

VOLUME 12
NUMBER 7

The Whole



Dog Journal™

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

July 2009

\$5.95

FEATURES

3 Door Darting

Five things to do if your dog dashes out the door. (Hint: Don't get mad!)

4 Bleeding at Both Ends

Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis is scary, but it responds to fast treatment.

8 Make a Splash!

"Dock jumping" sports are for water-loving, high-energy dogs of any size. Best of all, extensive training is not required!

12 In Praise of Prebiotics

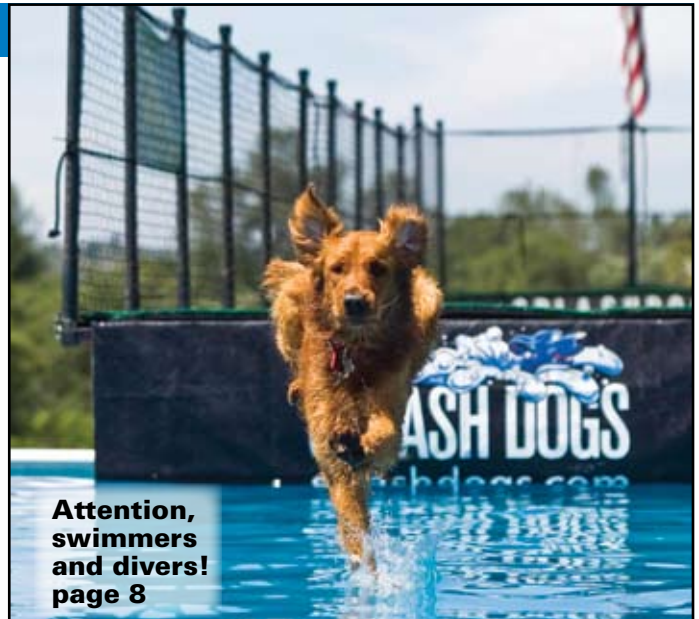
How to nourish the "good guy" bacteria in your dog's gut to help him get the most out of his food.

14 Demanding Times

Eliminate your dog's "demand behaviors" – such as begging, whining, jumping up, or nose-nudging.

19 Fostering Success

How to maximize the joys and minimize the perils of fostering a needy dog or puppy.



Attention, swimmers and divers!
page 8

PHOTO BY HOWIE GEORGE, MAXDOGPHOTOS.COM



Food for "bugs" . . .
page 12



A second chance pup . . .
page 19

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editor's Note
- 24 Product and Expert Resources

No Regrets

Fostering is hard, but worth every minute.

BY NANCY KERNS

The article on page 19 conveys (I hope) some very useful information about fostering a dog or puppy. It's an article I wish I had read before I embarked on my latest fostering venture. There is so much that a person should know before fostering, in fact, that there was little room to share my own fostering experience. Here's the story behind the story.

I wasn't planning on fostering; it was an impulse decision (mistake #1). I had spent all day at my local shelter, helping out during an "Adopt-a-thon" event that drew a crowd of potential adopters with extended hours and reduced adoption fees. I personally matched three families with appropriate dogs that day, and was feeling really good about that adoption accomplishment. At the end of the day, the shelter director and I were taking one last tour through the kennels, noting which dogs had been adopted and which remained, when we heard a staffer exclaim, "Hey!"

"What happened?" the director asked as we walked over to the run the staffer was cleaning. "This dog just tried to bite me!" he replied. The director and I looked at the "dog" in question; it was a skinny puppy, 11 weeks old, who was cringing in fear at the back of his run. Many (if not most) dogs bite when they are scared to death (as this puppy appeared), but something else about the pup's expression and posture made us doubt his potential for danger. Still, a shelter can't responsibly present dogs who bite to the public. "Would you mind taking that puppy into the 'get acquainted' room and assessing him again?" the director asked me.

I entered the kennel slowly, crouched low. He hid his face against the back wall and shivered. When I carefully picked him up, he made no defensive gestures whatsoever – and while he wouldn't look at me, his long tail thumped against my side as I carried him to a small, quiet room.

I spent about an hour with the pup in that room. I sat on the floor quietly as he slowly smelled every inch of the floor, save for a wide circle around me. I tossed bits of hot dog

to him for another 10 minutes or so, until he warily approached my outstretched hand to take one from my palm. A few minutes later, he allowed me to touch him with one hand as he took a treat from the other. When I stroked his head, he stopped chewing and briefly closed his eyes. Then, slowly, deliberately, he climbed into my lap and lay down.

So, duh, I had to finish what I started. This poor little guy was obviously undersocialized, but it seemed to me that he was a good dog. I figured I'd take him for a week or two and return him as a better-socialized, confident pup who'd readily attract good adopters. The shelter director had no objections and so I took him home.

The train derailed shortly afterward. The pup had a poor appetite and his energy level ebbed and waned. He developed a snotty nose and a bad cough. When drinking seemed to irritate his throat and make him cough, he stopped drinking, got dehydrated, and earned his first trip to the vet. Fluids and antibiotics perked him up for almost a week – and then he got worse. He was diagnosed with pneumonia on his second trip to the vet, but just needed more subcutaneous fluids and an anti-emetic medication (for nausea) on his third visit.

Finally, I was able to get him in to see my favorite holistic vet, and we launched a multi-pronged, aggressive attack on his illness. I administered subcutaneous fluids twice a day for almost a week, until he felt good enough to drink adequate amounts of water. I also gave him daily injections of an antibiotic and an anti-nausea drug, and dropped a second antibiotic drug down his throat twice a day, until his appetite returned and I could hide them in treats. He also got colostrum mixed in an aloe distillate and probiotic treats (to stimulate better GI health, which improves immunity) and an herbal cough syrup.

The experience was totally worth the tough parts. He blossomed while he was here – Otto played a huge role in his education – and we found a perfect home for him. I'll share more about the pup, now named "Tonka," next month. *NK*

The Whole Dog Journal™

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – Nancy Kerns
 TRAINING EDITOR – Pat Miller
 PUBLISHER – Timothy H. Cole
 CIRCULATION DIRECTOR – Greg King

EDITORIAL OFFICE

E-MAIL: WholeDogJ@aol.com
 MAIL: PO Box 1349
 Oroville, CA 95965
 PACKAGES: 1655 Robinson Street
 Oroville, CA 95965

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

PHONE: (800) 829-9165
 INTERNET: whole-dog-journal.com/cs
 U.S. MAIL: PO Box 420235
 Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235
 CANADA: Box 7820 STN Main
 London, Ontario N5Y 5W1

BACK ISSUES, WEBSITE INQUIRIES

PHONE: (800) 424-7887
 E-MAIL: customer_service@belvoir.com
 INTERNET: whole-dog-journal.com
 U.S. MAIL: PO Box 5656
 Norwalk, CT 06856-5656

REPRINTS

For price quote, contact Jennifer Jimolka at
 (203) 857-3144
 Minimum order 1,000

NEWSSTAND

Jocelyn Donnellon, (203) 857-3100

**WHOLE DOG JOURNAL
 DOES NOT ACCEPT
 COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING**



THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 800 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Executive Vice President, Editorial Director; Philip L. Penny,

Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Executive Vice President, Marketing Director; Marvin Cweibel, Senior Vice President, Marketing Operations; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Vice President, Circulation; Michael N. Pollet, Senior Vice President, General Counsel. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2009, Belvoir Media Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL makes every effort to provide information on dog health, care, and treatment that is authoritative, reliable, and practical. It is not intended, however, to replace diagnosis or treatment from a veterinarian or other qualified dog professional. THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL does not assume any legal responsibility. Readers should always consult qualified healthcare providers for specific diagnosis and treatment.

Subscriptions: \$39 annually (12 issues). Bulk rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions available upon request.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL, PO Box 420234, Palm Coast, FL 32142

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL, PO Box 39, Norwich, ON, N0J 1P0

Door Darting

Five things to do when your dog . . . dashes out the door!

BY PAT MILLER

Ooops (expletive deleted), there he goes again!” Sounds like the frustrated human companion of a canine door-darter – a dog who slips out the tiniest crack of an open door every chance he gets. Frustrating for the human, dangerous for the dog, who likely romps around the neighborhood just out of his owner’s reach. Here are five things to do if your dog dashes out the door:

1 Catch him. Easier said than done, you may say. An accomplished door darter is often an accomplished keep-away player as well. Don’t chase; you’ll just be playing his game. Play a different game instead – something else fun. Does he love squeaky toys? Grab one, take it outside and squeak it. When he looks, run away, still squeaking. If he chases after you, let him grab one end of the toy. Play a little tug, trade him for a treat, then squeak it and play tug some more. Let him follow you, playing tug-the-squeaky, into your fenced yard, and close the gate behind you. Play more squeaky with him.

If he loves car rides, run to your car

and say, “Wanna go for a ride?!” Open the car door and invite him in. When he jumps in, take him for a ride! Playing tug? Chasing tennis balls or flying discs? Fetching sticks? Walkies? Whatever he loves, provide it.

2 Reward, don’t punish. You’ve managed to get hold of your cavorting canine. No matter how upset you are, don’t yell at him! Don’t even reprimand him calmly. He’ll associate the punishment with returning to you, not with darting out the door. Don’t even take him back inside immediately – that’s punishment, too. I promise, if you punish him when you finally get your hands on him, it’ll be even harder to catch him the next time. Instead, happily and genuinely reinforce him with whatever he loves best – tug, fetch, a car ride, or high value treats.

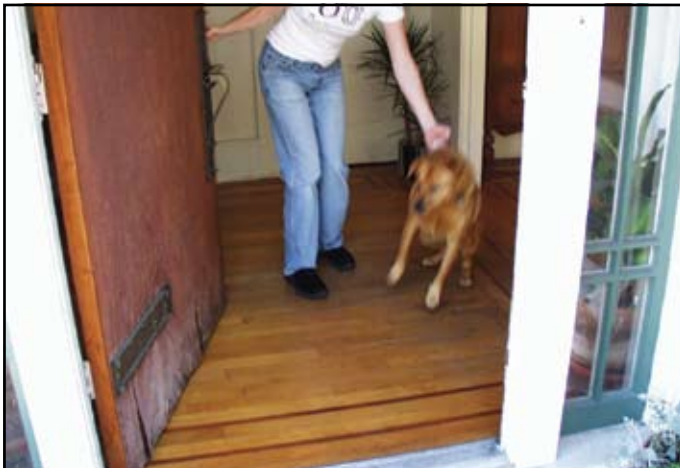
3 Create “airlocks” for your doors. Even if you can’t fence in your yard, you can put up a woven wire barrier around the door(s) he darts out of – a small area with a self-closing gate, so if he darts out the door he’s still contained. Use baby

gates or exercise pens to set up a barrier inside, to block his access to the door. Insist everyone makes sure he’s behind the barrier before going out the door, or greeting a visitor.

4 Teach him to wait at doors. Implement a “Say please” program, where “sit” makes all good things happen, including doors. Teach him to “sit-and-wait” at doors until he’s given the release cue. The more consistent everyone is at sit-and-wait, the more reliable your dog will be at waiting, and the less likely he’ll dart out that door.

5 Increase his exercise. If you keep your canine pal busy and tired, he’ll be less inclined to look for opportunities to dash through doors. A tired dog is a well-behaved dog. 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT, is WDJ’s Training Editor. Miller lives in Hagerstown, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Pat is also author of several books on positive training. See page 24 for contact and/or book purchasing information.



Is this you and your dog? A dog who bolts and tries to escape every time the door opens may well be living on borrowed time. Train your dog to sit before you open a door, waiting for permission (a release cue) to go out or come in.



The “management” (as opposed to training) solution is to install an “airlock” at each exit to any unfenced yard. You can use an exercise pen to create a second barrier inside your door, or securely enclose your porch or deck.

Bleeding at Both Ends

Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis is scary, but responds to fast treatment.

BY CJ PUOTINEN

The symptoms came on fast and furious. One day Chloe was a healthy, tail-wagging Labrador Retriever and the next day she was vomiting mucus all over the house. Then her vomit turned red with blood and then came matching diarrhea. Chloe had hemorrhagic gastroenteritis, or HGE.

Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis is a mystery disease. No one knows what causes it and there is no recommended prevention. It does not seem to be contagious from one dog to another, although dogs living together sometimes develop HGE at the same time, and some parts of the country have reported outbreaks of several cases. It's most dangerous for small dogs, and although some veterinarians consider toy and miniature breeds between the ages of two and four the most typical HGE patients,

males and females of all breeds and ages have been affected.

