



# Puppy Kit





## Lake Minnetonka Pet Wellness Center

Wayzata

Phone: 952 471-0911 [www.tonka.vet](http://www.tonka.vet)

**Westonka Animal Hospital & Laser Surgery Center**

Mound

Phone: 952 472-4900 [www.westonka.vet](http://www.westonka.vet)

### Vaccine Schedule for Puppies

This is just a guideline; each patient's vaccine and deworming schedule will be specific to their needs

**6-7 week visit: (note: we recommend that pets are adopted at 8-9 weeks of age)**

- Wellness exam with the doctor
- Distemper Combination (distemper/hepatitis/parainfluenza/parvovirus)
- Nematode Deworming (1 of 2)
- Intestinal Parasite exam

**8-11 week visit: (any procedure not done previously)**

- Distemper Combination Booster
- Bordetella Booster
- Nematode Deworming (1 of 2 -or- 2 of 2)



Active Outdoor

- Heartworm Prevention (started at 8 wks of age, monthly Mar-Nov.)
- Flea/Tick Prevention (apply monthly Mar-Nov.)

**12-15 week visit: (any procedure not done previously)**



- Distemper Combination Booster-12 wks of age is when they start building their own immunity
- Lyme Vaccine Series started (1 of 2) –for puppies at risk

**16 weeks+ visit: (any procedure not done previously)**

- Distemper Vaccine booster
- Lyme Vaccine Series booster, or begin series if not started-for puppies at risk
- Rabies vaccine

**20 week visit:**

- Leptospirosis vaccine will need to be boosted in 4 weeks, then annual boosters

#### Notes:

- ❖ A minimum of 2 Distemper combination vaccines are recommended on/after 12 weeks of age.
- ❖ A minimum of 2 Nematode Dewormings are recommended for puppies 6 weeks of age and older.
- ❖ We recommend 2 wellness exams with a doctor. One at the first visit, then the second after 20 weeks of age or at the time of spay/neuter.
- ❖ After their schedule is completed these vaccines will then be good for 1 year
- ❖ This is a wellness schedule; if your pet becomes ill/injured there will be an ill/injured exam with possible additional diagnostics necessary.
- ❖ We also have "Puppy Play Time" the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month. This is for puppies 8-16 wks of age for socialization and "Happy Visit" to the Vet.



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# **I Want To Have The Sweetest Dog In The World**

## **Or "Anti-Mouthing Puppy Training"**

By teaching your puppy to defer to you, it allows you to teach tolerance to a your puppy and to become his leader rather than his master. Playful aggression that is unchanneled or actually encouraged may ultimately result in a dog that is too dominant. Biting and protective aggression are problems caused by inappropriate training or lack of training. Early intervention is the answer for prevention of aggressive behavior. Puppies are pack animal by nature and they need to learn to defer or submit to you, the leader of the pack. For breeders, lessons can be started with newly weaned puppies. To you, a new puppy owner, you should start training as soon as your puppy arrives home.



### ***Puppy Playful Aggression***

Puppies are fun to play with. We all know that. Dogs are pack animals and hunters by nature. When pack animals play, they are often practicing their skills for how to socially climb up their [dog pack's hierarchy](#).

Here is a little test just to make sure your puppy is trying to get you to play. During the play sequence at some point the dog should exhibit either a "play bow" or some other typical play posture. If that occurs near the time of the aggression, it should help to identify this as "play related aggression."

Unfortunately, a few puppies practice these skills too aggressively and inadvertently injure their stewards (their human family members). However, with some changes in how we, their stewards, interact with them, many times these behaviors can be corrected.

1. First and foremost, a good positive reinforcement based puppy class is perhaps the best starting place. The basic skills of sit and stay may be taught (nothing too advanced for puppies).
2. Be sure to provide plenty of exercise, training, play session and play toys to meet your puppies needs. Dogs left home all day with nothing to do build up energy and



enthusiasm. They need to have a productive outlet for this pent up energy. Make sure your puppy has plenty of opportunities for exercise and play.

