problems with prior GSDs. I showed her the article on a reduced vaccination schedule (“Annual Vet (Not Vaccine) Visits,” August 2010) and asked her opinion. She was receptive, and so we only had the state-mandated rabies plus one other for a disease prevalent around here, and skipped the others. She said she does the same for her dogs.

And oh that Otto! I feel very disappointed if there isn’t something about him in each issue, he is so darn cute, and I like that you openly and honestly share your experiences with him. I cannot omit how your publication has educated me on dog food! That has been huge.

Carole Shafer and
Suzi, the scamp GSD
SW Michigan

ANOTHER VIEW

I really enjoy everything about Whole Dog Journal except the Editor-In-Chief’s column. I, along with most of my friends, were horrified when Nancy Kerns got her new dog and shared with everyone that the poor critter would be living outside because the dog and the husband preferred it. I was sickened by her negative article about fostering. And now I’m embarrassed to buy subscriptions to WDJ for holiday gifts as the editor’s note about being a celebrity and taking bribes. Maybe it’s time to consider a new editor.

I’m glad you like the Dyson and hope you donate it to a shelter when you are finished with your “review.” I find it doesn’t have good suction about half the time I use it; it’s way too heavy and the hose gets clogged with the least little bit of dog hair. But maybe if the tester actually had long haired animals that lived inside . . .

Pat Johnson
Via email

Just for the record: Otto sleeps inside any time he wishes to. It’s up to him. In the winter, he’s indoors about three-quarters of the time. 🐾

INGREDIENT CLAIMS	MANUFACTURING INFO	FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM
<p>BARF World sources some of its ingredients; its manufacturer sources the rest. “Our meats are all sourced from the Northwestern US and come from USDA-inspected slaughter facilities, with the exception of lamb, which is sourced from New Zealand.”</p>	<p>“We use a co-manufacturer that has a long history of manufacturing quality raw meat diets.”</p>	<p>“Careful sourcing of our ingredients and a clean manufacturing facility based on human food processing standards are our foundation for producing a high quality, safe food. Our products are subject to monthly testing for E. Coli, Salmonella, and for proper guaranteed analysis levels. We have an efficient trace-back system to accurately track product back from client to farm. Our philosophy is that the raw food diet should be fed without adulteration from heat processing, irradiation, or high pressure pasteurization. Ingredients that are presented in a natural unaltered state are the best way to utilize the nutrient value. Until we are forced to comply with the new proposed FDA guidelines regarding pet food pasteurization we will continue to offer our diets in an unadulterated and natural manner which is the ideal way for our pets to grow and thrive.”</p>
<p>NW Naturals sources its own ingredients: meat is USDA-inspected and -passed from USA, Canada, and New Zealand. All meats are hormone- and antibiotic-free. Fruits and vegetables are human quality, GMO-free, purchased locally. All raw materials received and used at a USDA-inspected facility are raised and slaughtered under the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. Multiple USDA inspected suppliers are used for each species of raw material to ensure steady and stable supply of quality raw materials at a consistent value price for NWN customers.</p>	<p>Company owns and operates its own USDA/FDA manufacturing plant, certified to produce organic products by Oregon Tilth. All processing rooms are kept at 36° or below; primary production method chops ingredients with only one extrusion process for minimum cell damage. Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) at -30° for 10 minutes to keep the nutrients intact.</p>	<p>“We are a USDA human facility and have a USDA inspector on staff for all shifts, every day, for all production. All products are produced under the following programs: HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points); GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices); TQC (Total Quality Control); SSOP (Standard Operating Procedures); PREOP (Preoperational Inspections); PIP (Planned Improvement Program). We have always scored among the highest scoring in annual third-party food safety audits. Random testing is performed to ensure nutritional integrity and food safety.”</p>

The Gift of Life

Dogs, too, sometimes need blood transfusions – and therefore, donors and blood banks are needed, too.

BY LISA RODIER

Denise Mankin, DVM, was on duty late one night in a Des Moines, Iowa, emergency veterinary clinic when Yeller, a Labrador Retriever, was rushed in sporting a fresh wound to his back. Yeller had been shot after escaping from his rural home.