There are few, if any, HGE warning signs. It is not usually accompanied by a fever. Diarrhea containing bright or dark red blood is the illness's signature symptom. Vomiting, which usually accompanies the diarrhea, typically begins as mucus or bile and then becomes bloody. Affected dogs may eat grass and vomit that as well.

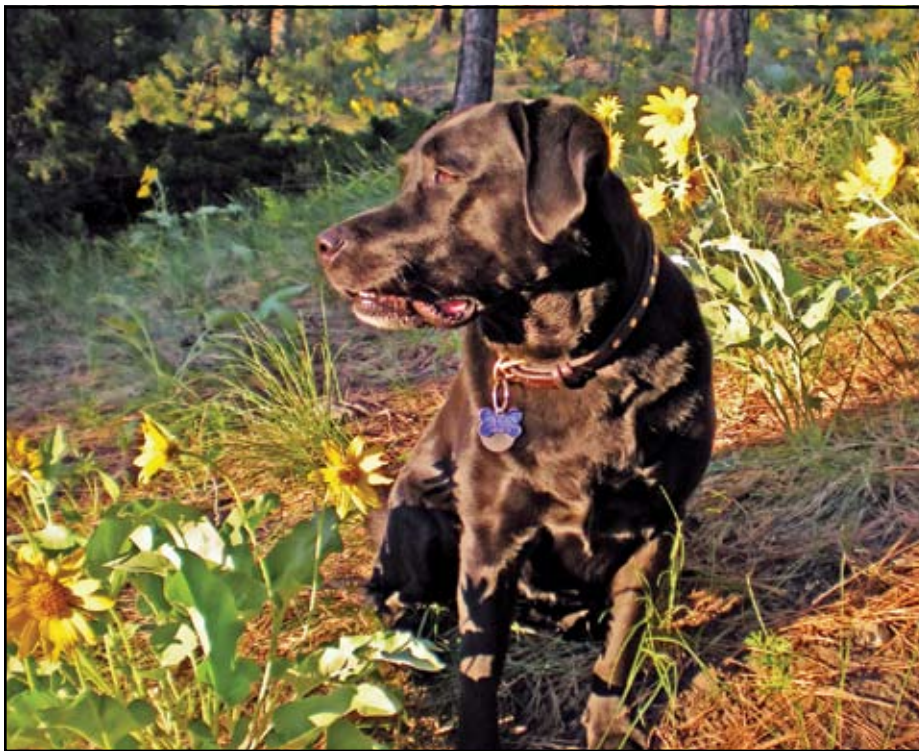
Because HGE can be fatal, prompt veterinary care is essential. Patients are not usually dehydrated when first examined, but dehydration can develop quickly, leading to hypotension (low blood pressure), an elevated red blood cell count, shock, blood clotting problems, or kidney failure.

Confirming the diagnosis

Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis is usually

What you can do . . .

- Pay attention to your dog's symptoms, especially vomiting or diarrhea.
- If you see blood, don't wait. Call your veterinarian immediately.
- If you live in an area known to have HGE outbreaks, be especially vigilant.
- Do what you can to keep your dog's immune system strong. It can't hurt and might help.



Chloe, a five-year-old companion of article author CJ Puotinen, survived a recent and scary bout of HGE. Her previous good health, CJ's quick action, and aggressive veterinary care helped her recover quickly. Debilitated dogs don't fare so well.

diagnosed by a process of elimination, since there are several other disorders that produce bloody vomiting and diarrhea.

Puppies and young dogs may develop these symptoms after eating slippers, leashes, or other foreign objects. Dogs of all ages can bleed from trauma injuries; the ingestion of toxic substances or contaminated food; gastrointestinal ulcers; colitis; infectious diseases such as parvovirus and coronavirus; infections from *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *Clostridium*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Leptosperosis* bacteria; parasites such as whipworms, hookworms, coccidiosis, and giardia; warfarin (rat poison); coagulation disorders; gastrointestinal cancer; and Addison's disease (hypoadrenocorticism).

Because a comprehensive examination with complete blood count (CBC), biochemical profile, urinalysis, fecal examination, and bacterial cultures is both expensive and time-consuming, unless a specific cause can be quickly identified, such as a swallowed foreign object or parvovirus, the diagnosis is likely to be HGE.

In addition to producing diarrhea that looks like raspberry jam, canine patients appear tired and weak. Many have an elevated pulse and labored breathing.

Treatment

The treatment of HGE may or may not involve hospitalization, but it often includes the administration of fluids to prevent dehydration. Without sufficient fluids, the blood thickens and its flow through blood vessels may be impeded.

For patients treated early, subcutaneous fluids or even plain drinking water may be sufficient, but intravenous fluids are recommended to prevent “disseminated intravascular coagulation,” or DIC, a potentially fatal clotting disorder that occurs when the blood thickens and slows. Once DIC has begun, it is often irreversible.

Although HGE has not been shown to be caused by bacterial infections, parasites, fungal infections, viruses, or any other specific pathogens, many veterinarians prescribe medications that address these agents. In addition, patients may be given medications that treat ulcers, soothe the gastrointestinal tract, or prevent nausea, vomiting, or pain.

The patient’s veterinarian may recommend that no food or water be given by mouth for one to four days to let the digestive system rest or that water be given in small amounts every few hours the first day and then in larger amounts as long as it doesn’t contribute to nausea and vomiting. Food is reintroduced slowly. A veterinarian may recommend that a new or different type of protein is fed to the dog in case the problem was related to the dog’s previous diet. Alternatively, a prescription pet food may be used until the acute phase of HGE has passed.

Seasonal and regional?

Two weeks before Chloe’s symptoms began, she and I moved from New York to Helena, Montana. At 7 p.m. on a Monday in May, she vomited blood, and I drove her to the first veterinarian listed in the phone book who could see us. I used a plastic bag to gather a sample some of the bloody mucus that she vomited to show to the vet.

Heidi Wampler, DVM, took one look at Chloe and the bag of mucus and said, “This looks familiar.” Chloe’s pulse was fast but her temperature was normal, and when Dr. Wampler removed the thermometer, a pool of bright red diarrhea came with it.

According to Dr. Wampler, dogs in the Helena Valley present these symptoms in spring and fall, when the ground is damp from snow melt or rain. She and her colleagues have tested affected dogs for the bacterial, viral, and parasitic infections listed above, and when dogs in multiple-pet households developed symptoms at the same time, as two dogs in a five-dog household did recently, they tested soil and water samples.

“But no matter what we test for,” says Dr. Wampler, “we can’t find a cause.”

When I spoke with Chloe’s previous veterinarian, Stacey Hershman, DVM, in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, she said, “Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis is common in the spring in the Northeast, too. I have treated five dogs in the past two months. There is usually no known cause, and we give supportive care with subcutaneous or IV fluids and medications like metronidazole, which works well against anaerobic bacteria and parasites such as giardia, just in case they’re involved.”

In the winters of 2004, 2005, and 2006, outbreaks of mild to moderately severe bloody diarrhea in dogs were reported to the Los Angeles County (California) Veterinary Public Health office. Because so many cases occurred near each other within a short time, researchers suspected that a contagious infection or food contamination caused the illness. However, extensive diagnostic tests conducted during each outbreak failed to reveal a connection.

In January 2009, the L.A. County Veterinary Public Health department reported a much higher than normal incidence of canine diarrhea and hemorrhagic gastroenteritis in the San Fernando Valley. They began collecting information about the diet and lifestyle of affected animals as well as the results of their physical exams, laboratory tests, and treatment protocols.

The department’s report explained, “If parvovirus is considered a possibility, a rapid in-clinic test on feces may be done first to make sure that is not the problem. Fecal tests for parasites are often performed. Blood tests often show that the dog has a very high red blood cell count and low protein levels as protein and fluid are lost into the gut. Sometimes additional tests such as fecal cultures are done, or radiographs of the abdomen are taken to check whether the dog has swallowed any unusual objects.”

Between January 1 and February 12, 2009, veterinarians at 13 Los Angeles

County clinics reported 99 cases of bloody or watery diarrhea in dogs. Most of the patients (82) also had vomiting. Half recovered within five days and half took longer to recover or had a waxing and waning disease course. At least 29 cases required intravenous fluid treatment, while others required less intensive care. Most cases were treated with antibiotics and anti-nausea or anti-vomiting drugs.

No evidence links this disease outbreak to January’s recall of peanut butter products contaminated with *Salmonella*. Of the 12 Los Angeles County dogs with HGE who were checked for *Salmonella*, all tested negative. Tests for several other infectious agents were also performed but none were conclusive. There is no evidence that any food contamination played a role, because the affected dogs ate a wide variety of foods.

In almost 90 percent of cases reported, no other pet in the house had the same illness. HGE does not appear to spread easily from dog to dog, and it does not appear to spread from dogs to people.

Whether HGE is a regional or seasonal illness remains speculative, but there does seem to be a connection in at least some parts of the country between HGE and certain times of the year.

In general, HGE strikes anywhere at any time. In most parts of the United States, it is a random rather than seasonal disorder.

And it’s rare. If you’ve never heard of hemorrhagic gastroenteritis, you’re not alone. Even at its peak, the Los Angeles County outbreak affected less than a fraction of one percent of the county’s 1.9 million canines. But if your dog is one of its victims, HGE is an enormous problem.

Canine patients

Janet Tobiassen Crosby, DVM, has treated only one dog for HGE, and that was during her first year of veterinary practice. However, dozens of dog lovers across the country have described their pets’ bouts with HGE at her Veterinary Medicine Blog and online forums.

The patients’ breeds include Jack Russell Terrier, Beagle, Pembroke Welsh Corgi, Labrador Retriever, Pit Bull, Toy Fox Terrier, Miniature Dachshund, Golden Retriever, English Bulldog, Miniature Poodle, Miniature American Eskimo, Yorkshire Terrier, English Springer Spaniel, Maltese, Miniature Schnauzer, Bichon Frise, Shih Tzu, Chihuahua, Silken Windhound, and several mixed breeds.

Their stories illustrate the frustration, confusion, fear, and loss that HGE produces, for many of these dogs were desperately ill and some of them died. If the reports share a common message, it's a plea for fast action.

"Time is of the essence," agrees Dr. Crosby. "Because there are so many possible causes of vomiting or diarrhea, the best thing you can do is call your veterinarian immediately. HGE has a high survival rate when patients receive aggressive support therapy, and a pet that has observant caretakers (the situation just happened and they responded right away) has a much better chance than pets that have been sick for days. It also helps if the dog is in good health to begin with and at a good weight. Age can be a factor, too, with young to middle-aged dogs bouncing back faster. Like other illnesses, HGE is hardest on pets that are in poor shape to begin with."

One HGE survivor whose story appears on Dr. Crosby's forum is Helios (Ch. Talisman's Light of Helios SRC IC), a Silken Windhound with racing and coursing titles who lives in Walnut Creek, California, with Joyce Chin. In May 2008, when he was one and a half years old, Helios became lethargic and vomited bloody foam.

PHOTO BY RICK STEELE



Helios, a Silken Windhound, was just a year and a half old when he developed HGE. The racing and coursing champion recovered after spending a week in a vet hospital.

"He wasn't interested that morning in playing with the pups," says Chin, "and he's always playing with the pups. Since he's always so happy and on the go, it was a dramatic change. He developed bloody diarrhea and was in the vet clinic on IV fluids and IV antibiotics for almost a week. He's better now and has regained the weight he lost, but he really could have died. I'm so glad we were around to catch it. It would have been very hard to lose him, he's such a happy part of the family

here. When he was in the hospital, all the hounds were looking for him."

Hospital stays can be expensive. Just ask Heidi Hansen, who lives in San Anselmo, California, with her eight-year-old, 100-pound yellow Lab, Herbie.

"Herbie's HGE symptoms started at about 5 a.m. on a Sunday last April," she says, "and by 9 a.m. he was in the hospital. He stayed there for three days and needed albumin transfusions. The total bill came to \$5,620."

Fortunately, Herbie survived his ordeal. "He's better now," says Hansen, "but he's slower than before. This took a lot out of him. He had blood loss once before, so he has had a tough time."

Looking for culprits

So far, the cause of hemorrhagic gastroenteritis has eluded everyone, but the search goes on.