3. Be sure you and your family is controlling the play. You (your family members) should initiate and terminate all play sessions (which should include some command and reward training within). Your puppy should not initiate nor terminate the sessions. The humans should pick up the toys to initiate play, not the puppy. Play should be something that you can control such as fetch with two toys, (therefore no need to wrestle the ball away). Your family should always stop the play short of him/her becoming highly aroused. Then ask him/her to sit, perhaps perform a few other obedience tasks, when your puppy is under control, play could be started again. You should teach your puppy to consistently [defer to you and your family.](#)

### ***Playful Biting In Puppies***

Puppies should not be allowed to bite a human hand. Playful interactions among littermates, even as early as 3 – 4 weeks of age, teach how hard to bite to inflict pain. When owners tolerate play bites because they are “cute”, the puppy learns to bite hard. A littermate in the same situation would yip and stop the play when the bite became painful. Punishment for biting is inappropriate, because the puppy behavior is a normal one, just unacceptable. Owners need to stop the interaction as soon as mouthing occurs and either: 1. leave the area 2. divert the puppies attention or 3. ignore the puppy (the “Invisible Puppy Game”)

If your puppy begins to bite during play or bites to get attention you can:

1. walk away, go inside and stop the session - do not reinforce his/her behavior. The lack of play or attention is the punishment for noncompliance.
2. use a command to get your puppy to settle, for example, to go to his or her mat., or to redirect into alternate play toys
3. ***play the “Invisible Puppy” Game.*** This is a great technique for everybody, but especially children who might be not be strong enough to use a head halter or to teach the puppy to sit.

The Invisible Puppy Game is based upon the observations made when two puppy littermates are playing together. When the first puppy bites the second puppy too hard, the second puppy will cry “YIP” informing the first puppy that he is hurt and will ignore the first puppy for a few minutes.

Humans can do the same. When your puppy places it mouth around human skin, the person should “YIP”, like a puppy would. Stop whatever activity you are doing with the puppy, then simply ignore the puppy. For children, tell them to “Yip”, stop the game they are playing immediately and pretend that the puppy is “invisible” for few minutes, that it can’t even be seen.



Continue to play the game even as the puppy learns to place his mouth on the skin gentler and gentler. Essentially what you are teaching the puppy is that that human skin is more sensitive than it truly is. Continue this game until the puppy no longer continues to bite.

4. train with a head halter such as a Gentle Leader Promise Collar  
If head halter can be worn during play, a command and quick pull upwards should close the mouth and stop the nipping. If your puppy settles and plays again without biting it can be continued (or repeat the pull and release if the biting recurs).



### ***Preventing Food Bowl Aggression***

The food bowl is another area where early lessons can be very helpful in preventing dominance aggression and protective aggression. Young puppies should be readily allow the owner to pick up its food. When small children are in the family, this lesson is particularly important because children have a habit of trying to take things from dogs. Lessons to teach acceptance should be started before there is a problem.

### ***Puppies Should Tolerate Handling By Others***

Puppies also need to tolerate other lessons that will facilitate handling them as adults. Having the puppy lay on his/her back until the puppy stops struggling and stops whining is a good exercise for people, including visitors to the home.

### ***Get Puppies Accustomed To Handling Techniques Used On Adult Dogs***

For puppies, it is best to get them accustomed to handling techniques that will most likely be exposed to as an adult. These special handling techniques include cleaning of ear canals, brushing of teeth, trimming of the toenails, grooming, and wearing a collar and leash. Getting puppies accustomed to these techniques when they are still young will save you a lot of time and energy when the puppy grows up.

If these actions are not tolerated or result in growling or biting, the owner should continue the challenge firmly, but not abusively (do not hit the puppy), until the puppy's behavior is no longer aggressive. The challenge should then be repeated frequently until the aggression is no longer elicited.

### ***Games – Do's and Don'ts***

Games played with a puppy are extremely important in shaping its future behavior. Only those behaviors acceptable in an adult dog should be considered acceptable in a puppy. The owner must always be able to control access to a toy, so the puppy is never to win a game of tug-of-war. In general, we do not recommend tug-of-war games. Toys should be given to the puppy at the start of play and physically taken away before the puppy is through playing.

Owners should never chase the dog to get a toy – “Chase Me” should not be allowed to become a game. Instead, the environment should be managed by an enclosure or leash to ensure that the owner controls the situation. Rambunctious play should be with a toy rather than with the owner’s arms or legs.

Fetch is a great game to play if you can teach your puppy to fetch. Try starting with two or three exact duplicate toys or balls when training to fetch. This will facilitate training your puppy to drop the toy he has in his mouth at your feet before he chases after the second toy being thrown.

### ***Reward For Obeying Commands, Not For Being Cute***

Encouragement and reward for following you should also be practiced to help the puppy see the human as the leader figure. Rewards should be given for obeying a specific command, not just for being a cute, fuzzy, carbon-based life form. Rewards can be tidbits of food and petting, which may be interpreted as grooming of a subordinate by a dominant.