After stabilizing Yeller with IV fluids, antibiotics, and pain medications, Mankin opened up the dog's abdomen to find blood filling his abdominal cavity. A bullet had perforated Yeller's small intestine in five different locations, and two of the sites were hemorrhaging profusely. Within moments, his blood pressure plummeted. As Mankin worked desperately to tie off the blood supply to his damaged bowel, Yeller went into cardiac arrest. Cardiac drugs restored Yeller's heart beat, and donor blood, having been warmed for transfusion, was pumped into him.

If your dog were to require an emer-

gency blood transfusion, would your veterinarian have access to blood to save your dog's life?

Veterinary medicine has become increasingly sophisticated, with trends paralleling those in human medicine – including the increased demand for canine blood and therefore formal blood banking services. Well-equipped private emergency clinics often maintain their own blood banks. Smaller clinics may rely on local blood donor programs or banking services might be provided by university veterinary teaching hospitals. A few commercial and non-profit animal blood banks also have been established.

However, according to world-renowned veterinarian W. Jean Dodds, CEO and founder of Hemopet in Garden Grove, California, "Despite these efforts, most of the country's needs are not being met. The demand exceeds supply and the individual

What you can do . . .

- Talk with your vet about having your dog's blood typed. Keep a permanent record of the results in a safe place.
- Find out in advance if blood would be readily available – and from where – for your dog should she require an emergency transfusion.
- If your dog is young and healthy, consider signing her up to be a blood donor. Understand that she will be thoroughly screened for temperament and health, and that you'll be signing up for a significant, but worthwhile, commitment. Your dog might save another's life!



Photo courtesy Hemopet.

Only rescued Greyhounds (with the universal donor blood type) are used as donors at Dr. W. Jean Dodds' (seen above) nonprofit animal blood bank, Hemopet.

clinic programs may not be standardized to ensure safety and efficacy. A coordinated national effort is still an essential next step to maximally utilize what is available and set appropriate procedural standards."

The University of Georgia's College of Veterinary Medicine in Athens is one of many vet schools that has a canine (and feline) blood donor program. Its program utilizes thoroughly screened donor dogs belonging to veterinary school staff, students, and faculty. Producing close to 400 units of product per year, the UGA blood bank serves only critical care patients who are treated at the university's small animal hospital; it does not provide blood to outside veterinary clinics. Despite this volume, the UGA blood bank can't completely meet the demand from the

university's veterinary hospital – blood products expire, sometimes demand is too high – so it, too, will occasionally order from a national canine blood bank.

There are advantages and disadvantages of obtaining blood or blood products from a local donor and blood banks. According to Dr. Dodds, “As long as the local donor is blood type compatible and screened for infectious diseases, this blood – if properly collected and prepared – is just as beneficial as blood obtained from the handful of commercial veterinary blood banks in the country, large veterinary emergency clinics and institutions such as the Animal Medical Center in New York, or veterinary school blood donor programs that serve their clinical teaching hospitals.

“The advantage of the products from an animal blood bank are proven quality, prepared according to generally acceptable veterinary transfusion medicine standards

or regulations (California only), and availability. Blood from these blood banks can be stored refrigerated for up to 46 days (packed red blood cells) and frozen for up to 5 years (fresh-frozen plasma).”

Blood products and their uses

There are a number of acute and chronic conditions that call for your dog to be treated with blood or blood products. “Acute conditions include trauma, surgery, acute hemolytic anemia, or bleeding from accidents such as rat poisoning or from an inherited bleeding disease,” says Dr. Dodds.

“Chronic conditions include chronic disease, cancer, chemotherapy reactions, immune-mediated blood cell destruction, recurrent bleeding from an inherited condition, liver failure, bone marrow failure, or kidney failure.”

Blood transfusions don't come cheap.

At UGA, some canine blood components cost \$150 to \$300 per unit, and up to \$500 for whole blood. A dog suffering from an acute crisis can require \$1,000 worth of blood products, alone, in one day.

The most commonly used blood components are whole blood, packed red blood cells, fresh and frozen plasma, and cryoprecipitate. One of Dr. Dodds' missions is to educate the veterinary community about efficiently and safely utilizing this precious resource, including using blood components, rather than whole blood, for transfusions.