Enterotoxigenic *Clostridium perfringens* is the most commonly suspected agent in HGE cases because specific strains of *Clostridium* have been associated with hemorrhagic gastroenteritis in both dogs and cats. This common inhabitant of soil, air, dust, and manure is found in the water of lakes, streams, and rivers, and it is a contaminant in many types of commercially prepared foods.

Toxins associated with *Clostridium* bind to the intestinal epithelial cells of infected animals, increasing membrane permeability. However, since *Clostridium* is a normal inhabitant of the intestinal tract, no one knows whether it's involved.

Some veterinarians suspect that allergies may play a role, but no one has been able

to find a specific allergen that has caused HGE in any patient.

Is diet a factor? Some veterinarians and Internet resources blame raw food, home-prepared diets, and "people food" for HGE, but the evidence doesn't support those claims, either. Most HGE patients have eaten commercial pet food all their lives. This doesn't mean that diet isn't a factor, but it's one that hasn't been proven.

"One common contributing factor," says Dr. Crosby, "may be stress or hyper-



Herbie is an eight-year-old Labrador who needed blood transfusions to recover from HGE. The vet bill came to almost \$6,000.

activity. I wonder if this might help explain why smaller dogs are over-represented."

The stress theory makes sense to me. For a month before we moved, Chloe lived with packing boxes and confusion. Her morning routine was interrupted when I tripped on a log while hiking and broke my right wrist. Thanks to friends, the packing got done, but I wasn't able to drive, take Chloe for hikes, or prepare her usual dinners. We switched to a dehydrated food for convenience, and she did well on it as she has in the past while traveling or staying with friends.

After the moving van departed, my fiancé, Stephen, drove us 2,300 miles with Chloe and Pumpkin (a red tabby cat) on my car's back seat. Waiting for us in Helena was our new roommate, a Cairn Terrier. Seamus is a sweet dog but he guards food and toys. While Chloe gets along with everyone, settling into her new home made May a stressful month.

And while HGE doesn't seem related to pathogens, I can't help but notice a coincidence of timing. For most of her life, Chloe has consumed one or two tablespoons of coconut oil every day, a supplement whose medium-chain fatty acids help destroy viruses, harmful bacteria, parasites, yeast, and fungi. She also received probiotics, which are the body's first line of defense against many agents of infection, along with supplements that improve digestion and the assimilation of nutrients. But during and immediately after our move, I forgot or was at best inconsistent. When Chloe's immune system most needed a boost, it wasn't getting one.

Because a small number of dogs develop HGE more than once, one of my goals is to protect Chloe from future episodes. Even though the HGE experts say there is no way to do this, anything that strengthens

her immune system sounds like a good idea! Stress relief is another strategy we'll employ to keep her healthy. The passage of time and a comfortable daily routine are already helping to reduce Chloe's stress.

Home support

Not all HGE patients are hospitalized and not all of them need IV or subcutaneous fluids. Dr. Wampler sent Chloe home with medication and instructions to call during the night if she continued to vomit or if her symptoms grew worse. In her favor, Chloe was five years old, athletic, and otherwise healthy.

Dr. Wampler warned us that Chloe would probably have diarrhea without realizing it and that we might want to confine her to keep things tidy. I put layers of towels in Chloe's crate and changed them twice during the night when they became soaked. Owners who describe how they discovered their dogs in what looked like a slaughterhouse or execution scene aren't exaggerating. HGE can be a huge and malodorous mess.

That night we gave Chloe small amounts of water but no food.

According to *Small Animal Clinical Nutrition*, a veterinary textbook edited by Michael S. Hand, et al, the best foods for patients with acute vomiting and diarrhea are those that do not produce "excess dietary acid load." Foods that normally produce alkaline urine are less likely to be associated with acidosis than foods that produce acid urine. Grains are alkalizing foods, while meat is acidifying. As a result, according to this theory, foods that are high in grain may be more comfortable than meat-based diets for dogs with gastrointestinal distress.

Another theory is that high-fiber foods, such as canned foods prescribed for dogs

with diabetes, may be helpful during the acute phase of HGE. Dr. Wampler gave us four cans of a high-fiber prescription food to help Chloe make a comfortable transition back to solid food.

Her appetite came back the next morning but she vomited the small amount she swallowed and lost interest in food for the rest of the day. The towels in her crate didn't need to be changed, but she released alarmingly red diarrhea in the backyard. The one encouraging sign was her thirst, for she drank increasingly large amounts of water that stayed down.

By Wednesday, 48 hours after her first symptoms, Chloe's appetite was back and she was on the mend. By Friday, she was her tail-wagging self again, producing normal bowel movements and ready for hiking. She was delighted to resume her regular diet and has been thriving ever since.

Keeping HGE in perspective

Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis is a serious illness, but most dogs will never develop its symptoms. Still, because it progresses so quickly and is potentially dangerous, being able to recognize those symptoms and act on them can mean the difference between life and death. If your dog – or any dog – is bleeding from both ends, don't wait. Get immediate help. With rapid treatment the story should, like Chloe's, have a happy ending. 🐾

CJ Puotinen is a freelance writer and a longtime contributor to WDJ. She is also author of many books on holistic health, including Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats. She recently moved to Helena, Montana from New York. For contact and book purchasing information, see "Resources," page 24.

Resources Mentioned in This Article

Janet Tobiassen Crosby, DVM, vetmedicine.about.com.

Heidi Wampler, DVM, Alpine Animal Clinic, Helena, MT. (406) 449-7155, alpineanimalclinic.com.

Stacey Hershman, DVM, Natural Vet for Pets, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY. (914) 478-4100, naturalvetforpets.com.

Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health Department, (877) 747-2243, publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet.

Small Animal Clinical Nutrition, edited by Michael S. Hand, et al. Mark Morris Institute; 4th Edition, 2000.

WHOLE DOG JOURNAL READER SERVICE:

TO VIEW OUR WEBSITE:

Visit us at
whole-dog-journal.com

FOR BACK ISSUES, ARTICLES:

Visit us at
whole-dog-journal.com/backissues

TO CHANGE YOUR MAILING OR E-MAIL ADDRESS, RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION, CHECK PAYMENT STATUS, OR ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR ACCOUNT:

Visit us at
whole-dog-journal.com/cs

Call (800) 829-9165

To change your address by mail, attach your present mailing label to this form (or a copy of this form), enter your new address below, and mail it to:

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL
P.O. BOX 420235
PALM COAST, FL 32142

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

To order or renew a subscription, enter your name and address above and check the subscription term you prefer:

2 years (24 issues) – \$54

1 year (12 issues) – \$29

In Canada, 1 year \$39 CDN, 2 years \$72 CDN. All other countries, 1 year \$47 US, 2 years \$94 US.

Check enclosed AmEx

MasterCard Visa

Card # _____

Expiration _____

Signature _____

YOUR RENEWAL IS JUST A CLICK AWAY!

whole-dog-journal.com/cs

Make a Splash!

“Dock jumping” sports are for water-loving, high-energy dogs.

BY TERRY LONG

Barking dogs, speakers announcing the dog on the dock and who’s on deck, handlers pleading with their dogs to *Stay, stay, stay, okay, go get it!* SPLASH! The audience cheers, oohs, aaahs, and claps wildly in support of a sport that brings a smile to the face of anyone watching or listening.

The game

There are a few different types of dock jumping competitions, with new ones being invented all the time. In most events, some aspect of a dog’s leap off a dock into the water is measured, with the highest or longest jump winning the class.

Long jumps and high jumps both start with dog and handler climbing a short stairway to reach the top of a dock measuring about 8 feet by 40 feet (there is some variation to dock sizes). The handler brings a toy, which has been selected based on A) the dog’s obsession with it, and B) the ease and predictability with which it can be thrown beyond the edge of the dock into the pool.

For standard dock jumping (which measures forward distance), the handler leaves the dog at the far end of the dock and walks to the end closest to the pool. She then releases the dog and throws the toy into the pool as far as she can, in order to motivate the dog to leap far into the pool to reach the toy. The current record is 28 feet, 10 inches.

The other common type of dock jumping focuses on the dog’s vertical distance. Depending upon the organization putting on the event, this game might be called Extreme Vertical, Super Vertical, or Ultimate Vertical. In this event, an apparatus that suspends the toy is raised over the pool, and the dog leaps vertically to grab the toy before falling into the water with his prize. The current record is 7 feet, 11 inches.

Organizations continue to add classes in the never-ending search for a variation on the theme of jumping into a pool.



PHOTO BY HOWIE GEORGE, MAXDOGPHOTOS.COM

A Labrador leaps into a pool in a Splash Dogs contest, one type of dock jumping.

History

The sport of dock diving or dock jumping got its start in England in the 1970s. In 1997, the United States saw the sport for the first time at the Purina Incredible Dog Challenge. The sport gained in popularity when ESPN televised it as part of their newly created Great Outdoor Games program. Three companies began offering the sport to the general public between 2002 and 2005 primarily through other organizations such as pet expos, hunting and fishing conventions, and other dog sporting venues.

Each of these organizations now offers separate titling opportunities and public demonstrations throughout the country. Two of them, Splash Dogs and Ultimate Air Dogs, also offer titles available through the United Kennel Club.

Many people see dock jumping for the first time while watching TV or at one of those outdoor events. Some of them are hooked the moment they see it.

Linda Hettich of Arcadia, California,

was one of those people. “I first saw ‘Big Air’ on ESPN’s Great Outdoor Games in the 2000. It was the craziest sport, dogs running down a dock and flying into a pool. I told my husband, Randy, ‘Hey, our dog can do that!’ It was the perfect sport for him! Kadin (pronounced kuh-DEEN) loved the water, loved swimming and running, and had a very strong toy drive. I looked on the Internet and, unfortunately, there was nothing even remotely close to Southern California.”

It wasn’t until 2005 that Linda and Kadin got their chance, but she and her husband Randy have been training and competing ever since.

Dock jumpers’ attributes

What sort of dogs will excel at this sport? “Dogs who are crazy about water and crazy about retrieving,” answers Splash Dogs’ Tony Reed. In addition to the usual complement of retrievers, he has seen everything from Pit Bulls to Chinese Cresteds to Dobermans.

This sport attracts a variety of breeds, but understandably is predominated by Labradors. The DockDogs' website states that 56 percent are Labs. Golden Retrievers constitute 6 percent of the participants, 4 percent are Chesapeake Bay Retrievers; that means that 66 percent are sporting breeds. This makes sense, given that those breeds should love both water and retrieving.

Hettich's Kadin exemplified this profile. "Kadin was seven years old when he started. He was a German Shepherd/yellow Lab-mix of about 60 pounds. His name means 'friend' or 'companion' in Arabic. He was very intelligent and highly trainable. He was also a fast runner, a great swimmer, and an incredible jumper. We'd play Frisbee with him and he could catch it in the air, making these incredibly acrobatic leaps. People would always stop to watch him at the dog park."

Dock jumping requires quick bursts of speed, leaping into the air, and landing in water. Dogs who are physically fit will have fewer injuries than those who are couch potatoes, but as with many of the physically strenuous dog sports, there is always some risk of injury.

Handler attributes

First, you have to have a high tolerance for wet dogs, dogs who smell like wet dogs, and getting wet-dog residue and spit on yourself. But, if seeing your dog play in the water has always put a big smile on your face, this sport will make you absolutely deliriously happy. All you need to do is learn how to throw that toy with reasonable precision. Or know someone who can.

Hettich remembers, "Kadin's first jump [at a DockDogs event] was 9 feet, 1 inch. The next day, I was showing my husband Randy how to jump Kadin off the dock, but I threw the Floppy Disc clear out of the pool. Kadin immediately jumped in the water, started swimming, and then tried to jump out of the pool where the Floppy Disc had landed. That was the end of my handling career. Randy took over, and by the time the weekend was over, Kadin had jumped over 12 feet."

Men and women participate in this sport in nearly equal numbers. DockDogs' site states that 54 percent are men, 46 percent are women, and 9 percent are between the ages of 7-14. Both DockDogs and Splash Dogs have junior handler programs so the entire family can participate.

Equipment and supplies

There are not too many things required for dock jumping, but each is important.

■ **The toy.** Ah, the almighty toy. Your dog must be insane about a toy, preferably one that can be thrown with some precision into the pool. Favorites in the sport include all the standard toys for retrievers, including bumpers, balls, and Frisbees.

Hettich reports, "I've seen the girl rubber chicken toy in a bikini, the boy rubber chicken in board shorts, and a short wooden stick like a 2x4. The retrieve object must be floatable, not edible, and not alive, or not formerly alive. There is a DockDogs legend that someone once asked if he could throw a raccoon in, and was told that no live animals were allowed. So he said, 'Well, what if it's in a cage?' Uh, no."

■ **A pool or lake.** If you live near bodies of water, you have it made; otherwise, you'll need a pool or a friend who has one – and doesn't mind dog hair in their filters.

■ **Miscellaneous supplies.** Towels, water bowl, and treats. Hettich remembers her

Snapshot of the Sport: Dock Jumping

■ **What is this sport?** Dock jumping, or dock diving, requires a dog to run with speed to the end of a dock and jump into a pool constructed specifically for the sport. Dogs earn titles based on the distance they cover once they leave the dock.

■ **Prior training required?** Sit-stay, love of water, and an obsession about a toy.

■ **Physical demands?** On the dog: High.
On the handler: Mild.

■ **Best-suited structure?** Physically fit dogs of any size.

■ **Best-suited temperament?** Confident, high energy.

■ **Cost?** High (if you compete regularly).

■ **Training complexity?** Low.

■ **Mental stimulation?** High.

■ **Physical stimulation?** High.

■ **Recreational opportunities?** Low.

■ **Competition opportunities and venues?** Many in some states, very few or none in others.

■ **For further information, see the following:**
DockDogs. dockdogs.com or (330) 241-4975

Splash Dogs, LLC. splashdogs.com or (925) 783-6149

Ultimate Air Dogs. ultimateairdogs.net or (248) 217-0614

United Kennel Club (UKC)
ukcdogs.com/WebSite.nsf/WebPages/DogDockJumping
(269) 343-9020

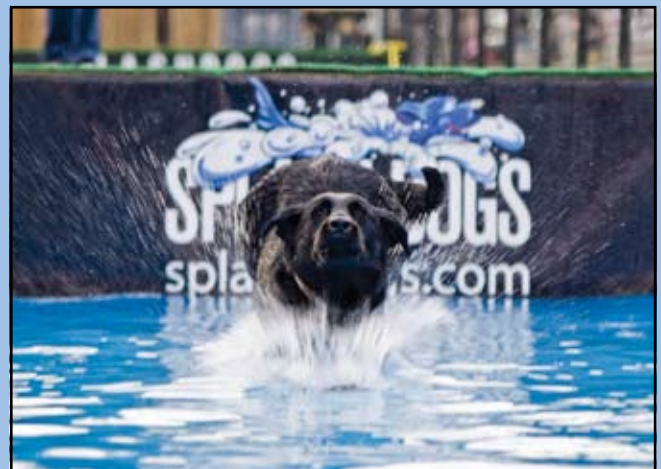


PHOTO BY HOWIE GEORGE, MAXDOGPHOTOS.

first dock jumping event and what she forgot to bring. "Being unfamiliar with DockDogs and dog sports in general, all I brought that day was my dog, a Floppy Disc, a tennis ball, and a leash. I had no water, no water bowl, no towel, no crate, no chair, no food, and to make matters worse, I was wearing long pants. I came home in soaking-wet jeans, with a soaking-wet dog and a first-place blue ribbon!"

Expenses

The biggest expenses are travel and entry fees if you choose to compete over an entire weekend.

■ **Travel and lodging.** Hettich gave this example: "Events are usually Friday through Sunday, so figure \$100/night for lodging. Let's say I have an event in Scottsdale, Arizona: \$200 for hotel, \$95 for gas for 760 miles round trip, \$150 for food/water/beverages: \$445 total. Multiply that times the four or five events per year within a 400-mile driving distance."

■ **Entry fees.** Each dock jumping "wave" (single dive or jump) costs \$20. Specialty classes such as Extreme Vertical, Speed Retrieve, etc., may cost \$25 to \$30 to enter. Pre-registration for classes reduces their cost; onsite registration costs a little more. Hettich typically enters 10-11 classes over a typical weekend.

Training

If your dog doesn't naturally love water, you'll need to train him to like it. You can start by having your dog bob for hotdogs in a shallow pool, gradually increasing the depth of the water so that he learns to hold his breath and blow bubbles.

Then, transfer this to the steps of a pool or the edge of the lake. You can carry your dog into the water and feed him yummy treats, only gradually lowering him while you still cradle him, just letting him feel the buoyancy that will keep him afloat.

Once he's comfortable with that, you can let him swim on his own a very short distance with you nearby to cradle him again. Depending on the dog, this can create a dog who gradually likes water more and more or simply tolerates it.

Your dog must like his toy enough to jump into water to get it. Some dogs are natural retrievers while others must be taught to chase, grab, and return the toy to you. If your dog really, really likes a particular toy, you can use it to increase his

motivation to enter the water. However, if your dog doesn't like toys or water, this is probably not the sport for your dog.

Running and jumping off an elevated surface to chase a toy can help, but be careful due to the added risk of landing the wrong way on a hard surface.

Once your dog has a solid retrieve, you're ready to transfer the behavior to a pool or lake. In a pool, start by getting your dog on the steps of the pool and tossing the toy a short distance away, gradually throwing farther and farther. Next, try him at the edge of the pool and throw the toy a short distance. Wherever you start, make water fun, throw short distances, build confidence, and then build distance. By the time you have built this foundation, you can add height by building platforms from which your dog jumps into the water.

The biggest challenge for dock jumping addicts is finding a place to practice if they live in an urban area and do not have a pool. As a result, most competitors practice at the events themselves.

"Unfortunately, in Southern California there are no official training facilities and very few venues with docks that allow dogs in the water. We have to do our training during practice time at the events. Some competitors use their own pools or take the dogs to dog-friendly beaches.

"We recently established a SoCal DockDogs club, an affiliate of DockDogs Worldwide, and found a training facility at Lake Henshaw in San Diego County. We have had only one practice session there. We are currently trying to find any lake, stream, pond, river, or body of water where we could get permission to build a dock and train."

Contact one of the organizations listed on page 9 to find other people in your area for support and practice ideas.

Levels of competition

Each organization has its rules posted on its website. Each has slightly different classes or divisions and distances or heights to be attained in each class for a variety of colorful titles.

For example, Splash Dogs' "Dock Jumping" is broken down as follows (and each is split further by size of the dog):

Splash:	0-9'11"
Junior:	10' to 14' 11"
Senior:	15' to 19' 11"
Pro:	20' to 22'11"
Extreme:	23' plus

How to get started

Go on-line or call each of the organizations listed on page 9 to find a list of upcoming events. Depending upon where you live, there may be many, few, or none. This is a growing sport; each of the organizations has plans to expand geographically.

When you go to a dock jumping event for the first time, you'll find the staff and volunteers to be very helpful to newcomers. At some events, they even have a practice pool in addition to the competition dock and pool.

Hettich, a journalist by profession, was delighted when she heard about an event being held near her home. She contacted Mark Stuart, who was putting on the DockDogs event, and asked for an interview. She also mentioned, "And by the way, I have this dog . . ." After the interview, Stuart invited her to bring her dog to the event.

She reports: "After fighting Friday afternoon traffic, Kadin and I got there around 2:45. By 3:30, Kadin was successfully jumping off the dock and into the water; by 4 o'clock, we were competing in our first 'wave,' and by 4:45, Mark was presenting us with a blue ribbon for finishing in first place in the Novice Division with a jump of 9 feet, 1 inch.

"By 5 o'clock, I placed a hysterical call to my husband Randy, telling him not only did Kadin jump off the dock, but we won! Randy was suffering from a really bad cold at the time and was probably deathly ill, but I told him we absolutely had to come back the next day because he had to try this. And Kadin? He had this crazed look in his eyes that I'd never seen before. He was hooked and so was I."

Is this sport for you?

If your dog loves toys, loves water, and has an owner with car keys who will go to the ends of the country to keep that smile on his face, this sport is for you. You don't need to compete; this is a sport that welcomes newcomers, whether you come out once a year or a dozen times. And bring the family; they won't want to miss it!

As usual, have fun, train positively, and revel in the relationship with your dog, not the ribbons on the wall. 🐾

Terry Long, CPDT, is a writer, agility instructor, and behavior counselor in Long Beach, California. She is addicted to agility and animal behavior. See "Resources," page 24, for contact information.

Kadin: A Great Last Year

BY TERRY LONG

Kadin was Linda Hettich's first dog to try the sport of dock jumping. His first try at age seven was in early 2005 where he took 1st place in Novice. Hettich believes dock jumping contributed to Kadin's quality of life as he underwent treatment for cancer.

"Kadin competed in DockDogs at Long Beach and Del Mar (California). Then he competed in Splash Dogs in Orange County, where he made the finals for the first time. Then, Kadin was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Randy and I decided to take him to as many events as he could physically handle. It was what he loved to do more than anything.



"He earned his DockDogs Senior Title with both Randy and me at Cynosports in Scottsdale, Arizona. It was there that he jumped his personal best, 18 feet, 3 inches, while undergoing chemotherapy. His last event was two months later in January 2006 at DockDogs at the Fred Hall Fishing Boat and Tackle Show in San Francisco. He miraculously made the finals, as the 12th seed, and he finished 12th. Somehow, with cancer rapidly spreading throughout his body, he jumped 14 feet. He had just turned eight. We had to say goodbye to him just a few weeks later."

Read more about Kadin's at acvimfoundation.org/stories/kadin.html.

Above: Kadin jumping in November 2005

Left: Last family portrait with Kadin in January 2006



Tessa: A Dock Jumping Addict

BY LINDA HETTICH

Five months after Kadin passed away, we rescued Tessa. She was two years old, a little Lab, barely 20 inches at the withers – although, when we first got her, she was a very overweight 70 pounds! After we got her slimmed down to 50 pounds, we discovered we had a jumper. We introduced her to a pool and she took to swimming and dock jumping immediately.

Tessa is one of those dogs who would run through a brick wall; her drive is incredible. She starts barking from the moment she sees the dock. And she goes *nuts* when she sees another dog on the dock. "What are they doing on my dock? GET OFF MY DOCK!"

Tessa barks while waiting in line, and she practically rips my arm off trying to run up the stairs. She runs to the front of the dock and barks when I call her back to the end of the dock, jumping over my head as she tries to grab the bumper that I hold high in the air. She *barks and barks!* I have to stare her down until she stops barking. She is on edge, barely staying in place, until I get to

the front of the dock. I turn and see her body tense up, her eyes wide. When I yell, "GET IT!" she runs at top speed down the dock, a little black blur racing past me, before launching herself in the air and into the water.

Tessa is a natural on the dock, as most Labs are. In DockDogs, Tessa holds a Senior Title, a Masters Title, and is on her way to earning an Elite Title. She also

holds a Turbo Title in DockDogs Speed Retrieve and recently won a First Place Cadet in Extreme Vertical, then jumped a personal best 6 feet, 4 inches to move into the Top Gun class. Her personal best is 24 feet, 11 inches.

It seemed unreal when we learned that Tessa had developed a squamous cell carcinoma in her mouth; two dogs with cancer in a row? In a way, it was Kadin – the dog we lost to cancer – who led us to the people who helped us get through this. Because of him, we met our veterinary oncologist, people who have gone through similar experiences and supported us, and people who are devoted to raising awareness and money for canine cancer research. Both of our beloved dogs are why we're devoted to Chase Away K9 Cancer; see chaseawayk9cancer.org for information about this great organization.

Our vets assured us that Tessa's chances of beating this cancer were good. We immediately began her treatment with radiation every day, Monday through Friday, for four weeks. Tessa lost weight and developed a urinary tract infection, and on some days she was tired. The radiation caused the fur on her chin to fall out, and the skin blistered. (The fur has since grown back, white.) Two immune system-boosting supplements (Eicoso-Derm and ImmunoSupport) helped quite a bit.

Reaching the one-year mark from the time of her diagnosis was a big milestone. Tessa's oncologist says she looks fantastic and believes she will be fine.

Watch Tessa's best performance at DockDogs; see youtube.com/watch?v=C74Mjzous8s

Left: Tessa with Linda and Randy and their son Quinn.



PHOTOS BY
MARTY BARRETT

In Praise of Prebiotics

Feed the “good guy” bacteria in your dog’s gut to help him get the most out of his food.