Whole blood is collected directly from a donor animal. It can be used immediately or chilled for future transfusion or separation into blood components. Whole blood contains red blood cells, coagulation factors, and some white cells and platelets – but only when used within 24 hours of collection. Whole blood is generally re-

Donor Dogs – Do You Have What It Takes?

Commercial animal blood banks in California are closed colonies of dogs (or cats) and are regulated by law through the State Department of Food & Agriculture. These blood banks are licensed and inspected annually by the state.

In the state of California, commercial sale of volunteer donor blood from privately owned pets is not permitted.

W. Jean Dodds, DVM, established the first private 501(c)(3) non-profit animal blood bank, Hemopet, in July 1991. Dr. Dodds' goal was to do for animals what the American Red Cross did for humans: develop a national blood bank and education network. Today, Hemopet services more than 2,000 veterinary clinics in the U.S., Canada, and Hong Kong.

Hemopet's licensed facility houses a colony of healthy, canine donors – all Greyhounds rescued from the racing industry – of universal blood type (DEA 4). Commercial animal blood banks in California are regulated by law through the State Department of Food & Agriculture. Hemopet's Greyhounds are maintained in an outstanding environment, screened for an inclusive list of pathogens, current on all vaccinations, and neutered. They also have access to on-site 24 hour-a-day veterinary care. About 200 donors live in Hemopet's new, large facility, and are part of a novel rescue-donor-adoption program, Pet Life-Line.

You should ask your veterinarian or call your local veterinary emergency hospital to see if they have a

volunteer donor program. Your dog could be a volunteer blood donor if he or she is at least 50 pounds, of stable temperament, a young healthy adult, and if female, preferably spayed (to avoid heat cycle influences). To qualify as a donor, a complete health exam is performed along with lab testing for CBC, serum chemistry, bleeding disease screening (e.g., for Von Willebrand disease), heartworm check, and screening for more common infectious diseases transmitted by blood.

Registered veterinary technician Anna Santos has been with the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, Small Animal Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Athens for 13

years. She cares for thousands of critical care patients yearly at the hospital, and heads its donor and transfusion program. She explains that canine blood donation is not a big deal for the dog – although the right temperament helps! The time from when a needle is placed (to draw blood) until it is removed is only about eight minutes. Santos describes it as very similar to the experience of donating blood at the Red Cross, all the way down to the “cookies” provided to patients post-donation! Each appointment takes less than a half hour, but the donor dog's caregiver must be willing to make a significant commitment to the program: UGA requires that the dog come in every two months to donate over a period of one year. This is not an uncommon requirement made by canine blood banks.



These packed red blood cells (PRBCs), from a volunteer donor, are kept in a vet clinic refrigerator, and have a very short shelf life – less than two months.
Photo courtesy Georgia Veterinary Specialists.



Canine hemophiliacs such as this dog can begin bleeding without any warning and often require a life-saving transfusion. Photo courtesy Hemopet.

served for use in acute cases in which the patient has lost a great volume of blood.

Packed red blood cells (PRBCs) are a concentrated source of red blood cells. This is the preferred source of red blood cells for most medical needs; PRBCs have a longer shelf life than whole blood, avoid the risk of “fluid volume overload” in compromised patients, and pose less risk of adverse immunologic reactions to plasma proteins.

Fresh plasma is essentially blood from which the red blood cells have been removed; it’s sometimes referred to as “platelet-poor plasma.” **Fresh frozen plasma** is the same thing, only frozen. **Platelet-rich plasma** is just what it sounds like; platelets (also known as thrombocytes) play a critical role in blood clotting. If a dog has too few platelets, excessive bleeding may occur. Platelet-rich plasma may be given to dogs with platelet dysfunction, or to sustain oncology patients

whose platelets have been damaged by chemotherapy. **Cryoprecipitate** is a plasma concentrate indicated for treatment of severe bleeding (or in anticipation of surgically caused bleeding) caused by deficiencies of plasma factor VIII, von Willebrand factor, or fibrinogen.