BY GREG TILFORD

Curly, a five-year-old Standard Poodle, eats the best food his human can afford. Raw chicken, rabbit, and venison are his favorites. Tina, his two-legged companion, switches the meats every few days, mixing the protein with some sweet potato, carrots, an occasional stalk of broccoli, and *always* a good fish oil supplement. Plus, to be sure that Curly is getting full nutritional benefit from every delicious bite, Tina always adds a sprinkling of a probiotic and digestive enzyme supplement as a final touch.

Everything Curly eats is the best of the best: human-grade ingredients, no preservatives, no by-products. But somehow, despite all of the good lovin’ and great food, Curly is a bit thin, won’t put on weight, and his stool is sometimes dry – making it hard for the poor guy to poop during his daily walks. Tina knows that something is amiss and she is worried. She was told that maybe the probiotics weren’t active, so she tried several different brands. But nothing has improved. So what gives; is it that the probiotics don’t work?

Adding supplemental *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*,

Lactobacillus bulgaricus, or other probiotic organisms to your dog’s diet is almost always a good idea. This will support the resident microflora that are always present in Curly’s gut, enhancing digestion and absorption of nutrients, supporting detoxification and elimination processes, and helping to boost his immune system.

The digestive system is the largest immune organ of the body; roughly 70 percent of the body’s immune cells, enterocytes, goblet cells, and other immune warriors reside in the mucosal linings of the intestinal tract.

Probiotics, like those that Tina adds to Curly’s food each day, work in concert with these immune warriors by producing special enzymes and other chemicals that support immune functions at many levels. Probiotics will also help keep populations of “bad guy” pathogens, like *Salmonella spp.* and *Escherichia coli*, in check.

But in Curly’s case probiotic supplements may not be enough. Curly’s digestive microflora need something more.

It may simply be that his digestive tract is host to a different assortment of beneficial bacteria than

What you can do . . .

- Give your dog a probiotic supplement that offers a variety of strains of beneficial bacteria.
- Nourish those “good guy” bacteria with a prebiotic supplement.
- Monitor your dog’s weight, the condition of his coat, his energy level, and the quality of his daily stool for signs that his diet needs to be adjusted in some way. What works well for some dogs may not benefit another dog in other circumstances.



There are many probiotic supplements available on the market. Make sure you provide a wide array of probiotic bacteria species to your dog. Use different products, or look for a product that contains multiple species.

those included in the supplements Tina is feeding.

One of the fundamental rules of holistic pet care is to always remember that no two animals are alike. Curly may be a Standard Poodle that looks and behaves like others like him, but his inner nature is different from any other dog.

This is true of his digestive flora, too. While *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, and *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* represent some of the frequently encountered residents in the canine gut, not all dogs are host to the same mix. In fact, studies have shown that each individual dog hosts its own, custom mix of these and several other digestive bacteria – and the actual counts of each strain can vary considerably from dog to dog. It is theorized that this is because microflora are constantly evolving and adapting to the nature of the beast they inhabit. Health

issues, eating habits, influences such as antibiotic therapies – or even something that was eaten while at the dog park – can affect the way beneficial microbes behave and replicate, or help determine which ones take up residence in the gut. This makes it virtually impossible to create a perfect probiotic supplement, as none can totally serve the needs of every dog's microflora.

If the probiotic you feed to your dog isn't diverse enough to replace and support what is already living there, what other supplements can be added to a healthy diet to maintain healthy digestive flora?

Feed the flora

Curly may need a *prebiotic* supplement. In the simplest terms, prebiotics are food for resident microflora. They are defined as indigestible food ingredients that beneficially affect the host by selectively stimulating the growth of one or a limited number of bacterial species in the colon – specifically those which have the potential to improve host health, such as *Bifidobacteria* and *Lactobacilli*.

A scant, daily dose will provide the resident beneficial bacteria with the food they need to flourish. It will also feed the bacteria that are in the probiotic formula that Curly the poodle is already eating on his dinner, making the supplement more effective.

Prebiotics are a class of carbohydrates known as oligosaccharides – soluble carbohydrates that are naturally found in many foods, including whole grains, onions, bananas, garlic, honey, leeks, and Jerusalem artichokes. In the world of herbs, burdock root, dandelion root, and chicory root are rich sources, too.

Oligosaccharides differ from other types carbohydrates (sugars) in that they are indigestible in the stomach and small intestine. Instead of being broken down by acids, enzymes, and other digestive chemicals in the upper GI tract, they remain intact until they reach the large intestine, where they are finally broken down and fermented by resident microflora. The result is stimulation of the growth and/or activity of bifidobacteria and other beneficial bacteria that dogs need to properly digest their food and metabolize waste.



Remarkably, prebiotics are selective about what is actually fed – good bacteria flourish, while growth of “bad” pathogenic bacteria like *Salmonella*, *Peptidococci*, and *Clostridia* is inhibited. Studies have shown that when bifidobacteria (good guy) counts increase, acid levels in the gut also increase, making the environment less hospitable to harmful strains of yeast (*Candida*, etc.) and pathogenic bacteria. In the colon, prebiotics may also raise levels of short chain fatty acids (SCFA), which can help protect against carcinogenesis, inflammatory bowel disease, and even some forms of chronic allergy.

Fructooligosaccharides (FOS)

Many pet food and supplement manufacturers are now adding prebiotic fructooligosaccharides (FOS) to their formulas to improve the digestibility of food ingredients. Fructooligosaccharides (FOS) are plant sugars that occur in a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and cereals. They are produced commercially by partial hydrolysis of chicory inulin (an oligosaccharide found in chicory root), or from sucrose (sugar) using an enzymatic process.

In addition to improving the digestibility of various food components, FOS may also improve absorption of dietary calcium, iron, and other important minerals. Although many foods contain appreciable amounts of oligosaccharides, questions remain about how much is really available to your dog from food sources. Dogs don't digest grains, fruits, and vegetables as effectively as humans or herbivores and therefore may not find full benefit from the oligosaccharides contained in the foods they eat.

On the same note, diets comprised primarily of meat will be pretty much void of prebiotic oligosaccharides. This is where FOS offers a big advantage; it is carried directly to your dog's large intestine, where it is needed. It is very sweet – much like powdered sugar – making it an easy addition to your dog's food. Only a small pinch (50-100 mg) is needed for the job of feeding the “good guys” in your dog's gut.

Herbal prebiotics

I prefer feeding prebiotics in the form of an herbal extract formula. Chicory root, burdock root, and dandelion root are my

favorites. All contain inulin, an oligosaccharide compound that is highly soluble and easily extracted into hot water. A properly made liquid tincture of any of these herbs will contain appreciable amounts of inulin in a form your dog can fully utilize.

Herbs offer a distinct advantage over isolated sources of FOS in that they provide much more than just prebiotic support. Chicory, burdock, and dandelion are all known by herbalists for their antioxidant properties and their abilities to strengthen various functions of the liver and gall bladder. This in turn helps to improve digestion and aid in removal of systemic waste.

My personal formulation, Prebiotic Plus from Animals' Apawthecary, contains extracts of inulin-rich chicory root, along with fennel seed (to prevent flatulence). It also includes marshmallow root (*Althea officinalis*), an herb that contains impressive amounts of mucilage polysaccharides that are known to soothe and lubricate digestive mucosa while stimulating immune functions in the gut.

Safety

Inulin and fructooligosaccharides (FOS) have been used in animal feeds and supplements for many years. They are considered safe, but overfeeding may cause flatulence and bloating – the effects of intestinal fermentation. This can usually be prevented by feeding only small amounts (e.g., one-half the recommended dose) for a few weeks until your dog's digestive tract adjusts.

Inulin has a minimal impact on blood sugar and does not raise triglycerides, making it suitable for diabetics and potentially helpful in managing blood sugar-related illnesses. 🐾

Greg Tilford is well-known in the field of veterinary herbal medicine. He is an international lecturer and author of four books, including Herbs for Pets, recently released in a second edition. He is president and formulating herbalist for Animal Essentials, a company that produces natural supplements for animals. Visit his blog at theanimalherbalist.com, or see animalessentials.com.



Demanding Times

How to eliminate your dog's "demand behaviors" (such as begging, whining, jumping up, or nose-nudging).

BY PAT MILLER

Missy sidles up to me as I type and nudges her nose under my arm, lifting my hand off the keyboard. "I want you to pet me, *now!*" she says. As much as I'm reluctant to reinforce demand behaviors, her rakish one-blue-eyed, one-brown-eyed expression is irresistible. My hand drops onto the soft fur of her head, and I scratch briefly behind her ear before asking her to go lie down. She obliges, curling up under my desk.

I laugh as Scooter, our recently rescued Pomeranian, stands on his hind legs in front of the sofa and waves his front paws at me. "I want up, *now!*" he says. Because he's cute, and because I want to reinforce his affiliative social behavior, I reach down and scoop up his furry little body and deposit him next to me.

These are "demand behaviors," often frowned upon in the dog training world. Yet, from another perspective, they are simply my dogs' way of communicating their desires to me. There's a grey area between acceptable communication and unacceptable demand behavior; what's perfectly appropriate to one dog-person

may be annoyingly inappropriate to the next. Who gets to decide what's acceptable for your dog? You do.

A dog's mission in life is to make his world work for him to get good stuff. His goal is to get as much good stuff as possible, perhaps including a safe, predictable environment, lots of attention from his human, opportunities to herd sheep or chase rabbits, plenty of bone-chewing time, hikes in the woods, running after flying discs, sailing over flyball hurdles, or a soft bed upon which to lay his body.

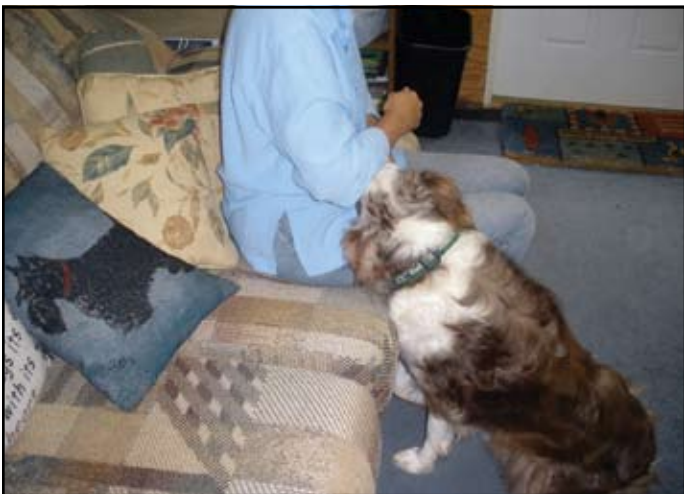
Recognizing that those with opposable thumbs are more able than he to open doors, throw tennis balls, and operate can openers, a dog spends a good part of his time figuring out how to manipulate his humans into making good stuff happen. Although he's never studied B.F. Skinner and the science of behavior, he knows exactly how operant conditioning works. He repeats behaviors that make good stuff happen or those that make bad stuff go away, and controls himself from repeating behaviors that make bad stuff happen or ones that make good stuff go away. (See "Operant Conditioning," next page.)

What you can do . . .

- Identify your dog's demand behaviors and make deliberate decisions about which ones to keep and which to modify.
- Embark on a behavior modification program to teach an incompatible behavior and extinguish the unwanted ones.
- Educate everyone who comes in contact with your dog so they don't inadvertently reinforce demand behaviors you're working to extinguish.



Demand behaviors occur because they make good stuff happen. Initially, your dog may offer a new behavior to see if it works. A dog with a strong reinforcement history for a behavior such as sitting may



Missy gets Pat Miller's attention by nudging Pat's arm or wrist, or shoving her whole head under Pat's elbow.



Then she fixes her arresting two-toned gaze on Pat's face. It's hard for any dog lover to resist such a winsome assault!

offer a sit to get your attention. If you, like a lot of humans, are too absorbed in your computer, your book, or your TV program to reinforce your dog for sitting, he may fidget a little, stand up and sit again, or inch a little closer to you.

If he's just looking for a scratch behind the ear, he may give up and lie down on his bed. But if his need is urgent – say he has to go out to pee – he may woof at you or nudge your arm to get your attention. When he does, you look at him and say, “Oh hi, Buddy, you have to go out?” He dances happily, you get up to let him out, and his brain registers this important note-to-self: woofing (or nudging) gets reinforced. The new behavior strategy gets added to his repertoire – and he'll happily generalize it when he realizes it works to get other things, like that scratch behind the ear. That's all fine and good if you're okay with your dog communicating with you by woofing or nudging. But if you find those to be undesirable behaviors, it's time to take note and take action.

It's all training

Every moment you are with your dog, one of you is training the other. Behaviors are constantly being reinforced – or not – and you and your dog are constantly making choices – deliberate, or not – about how to behave, based on which behaviors get reinforced. In general, your relationship with your dog is more successful if you are the trainer more often than you are the



Not everyone loves puppy kisses! Puppies should be reinforced with attention and petting for “good manners” behaviors such as sit or down. Ignore or turn your back on a pup for for pushy behaviors such as jumping up or licking.

trainee – that is, if you're manipulating your dog's behavior more often than he's manipulating yours.

When I realized this vitally important concept, I started paying a lot more attention to what my dogs are doing all the time, and started being more deliberate about reinforcing behaviors that I like, and not reinforcing those I don't.

While I really don't mind Missy's nose-nudge, when she comes and sits by my

chair, I do try to notice and pet her *before* the nudge happens. She also knows that my “That's all!” cue means petting is done; it's time to leave me alone. And if the nudge escalates to “paws scratching on my leg” I tell her “Oops!” and turn away. The “Oops” is a “no reward” marker (NRM). Just as the clicker tells my dog which of her behaviors earned her a reward, the NRM tells her the behavior she just did – pawing at my leg – made my attention go away.

Operant Conditioning

The scientific principles of operant conditioning, developed by behavioral scientist B.F. Skinner in the 1950s, apply to all creatures with a central nervous system. While the terminology initially can be confusing, if you remember the following definitions it's really quite simple:

Positive: Means something is added.

Negative: Means something is taken away.

Reinforcement: Behavior is likely to increase or strengthen.

Punishment: Behavior is likely to decrease or extinguish.

When you combine those terms you get the four principles of operant conditioning as follows:

Positive reinforcement: The dog's behavior makes a good thing happen; the behavior is likely to repeat or increase.

Example: The dog sits, he gets a treat; dog is more likely to sit again, perhaps faster.

Positive punishment: The dog's behavior makes a bad thing happen; the behavior is likely to decrease. Example (not recommended): The dog jumps up, he gets a knee in the chest; the dog is less likely to jump up.

Negative reinforcement: The dog's behavior makes a bad thing go away; the behavior is likely to increase. Example: The dog barks at the mail carrier when the mail gets pushed through the slot in the door; the mail carrier goes away. The dog is more likely to bark again next time mail is delivered, perhaps more ferociously.

Negative punishment: The dog's behavior makes a good thing go away; the behavior is likely to decrease. Example: The dog nudges a human's arm for attention, the human says “Oops!” and turns away; the dog is less likely to nudge next time.

You can avoid having to deal with demand behaviors if you remember an important concept from puppyhood on. The key is to teach your pup from the outset that *deference* behaviors such as “sit” or “down” will work to get attention, rather than pushy behaviors such as pawing or barking.

If you *never* reinforce a communication behavior that you don’t want, and you make sure it *never* gets reinforced by anyone else, or the environment, your dog will have no reason to keep the behavior in his repertoire. The more often a pushy behavior does get reinforced, the more likely your dog will decide it’s a successful behavior strategy, and the more quickly and persistently he’ll offer it the next time.

What is a demand behavior?

Before we continue, let’s define demand behavior. Also called “attention-seeking behavior,” Dr. Karen Overall in her excellent book, *Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Small Animals* (1997), says “Dogs that exhibit attention-seeking behaviors can bark, whine, or ‘talk’ to the client to get attention, or they can use physical behaviors like rooting, pawing, pushing, leaning, jumping, scratching, or mouthing.” According to Overall, “The hallmark of attention-seeking behavior is that it . . . elicits some attentive response.”

The problem with demand behaviors is that they are usually *intermittently reinforced* (sometimes the behavior gets reinforced, and sometimes it doesn’t), which



Almost every dog lover will pet a small dog who jumps up for attention. It takes a lot of effort to stop unconsciously reinforcing this behavior!

makes them very durable, or “resistant to extinction.”

This means that if and when you do decide to try to make the behavior go away, it’s difficult to succeed. With intermittent reinforcement, your dog learns to play the slot machine – “Maybe it’ll pay off *this* time!” – and keeps on trying, hopeful that the next try will win the jackpot. If, on the other hand, a behavior is on a “continu-

ous schedule of reinforcement,” the dog expects to get reinforced every time, and is likely to give up sooner after missing a few reinforcers when he realizes the game is no longer on.

Incompatible behavior

One way to modify demand behavior is to find an incompatible behavior – one your dog can’t do at the same time as the unwanted one – and reinforce *that*. Lucy, our Cardigan Corgi, has an annoying habit of demanding her meal – in a *very* shrill voice – when two of our other dogs get fed first (necessary for pack management purposes). She’s a very vocal dog anyway, but her mealtime barking is particularly annoying.

While you wouldn’t think that “sit” was incompatible with barking, I recently discovered that to Lucy, it is. She doesn’t bark when she’s sitting, only when she’s dancing around, demanding her dinner. So now I ask Lucy to sit-and-wait while I place bowls down for the first two dogs – and give her a treat when I return to her. The dinner-demand barking has stopped, and a reasonable level of calm has returned to mealtime in the Miller household.

If your dog nudges for attention, like Missy, an incompatible behavior might be lying at your feet to ask for attention, or touching her nose to a designated target – perhaps a yogurt lid stuck to the wall near her normal sitting spots. “Sit” is an incompatible behavior commonly taught to dogs who demand attention by jumping up.

The “No Reward Marker”

There is some difference of opinion in the positive training world about the appropriate use of the “No Reward Marker” (NRM). Some trainers suggest that simply withholding reinforcement, without a marker, is sufficient consequence to reduce a behavior, and that the use of a marker is too aversive. This can be true if the marker is offered in an aversive tone, or if the dog is sensitive to any suggestion that he did the wrong thing.

For example, some trainers use an “eh-eh,” “no” or “wrong,” as their NRM. All of these can be spoken softly, but they are often uttered in a harsher tone, with a subliminal meaning of “bad dog!” It may be unintentional, but people tend to use a harsher tone when they are even slightly upset.

I do use an NRM for my dogs, to communicate to them exactly which behavior earned the withdrawal of reinforcement. I believe that, like the clicker, it helps the dog identify the behavior in question. I like to use “Oops!” as my NRM; it’s almost impossible to say it in a harsh tone unless you try *really*

hard, and because it’s a humorous sound it tends to lighten the emotion even if the human is upset.

Marine mammal trainers don’t, as a rule, use an NRM. I am told that whales, dolphins, and other marine mammals tend to shut down very quickly if told they are “wrong,” and that lack of reinforcement is adequate to send them the “try again” message. The same is true with *some* dogs – and your choice to use an NRM, or not, is wisely based on your own philosophical position on the question as well as your own dog’s response to some kind of “Oops!” marker.

While we call it a “No Reward Marker,” any indication that the dog made a wrong choice is, in fact, a form of negative punishment: the dog’s behavior made a good thing – the opportunity to earn a reward – go away. So, while it might be more accurately called a “Punishment Marker,” I recently saw it described by noted positive trainer Gail Fischer as a “Loss of Opportunity Marker,” or LOM. I like that, and think I’ll use it. Thanks, Gail!

Extinguish the behavior

The other way to modify demand behavior is to remove all reinforcement for a previously reinforced but now unwanted behavior; say “Oops!” and turn away. This is “negative punishment”; the dog’s behavior makes the good thing go away, and when carried out to its conclusion (the behavior goes away entirely), it’s called “extinction.”

If the dog jumps up, say “Oops!” and turn away. If he persists, walk away, perhaps even through a door, and close the door behind you. Or, practice with him on a tether so he can’t follow you. The behavior of jumping up results in the removal of all reinforcement. If he demand-barks for treats, say “Oops!” and turn away. If he paws at you to demand his walk, say “Oops!”, put the leash down, and sit until he calms, then pick up the leash again.

A caveat about extinction is that when you use “removal of reinforcement” to extinguish behavior you may witness an *extinction burst*, in which the dog’s behavior becomes worse before it gets better. This is a frustrated canine’s equivalent of a temper tantrum because a behavior that used to work isn’t working any longer. It often happens shortly before he gives up.

As he nudges or paws harder, or barks louder, he’s saying, “Hey! Hey! I want it! I want it now! This used to work, darn it! Hey! Hey! Give it to me!” It’s the equivalent of kicking the soda machine when you’ve put your money in and it won’t give you your drink – before you finally decide to walk away without the soda.

Here’s the big problem with the extinction burst. Many people think the extinction process isn’t working when they see their dog doing the behavior louder or harder, and give in to the dog’s demands. Don’t! If you reinforce the more intense presentation of the behavior, your dog will offer the more intense version more quickly next time. Grit your teeth, turn your back, walk away, and wait for it to stop. Beware the extinction burst!

Or both

You’ll see the best results with your demand-behavior modification efforts if you do both: reinforcing an incompatible behavior *and* extinction. You’ll get the most bang for your treat if you:

1. Pre-empt the unwanted behavior by asking for and reinforcing an incompatible behavior. With enough repetitions, the



Some dogs get their owners’ attention by doing something “naughty” like chewing a wallet or getting on forbidden furniture. They aren’t being willfully “bad.” They’ve simply learned that these behaviors always elicit some attention!

incompatible behavior will become the dog’s offered “default” behavior. When it does, be sure to reinforce it, gradually putting the new behavior on an intermittent schedule of reinforcement so it becomes very resistant to extinction. Otherwise the dog may quickly revert to his original demand behavior, especially if the behavior has a long history of reinforcement.

2. Remove reinforcement if the unwanted behavior *does* occur. If you miss the opportunity to pre-empt the behavior, or your efforts to forestall the behavior didn’t work, your second line of defense is the “Oops!” Remove your attention until the behavior stops and you can reinforce an alternative or incompatible behavior.

3. Reinforce an incompatible behavior. Your dog will be the least frustrated (and you’ll be the most successful) with your extinction program if you also remember to positively reinforce incompatible behaviors. Negative punishment works best when it’s followed by positive reinforce for a desirable behavior.

If Missy starts pawing at my leg, I say “Oops!” and turn away. When the pawing stops I turn back and give her the attention she seeks. I use a “variable schedule of reinforcement” – sometimes waiting longer after the pawing, sometimes only a second or two. I gradually increase the average wait time until she realizes that it’s waiting quietly with her paws on the floor that gets reinforced, not the pawing.

This is an important step, required to

avoid creating a “behavior chain” of paw, turn away, get petted. If there’s only a brief pause between the pawing and the petting each time, she’ll *still* think that pawing is earning the reward of attention and petting.

Remember that consistency is vitally important. If a well-used demand behavior is reinforced even only rarely, it will likely persist. If Dad sneaks a bit of steak to the family dog under the table once a month, the dog will continue to beg for food at the table. If, instead, Dad tosses a bit of food occasionally to the family dog who is lying on his bed on the other side of the dining room, the dog will learn to “beg” by lying politely on his bed (a deference behavior) on the far side of the room. This is much more acceptable to most people than begging at the table.

Remember, *you* get to choose which behaviors you want to reinforce. If you *like* a particular demand behavior, be my guest – reinforce to your heart’s content. So yes, I consistently reinforce Scooter’s demand-waving, and the behavior will persist. I intermittently reinforce Missy’s nose-nudging, and it, too, will persist – although in my defense I only reinforce mild nose-nudging. But Lucy’s demand barking? That one we’re very consistently working to modify. Sorry, Lucy! 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT, is WDJ’s Training Editor. Miller lives in Hagerstown, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Pat is also author of many books on positive dog training. See page 24 for book purchase and contact information.

Preview the WHOLE DOG JOURNAL HANDBOOK of Dog and Puppy Care & Training for the next 30 days RISK-FREE!

YOUR DOG MAY NOT CHASE THE POSTMAN, BUT YOU SHOULD!

When you act now, you can preview this brand-new book, packed with over 365 pages of valuable training and dog care guidance, without risking a single cent!



Written by *Whole Dog Journal's* editors, this instructive and comprehensive resource will show you how to...