Not your type

Most of us are familiar with the concept of blood “type” – the phrase is going by the way in favor of the phrase blood “group.” In dogs, there are at least 12 different canine blood groups; 6 are fairly common. Blood groups are determined by the presence or absence of different antigens on the surface of the dog’s red blood cells; these are known as Dog Erythrocyte Antigens (DEA) and are identified by numbers, such as 1.1, 1.2, 3, and 4. To make matters even more confusing, a dog can have more than one group; for example, he can be “typed” as DEA 4 and 7, or DEA 1.1, 4, and 7!

As with humans, there is a “universal donor” blood group for dogs: DEA 4. If the emergency is not life-threatening, commercial animal blood products such as packed red blood cells and fresh-frozen plasma can be ordered by your veterinarian for overnight delivery anywhere in North America. These blood products typically come from so-called “universal donor” dogs; true universal donor blood is automatically compatible with the red blood cell type of any recipient dog patient.

Also like humans, dogs can suffer adverse reactions to transfused blood or blood products from dogs with types that are different from their own. Transfusion

reactions rarely occur upon the first transfusion – but a transfusion from a dog with a different blood type than the recipient will sensitize the recipient’s immune system to that type. Subsequent transfusions with the same type of blood in the future will cause an adverse transfusion reaction. This is why blood typing for “repeat customers” is very important.

Vet emergency clinics generally keep in-office blood typing equipment on hand, so they can type your dog’s blood before giving him an emergency transfusion, but these kits are less reliable than tests conducted by veterinary laboratories. Having your dog’s blood sent to a lab for typing is highly recommended by many veterinary experts. It’s inexpensive and easy, and having the information ahead of time could be incredibly helpful if your dog had a serious medical emergency or trauma.

“It is always medically sound to know the blood type of the donor blood, and if not from a universal donor, the blood type of the recipient patient should also be known,” says Dr. Dodds. “Even if an emergency transfusion was given between two dogs of unknown type, the donor and recipient can always be blood typed after the fact for future reference.”

“Crossmatching” is another laboratory tool that can determine serologic compatibility (or incompatibility) between a donor and recipient. In a crossmatch, donor red cells are mixed with plasma from the recipient. If antibodies exist in the recipient plasma to antigens on the red cells of the donor, transfusion reactions can occur. Previously transfused dogs should be crossmatched prior to subsequent transfusions, even if the transfusion is from the previous donor.

The gift of life

After two hours in surgery, and an additional four hours on a ventilator, Yeller (the Labrador who’d been shot) made a full recovery. The combination of expert veterinary care and donor blood saved his life. Dr. Mankin says she has never lost a patient due to lack of blood availability; her clinic has always had blood on hand or had a donor dog nearby for blood collection if their stock was depleted. How many lives has she helped save with donor blood? “Wow, there are soooo many stories!” 🐾

Lisa Rodier is a frequent contributor to WDJ. She lives in Alpharetta, GA, with her husband and a senior Bouvier.

Blood Donation Resources

Association for Veterinary Hematology and Transfusion Medicine (AVHTM)

Includes listing under “links” for veterinary blood banks in the U.S.
vetmed.wsu.edu/org-AVHTM/index.asp

Dog Blood Donors

Unique blood donor registry in the United Kingdom. dogblooddonors.com

Hemopet (and Pet Life-Line), Garden Grove, CA. (714) 891-2022; hemopet.org

University of California, Davis, Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, Transfusion Medicine Service, Davis, CA

(530) 752-1393; caninebloodbank@gmail.com; vetmed.ucdavis.edu

University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, Small Animal Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Athens, GA

(706) 542-2895; hospital@uga.edu; vet.uga.edu

Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (VECCS), San Antonio, TX

Listing of veterinary emergency hospitals. (210) 698-5575; info@veccs.org; veccs.org

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- A natural shampoo formula that can help keep your dog flea-free (p. 201)
- The taboo training technique that can cause aggression (p. 148)

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RESOURCES

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

The **Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)** has references to local member trainers. Note: not all members employ similar training methods, nor does APDT set standards of skill or competence. APDT encourages (but does not require) its members to use training methods that use reinforcement and rewards, not punishment. (800) 738-3647; apdt.com