- ✿ *Make your dog an eager and responsive learner with positive training techniques.*
- ✿ *Foster his vigor, appearance, and well-being with wholesome nutrition.*
- ✿ *Safeguard his health and minimize illnesses with natural medicines and healing techniques.*

PLUS, the Handbook champions common sense and compassion when it comes to addressing a dog's illnesses or injuries... from the judicious use of vaccines to effective herbal and holistic treatments for those diseases that can threaten your dog's life.

IN THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL HANDBOOK YOU'LL DISCOVER...

- The biggest mistake owners make when crate training (p. 71)
- The safest place to store dry dog food (p. 176)
- The easy fix for boredom barking (p. 41)
- The simple test that could save your dog from unnecessary vaccination (p. 248)
- A natural shampoo formula that can help keep your dog flea-free (p. 201)
- The taboo training technique that can cause aggression (p. 148)

YOUR 100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEE

The Whole Dog Journal Handbook of Dog and Puppy Care & Training is yours to read and use for 30 days absolutely **risk-free!** If you aren't fully satisfied, you may return the book for a full, immediate and unquestioned refund.

Get Your Copy of WDJ's Handbook of Dog and Puppy Care & Training Today!

Three Easy Ways to Order!

1. Call 1-800-571-1555
2. Log on to: www.Whole-Dog-Journal.com/Handbook
3. Mail the coupon below:

WHOLE DOG JOURNAL ORDER FORM HANDBOOK OF DOG AND PUPPY CARE & TRAINING

YES! Rush me the *WDJ Handbook of Dog and Puppy Care & Training* **risk-free!** If the book does not exceed my expectations I may return it within 30 days for a full refund!

My check for \$19.95 + \$5 shipping (\$24.95 total) is enclosed

Charge my: Amex VISA MC

Account No. _____ Exp Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: Whole Dog Journal Books, PO Box 221004, Beachwood, OH 44122-1004

Fostering Success

How to maximize the joys – and minimize the perils – of fostering a needy dog or puppy.

BY NANCY KERNS

Had some prescient person warned me that I would spend nearly \$1,000 on vet bills; miss out on a lot of sleep; experience many worried and tearful moments (and a certain amount of marital strife); and lose untold hours on observing, training, shopping for, and cleaning up after that puppy I was considering taking home as a foster; would I still have done it?

Ah well, it's a moot point. I *did* bring a puppy home from my local shelter, with the intention of spending a week or so socializing him to the world of humans (which he seemed to have little experience with), and then sending him back to the shelter to find a terrific forever home. And while I never sent him back to the shelter, I did find him a *really* wonderful forever home, so the story ends happily. I'm glad I did what I did, and I would love to foster another dog or puppy again someday. Knowing that I made a life-or-death difference for that one darling puppy still fills me with a warm feeling of satisfaction.

But, to be perfectly honest, I'd want to be much better prepared before I fostered again. It was an experience I could barely afford – financially, emotionally, and in terms of the time I could spend on the pup. I made it work, but the experience took

its toll. I'd want to be far more prepared next time, so as to maximize the joys and minimize the perils of the undertaking.

My loss, your gain? Allow me to give you some helpful tips, in case you are thinking about providing a rehabilitative home, albeit a temporary one, for a needy dog or puppy. I can now share my own experiences, as well as those of a number of other foster providers (see page 22). If you are properly prepared for some of the worst things that can occur while fostering, you can prevent many of them, or at least be ready to deal with them in a graceful way. And that will make the joy of a successful fostering experience that much richer.

Who pays?

Before you bring a dog or puppy home with you, it's a good idea to find out who will end up footing the bill for his food and care. Otherwise (if you're like me), you could end up getting so attached to and involved with your ward that you find yourself spending more than you can really afford on his rehabilitation – which might make you reluctant or unable to foster again any time soon.

Some rescue organizations pay for all the costs associated with their foster animals; their foster volunteers invest only time and love in the animals' rehabilitation. Other groups rely heavily on their volunteers to subsidize rescue efforts. It's smart to know *before* you bring a needy animal home what amount of financial support is available for your fostering efforts.

I've fostered twice before. Both

What you can do . . .

- Foster a needy dog or puppy if you can! But be realistic about what you are and are not able to take on.
- Make sure you thoroughly understand and agree to the shelter or rescue group's requirements. If you don't, you shouldn't take one of their dogs.
- Be considerate of your own family members. It's not fair to subject your senior dog to a rowdy pup, or your children to an aggressive dog.



times, I agreed to take a needy pup from a nonprofit rescue organization in the San Francisco Bay Area. This particular group rescues animals from local shelters, places them with foster providers, invests in the animals' medical needs, and then finds them qualified homes. The organization provides food and (if needed) basic dog-care items such as collars and crates. It also manages oversight of the animals' veterinary care, with paid staffers calling to remind foster providers to make appointments for whatever veterinary care the animal needed. It's a model of what can be done in animal rescue.

Veterinary visits (for spay/neuter surgery, vaccinations, deworming, and the like) are provided by clinics that work closely with the rescue group; the group maintains accounts with the clinics. Had one of the foster pups become ill, I would have been able to bring the puppy to that clinic for treatment.

This is the puppy that WDJ Editor Nancy Kerns brought home from a shelter to foster, intending to spend a week or so socializing him . . .

The project turned into a month of nursing as he developed kennel cough, then pneumonia.



The Goals of Fostering

The idea behind fostering is simple: to provide a temporary home for a dog in need of a lifelong, loving, responsible home. But there is a lot to it, if you do it right. The goal is to help the dog become as healthy as possible – physically, behaviorally, and emotionally – so he'll be a star in his new home, and (one hopes) never require rehoming again. Here is a partial list of the things that a foster provider should be trying to accomplish in order to help the dog find a solid position in an appropriate "forever" home:

■ **Physical health.** Dogs with any sort of health problem will need special help and time to recover; individuals with digestive or skin problems, in particular, are hard to find homes for. A foster provider who can spend the time needed to diagnose and successfully treat a chronic problem like food or environmental allergies is worth her weight in gold.

■ **Socialization.** The dog should gain positive experiences with a wide range of humans, including babies, kids, seniors, and people of different races. He should also be exposed to other dogs and puppies. Poor responses (fear, aggression) should be noted and improved through counter-conditioning and desensitization.

■ **Management and supervision.** The foster dog should have adequate supervision so as to prevent him from being allowed to practice undesirable behaviors that could damage his potential for placement.

■ **House-training.** The foster provider should be ready to spend whatever amount of time that it takes to provide elementary or remedial house-training for the dog; this may be a matter of days, weeks, or months, but it's critically important. Dogs who are not reliably house-trained are *very* frequently returned by inexperienced owners.

■ **Ability to be left alone.** In today's society, most dogs have to spend a certain amount of time home alone, whether it's just for a few hours or a long work day (complete with a long commute time). Ideally, dogs and puppies should be given the opportunity to learn how to entertain and comfort themselves during alone-time in short but progressively longer increments. Food-stuffed Kongs are great tools for this purpose.

■ **Basic training.** If a dog or puppy learns to perform just one behavior on cue – sit! – he'll be miles ahead of most dogs that prospective adopters see in shelters. And if he knows a *few* behaviors – such as sit, down, and come – he'll be a genius in many adopters' eyes. If he knows a cute trick, too, such as "sit pretty" (sitting on back end, waving front paws), "high-five," or bowing, he'll find a home in no time at all.

■ **Behavior modification.** In addition to counter-conditioning for fear and aggression, the foster parent is ideally willing and able to work to modify other typically unwanted behaviors such as jumping up, mouthing, excessive barking, counter-surfing, and chewing.

The staff members coordinate and track the foster animals, schedule and staff weekly adoption events in the community, manage a website with information about each available animal, and process applications for potential adopters. The staffers also do a tremendous amount of fundraising in order to pay for these very extensive efforts on behalf of a few hundred animals per year.

Many breed and dog-sport clubs run their own rescue networks that operate in a similar, but less-organized way. They keep an ear to the ground for news of dogs in need and maintain a roster of volunteers who can help assess dogs, transport them (sometimes across long distances), and provide foster care. These efforts are sometimes subsidized (in whole or part) by the volunteers themselves, and sometimes supported by the club. Most clubs that rescue dogs undertake yearly fundraising or grant-writing projects that help pay for the care and feeding of their canine guests.

Established financial support structures are critical for groups that take on a significant number of rescue dogs and

that depend on repeat volunteers. Few volunteers can afford to personally subsidize extensive veterinary care or the feeding of numerous dogs. Groups that depend too heavily on their volunteers to pay for their foster animals' care usually don't manage to keep their volunteers for very long.

Then there are shelters, which tend to run on notoriously tight budgets. Few shelters can afford to reimburse foster providers for any extraordinary care they seek out on behalf of their charges, although there are exceptions, particularly in large cities with large pools of donors.

Like many less-well-funded shelters, my local shelter sometimes makes a project out of a really special dog who has faced extensive challenges, such as severe abuse. But I doubt that they can afford to "go to the wall" for every sick puppy in their care. Had I been completely unable to afford the care I thought the puppy needed, I knew that my shelter would have taken him back – although I'm not certain they would have given him the extensive treatment he needed to recover. I could have asked about partial reimbursement for some of

my foster puppy's medical bills. However, since I frequently donate money to the shelter, I decided that the puppy's vet bills, instead, would constitute my good canine deed for this quarter.

Helpful guidance? Or oppressive rules?

A prospective foster provider should also find out whether the rescue group has strict guidelines for its foster parents – or whether it offers any guidance, training, and support at all.

Some groups assume that only experienced, knowledgeable dog owners will volunteer to foster; providers are on their own to decide how the dog will be housed and trained. If their temporary wards exhibit health or behavior problems that are beyond their level of experience, they will probably have to figure out how to deal with it by themselves.

Other groups provide new foster providers with an orientation or basic training session, or give their potential foster providers a notebook full of "recommended" practices or guidelines. This may or may

not be backed up with phone or e-mail support from an experienced dog owner who serves as volunteer coordinator.

Then there are the organizations that have formalized the entire fostering process; some of these won't put a dog into the care of anyone who won't sign an agreement that compels providers to feed and train the dog a certain way.

I've heard of foster groups that require dogs to be fed *only* the food provided by the group; without fail, these foods have been provided by dog food companies that make what I consider to be low-quality foods. Perhaps even more offensive to me is the prohibition on feeding treats of any kind, even for training purposes. (Personally, I couldn't care for a dog without using this very powerful tool for training and behavior modification.)

And while I think the ability to be calmly crated is an incredibly important life skill for a dog to possess, I've learned about rescue groups that require their foster providers to crate every dog, every night – and for periods during the day, too. I understand that they are trying to ensure that potential adopters will be reasonably assured of receiving a house-trained, crate-trained dog – one that is unlikely to be returned to the rescue group.

I've also heard of organizations that require every foster dog to wear a headcollar, whether or not the dog needs or can be comfortably accustomed to that gear. Again, I'm not sure I could agree to such inflexible policies.

Finding him a home

It's also a good idea to find out what the rescue group or shelter does to find homes for its wards. Some groups take total responsibility for finding and screening potential adopters. Ideally, they run public adoption events; display promotional fliers at local vets, pet supply stores, and dog parks; and maintain an attractive and frequently updated website; and share their list of adoptable animals with Petfinder.org and other sites.

Even if the rescue group takes responsibility for finding an adopter for your foster dog, you will probably be expected to host "interviews" between the dog and prospective adopters, and to transport the dog to and from various adoption events.

This might sound like a lot of work for you, but groups that do less to promote their adoptable dogs may rely on you to do even more. Many rescue groups do a

poor job of promotion and marketing of their adoptable animals, and some rely almost solely on their foster providers to find homes for their wards.

Ask the foster coordinator about the efforts that will be made to find a home for your ward. Make sure you understand what the group expects you to do to help find a lifelong, loving home for your canine foster, and that you can meet those expectations.

Extraordinary support

Well-established rescue organizations generally have policies and support in place to address whatever sort of emergency might arise with a dog in foster care. In many other cases, though, providers may be left to their own judgment and resources to deal with the emergency.

I've talked about vet bills for the foster dog, but what about your own dog? Are you prepared to pay the bill if your foster ward infects your pet, necessitating a trip to the vet (or hospitalization) for your dog? A friend told me recently about a vet bill she had to pay when a dog she was fostering for a rescue group attacked her dog, who needed stitches, drains, antibiotics, and extended care.

As my friend's story illustrated, health problems are not the only emergency that can develop with a foster dog. Serious behavior problems can crop up without previous warning, resulting in a painful bite (or deadly attack) on your own dog, cat, kid, or self.

It may develop that a foster dog has serious behavior problems; many dogs seem to be well-behaved individuals when they are, in fact, so stressed by their changing environment that they are actually "shut down," responding in a slow, deliberate manner. Sometimes when these dogs become comfortable in a home and begin to relax, they may begin to exhibit behaviors that are beyond the ability of the foster provider to address.

Ideally, a rescue organization or shelter will have ready access to a really experienced positive trainer or behavior professional who can offer further

assessment, advice, and support. Be advised, however, that this sort of backup is rare; you may be on your own with serious behavior problems. Which brings me to the final thing to ask about before bringing your foster dog home . . .

Right of return

Keep it in mind that *any* foster parent, no matter how experienced, can become overwhelmed by the extraordinary needs of a deeply troubled dog or puppy. *Make sure that the rescue group or shelter can take back your foster dog if you find yourself in dire straits.*

Remember, you have a responsibility to your own family to consider, too. Despite your best efforts to prevent it, your sick puppy may infect your own dog, and leave you nursing two dogs. (This happened to me, too; Otto "caught" my foster puppy's "kennel cough." As a healthy adult dog, he didn't get very sick, but he had a horrible, raspy cough for a week or so. It was loud enough to prompt several of our neighbors to ask whether he was choking!) Unintentionally facilitating a foster dog's aggressive attack on one of your own family members – human, canine, or feline – would be even worse.

As upsetting as it can be for any well-intentioned dog lover to feel forced by circumstances to return a foster dog, it's even *more* disturbing when the rescue group lacks the ability to provide a backup placement. Being stuck with a dog who puts you, your pets, or your family members in jeopardy may well turn you away from fostering ever again.

Beware organizations or individuals

who pressure foster parents to "stick it out a little longer," no matter what problem their foster dog is exhibiting. In some cases, they may be counting on the foster provider to "fall in love" with the dog and adopt it. Many of us have good reasons for wanting to provide foster care, rather than adopting another dog. Groups

that take advantage of their foster providers in this way soon find themselves without foster providers. 🐾

Nancy Kerns is Editor of WDJ.



My foster pup finally got well, and learned a lot from his time with my family, especially "Uncle Otto." Best, he was adopted by a perfect family.

“The Most Selfless Thing You Can Do for a Dog” – Fostering Stories

Chris Danker, CPDT, of Albany County, New York, has fostered for more than 30 years. “Fostering is more than taking the dog into your home. It is spending quality time with the dog, exposing her to as many situations as possible. I hear stories of foster providers who have dogs living in crates until the ‘right home’ comes along. That is not fostering; it’s warehousing.”

She warns: “When fostering, be ready for anything. The progress these animals make is worth seeing. Be ready to give up your time, sleep, and probably some money.”

Liz Marsden, CPDT, trains in Washington, D.C., and Connecticut, and says she has been a “serial foster provider” for many years. “What would I warn people about? Be careful when you say you will foster; you might just end up with 10 or 15 dogs who are former fosters and now yours!”

Leslie Fisher is a positive trainer in Maryland who describes herself as a “failed foster” – meaning she ended up adopting each of the three dogs she originally took on as fosters. “Bridget CGC and Talley are much loved and they both help in my business. Recently I became involved with the Lab Rescue of the Potomac Valley, which is how I met four-year-old Doobie. I think he was a foster for all of 12 hours before I knew he needed to be part of my pack. If you are like me, you cannot help but become emotionally attached during the nurturing process. However, fostering is the most selfless, wonderful thing you can do for a needy dog.”

Saving a life, and making a family happy, are some of the reasons that Seattle resident **Dana Mongillo** fosters dogs and cats. “One of my first foster experiences, Shelby, was an 11-year-old shepherd-mix with ACL and hip issues plus pneumonia; her age and health would have made her an easy euthanasia at a lot of shelters, but the Seattle Animal Shelter thought there might be a forever home out there for her, and there was! She was with us for six months before we found the ideal family. It was hard to say goodbye, but once we found the right home it felt like the right thing to do.

“Tigger, a Border Collie/Rottie-mix, came to us at nine months. He was wild, but with tons of exercise he turned into a nice dog. We found a great family for him within weeks. Two years later I saw him back at the shelter! I fostered him again, but exercise did not help this time; he now had severe separation anxiety. I found this out when I left him alone in the car at the grocery store. He attacked the dashboard and seats and took chunks out of all four door panels. It was my husband’s car, so I had a lot of explaining to do that night!

“Tigger was a charming, friendly dog, but very anxious when left alone. We had a dozen interviews for him in five months, but once people would see him in his anxious state, it was over. He is now a cherished member of our family – the sweetest, goofiest guy. We can’t imagine life without him!

“Watching your foster dog jump into the car to drive off with his new family is bittersweet but ultimately happy. Every foster dog that you place leaves a space in your home for you to help another dog in need!”

Frequent WDJ contributor **Mary Straus** shares, “About 15 years ago, I agreed to foster a one-year-old blind Shar-Pei for what I thought was to be just a few days. The person who does Shar-Pei rescue in my area was going away for that long and my understanding was that she would take him when she got back. That didn’t turn out to be the case.

“The good part is that it changed my view of blind dogs forever. It was amazing how well Pumpkin got around. The problem was that I already had two dogs, and I didn’t want a third. I waited for almost two months for the rescue person to find a home for him. She finally admitted that she wasn’t really looking to find him a home because she was hoping that I would adopt him. I felt she had used me and been dishonest with me from the beginning. I ended up making her take him back herself (something I feel guilty about to this day), because that seemed to be the only way she would ever find him a home. In the end it worked out. He was adopted by folks I had met at my vet’s office, but the whole thing left a bad taste in my mouth. And it was dumb, because good foster providers are a lot harder to find than good adopters.”

In Ohio, **Bonnie Becker** has fostered Cairn Terriers “almost continuously” for the Colonel Potter Cairn Rescue Network since 2001. “One memorable foster was the nine-year-old female turned over to a shelter by a ‘rescue group’ that bought her at auction from a puppy mill. She had been burned, probably by a defective heating pad in her cage, and had gone for some time without treatment. One of our volunteers is a long-haul trucker who picked her up and took her to a vet in Chicago for treatment. Her skin had been damaged for so long that the vet didn’t know whether enough healthy skin would be left to pull over the area after the dead skin was debrided away. Her treatment exceeded \$2,000, but we were able to save her and she became a real beauty. She’s living in Georgia now and gets walks along a river there where there are many birds, squirrels, and other small critters for her to enjoy seeing.

“To anyone considering fostering: Go for it. It’s a wonderful, life-changing experience, and a great way to give back. My lifelong friends in rescue support each other in bad times and cheer with each other in good times.”

Lesley Bastian, of Annapolis, Maryland, has volunteered at the SPCA of Anne Arundel County for six years. She recently enjoyed her first fostering experience. “I am still giddy! I was fortunate enough to foster a momma Pit/Lab-mix and her eight puppies for two weeks in April. One of those puppies had kennel cough and had to stay with me for an additional two weeks. She had a typical puppy disposition and the energy to go with it, and I showered her with love and attention while she was here. I’ve done many fun things in my life, but I think this has been one of the most rewarding so far.”

Bastian said it was difficult to return the dogs to the shelter to find homes, but says she realizes that “the shelter is a stepping stone into their future. I trust that my shelter has the best interest of the animals at the core of their operation. If I didn’t believe that, I couldn’t have returned my pups.” 🐾

DON'T PINE FOR A LOST ISSUE!

Back issues of
Whole Dog Journal
are available

Order back issues in one of
TWO convenient ways:

Mail this order form, along with
a check or money order, to:

The Whole Dog Journal, P.O. Box 5656, Norwalk, CT 06856-5656

Or log on to whole-dog-journal.com
and click on "back articles" to
purchase articles and immediately
download them to your computer

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6/09 Dogs Who Chase Cats • DNA Breed Detection Tests • Socialization • Flyball • The Positive Approach to Otto's "Off!" | <input type="checkbox"/> 4/08 New Dog, Now What? • Calendula: Herb of the Year • Why Vinyl Stinks • Mixed-Age Dog Pack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5/09 Prevent Chewed Shoes • Interview With Victoria Stilwell • Find the Right Rawhide • Fence Sense • Earthdog | <input type="checkbox"/> 3/08 Tales of the Lost Appetite • Teaching Your Dog to be Calm • Grain-Free Dog Foods • Chiropractic and the Conditions It Cures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4/09 Selecting a New Dog • Canine Health Insurance • Teach Your Dog to Swim • Wait Versus Stay | <input type="checkbox"/> 2/08 Dry Dog Food Review • Behavior Myths • Acupressure for Vitality • Energy Med, Pt 5 (Color Therapy, Body Tapping, Directed Energy) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3/09 Happy Nail Trimming • Bike With Your Dog • Social Matters • EPI • Acupressure for Injuries | <input type="checkbox"/> 1/08 Dog-Dog Introductions • Antibiotic-Resistant <i>Staph</i> • Nighttime Visibility Products • Energy Med, Pt 4 (Crystals, Energy Balancing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2/09 Annual Dry Food Review • Teach Your Kids to Train the Dog • Run With Your Dog • Hand Signals | <input type="checkbox"/> 12/07 No Play Like Snow Play • Training Senior Dogs • The Best Warm, Dry Coats • Energy Med, Pt 3 (Homeopathy) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1/09 Gear of the Year • Top Wet Foods • Homemade Low-Fat Diets • Shelters, Good and Bad | <input type="checkbox"/> 11/07 Core Conditioning • Training for Reliability • Top Treats • Energy Med, Pt 2 (Flower Essences, Kinesiology, Animal Communication) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12/08 Sharing Your New Dog With Your Partner • Teaching the Recall • Canine Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome • More Novel Foods • Healthy Low Fat Diets | <input type="checkbox"/> 10/07 Resource-Guarding • Training for Reliability • Build a Healthy Hound • Holistic Healthcare Basics • Intro to Energy Medicine |
- To find more past topics, see www.whole-dog-journal.com/search

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____
_____ BACK ISSUES @ \$7.50 EA. \$ _____
POSTAGE & HANDLING \$ 2.00
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

RESOURCES

BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of *The Power of Positive Dog Training*; *Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog*; *Positive Perspectives II: Know Your Dog, Train Your Dog*; and *Play with Your Dog*. All of these books are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com

The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and *Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats*, by WDJ contributor CJ Puotinen, are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com. Puotinen is also author of several books about human health, including *Natural Relief from Aches and Pains*, available from your favorite bookseller.

HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AHVMA), 2214 Old Emmorton Road, Bel Air, MD 21015. (410) 569-0795. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search ahvma.org

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

Pat Miller, CPDT, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Hagerstown, MD. Train with modern, dog-friendly positive methods. Group and private training, Rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com

Gail Fisher, owner, All Dogs Gym & Inn, Manchester, New Hampshire. (603) 669-4644; alldogsgym.com

Terry Long, CPDT, DogPact, Long Beach, CA, is a writer, agility instructor, and behavior counselor. She provides pre-adoption counseling, behavior modification, and group classes in pet manners and agility. (562) 423-0793 or dogpact.com

The **Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)** has references to member trainers in your area. Please note that 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. See "How to Choose a Dog Trainer" on the APDT website: apdt.com. (800) 738-3647

Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers

Sorry, no phone number available; ccpdt.org

Truly Dog Friendly Trainers

Sorry, no phone number available; trulydogfriendly.com

WHAT'S AHEAD

Action Plan

Five things to do if your dog starts going potty in the house.

Herbal Safety

How to identify a "top quality herbal supplement."

Do You Smell Something?

Our new sports series gives "fun nose work" a sniff... It's good!

Canine Intervertebral Disc Disease

The most effective treatments for this potentially crippling disease.

Ready For a Baby?

How to prepare your dog to accept your new family member with aplomb.

Look here:

Unauthorized copying or distribution of WDJ is not permitted

This publication is supported by sales of subscriptions and back issues. The fact that we are NOT supported by advertising sales gives us the editorial independence necessary to present a subjective and critical view.

If you would like to share material from WDJ with a group, please contact our Reprint Manager, Jocelyn Donnellon, at (203) 857-3100.