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Train with modern, dog-friendly positive methods. Group and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Trainers can become “Pat Miller Certified Trainers” (PMCT) by successfully completing Pat’s Level 1 (Basic Dog Training and Behavior) and both Level 2 Academies (Behavior Modification and Instructors Course). (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com

Cindy Rich, KPA CPT, The Canine Connection, Chico, CA. Group classes for puppies and dogs, all positive methods, socialization sessions, and daycare. (530) 345-1912; thecanineconnection.com

HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AHVMA), PO Box 630, Abingdon, MD 21009. (410) 569-0795. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search ahvma.org

BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of many books on positive training. All available from Dogwise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com

WHAT’S AHEAD

Long Lines and Light Lines

Tools for training when your dog is not quite ready to go completely off-leash.

WDJ’s 2011 Dry Food Review

Our annual inspection of the pet food industry.

Auto-phobe?

A case history: A car-phobic Newf learns to driving.

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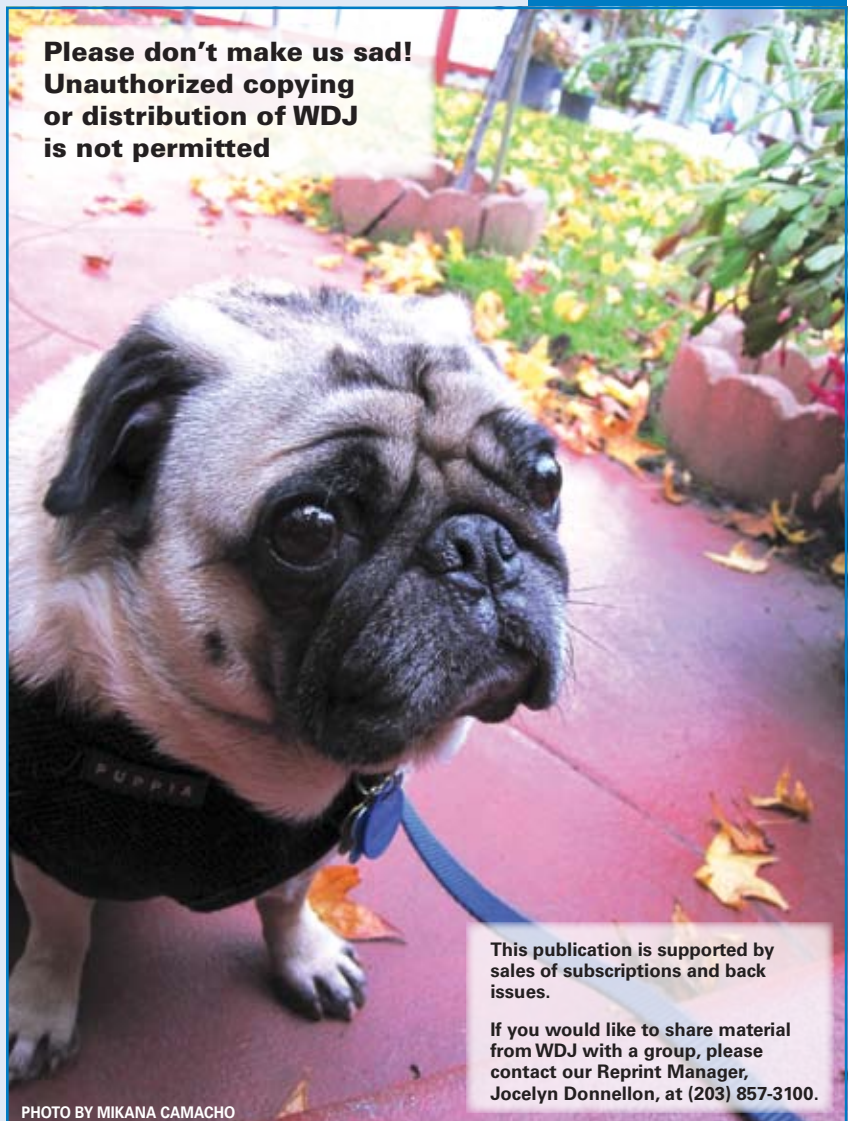


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