Although the attention span of puppies is short, they are capable of learning simple lessons in obedience. Learning to sit and lie down on command will reinforce the dominance of an owner. Shaking hands, licking, rolling over by the dog are submissive behaviors that also reinforce the owner’s higher social position. For puppies, food rewards and tactile interactions are usually more significant than verbal praise, however combinations should be used to classically teach the puppies relationships of dominant human to subordinate dog.





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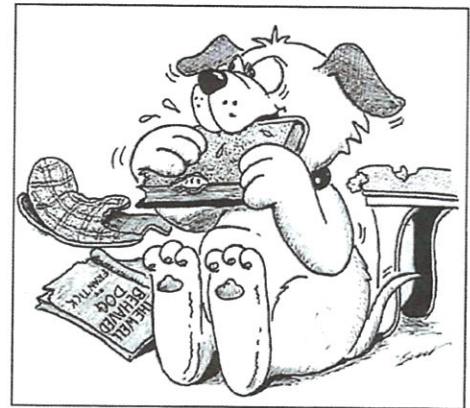
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## **DESTRUCTIVENESS – CHEWING**

### ***Why do dogs chew?***

Dogs, especially puppies are extremely playful and investigative. While play with people and other dogs is an important part of socialization and social development, exploration and object play are important ways for dogs to learn about their environment. Therefore it is a normal behavior for puppies to investigate their environment by sniffing, tasting and perhaps chewing on objects throughout the home. Dogs that chew may also be scavenging for food (as in garbage raiding), playing (as in the dog that chews apart a book or couch), teething (dogs 3 to 6 months of age that chew on household objects), or satisfying a natural urge to chew and gnaw (which may serve to help keep teeth and gums healthy). Some dogs may chew because they receive attention (even if it is negative) or treats from the owners each time they chew, but the owners are inadvertently rewarding the behavior. Chewing and destructive behaviors may also be a response to anxiety. Dogs that are confined in areas where they are insecure may dig and chew in an attempt to escape. Dogs that are in a state of conflict, arousal or anxiety, such as separation anxiety, may turn to chewing and other forms of destructiveness as an outlet. (see our handout on ['Separation anxiety'](#) for this specific problem).



### ***How can chewing be treated?***

First, determine why the dog is chewing. If the dog is a puppy or young adult dog that is chewing at a variety of objects in the household, it is likely that play and investigation (and perhaps teething) is the motive. Dogs that raid garbage and steal food off counters are obviously motivated by the presence and odor of food. Some dogs are attempting to escape confinement while in others chewing may be an outlet for anxiety. Determining the cause and motivation for chewing is therefore essential in developing a treatment strategy. Directing the chewing into appealing alternatives, sufficient play and exercise, and prevention of inappropriate chewing are needed for the exploratory dog. You must ensure that you are not inadvertently rewarding the behavior. Inattention or disruption devices may be useful for these dogs. If the dog is a puppy this behavior may decrease in time, provided you direct the chewing to proper outlets. Dogs that are garbage raiding or food



stealing need to be treated by supervision, prevention and booby-traps, since the behavior itself is self-rewarding. Dogs that are destructive to escape confinement must learn to become comfortable and secure with the cage or room where they are to be confined. Alternatively a new confinement area may have to be chosen. Dogs that are destructive as an outlet for anxiety, will need to have the cause of the anxiety diagnosed, and the problem appropriately treated. (See our handout on '[Separation anxiety](#)').

### ***How can proper chewing be encouraged?***

Before considering how inappropriate chewing might be discouraged the real key is to provide some appropriate outlets for your dog's chewing "needs." Begin with a few toys with a variety of tastes, odors, and textures to determine what appeals most to the pet. Plastic, nylon or rubber toys may be the most durable, but they tend not to be so palatable or tasty to dogs. Coating such toys with liver or cheese spread or peanut butter may also increase their desirability.

The Kong™ Toy is a durable rubber chew toy, but its appeal can be greatly enhanced by placing a piece of cheese or liver inside and then filling it tight with biscuits. Placing soup items or food into the Kong and freezing it, or freezing food items in "Popsicle" makers and placing them in the dogs food bowl may provide a little longer durability to the treats. Since the development of the Kong there are now a wide variety of durable toys that can have food stuffed or frozen inside or placed into small grooves in the toy, so that the dog needs to "work" to get its reward (see our handout on 'Behavior management products'). Another group of dog toys have compartments that can be filled with food. The dog needs to manipulate the toy by rolling, chewing or shaking to get the food treats to fall out. To ensure that your puppy is encouraged and rewarded for chewing on its toys, and discouraged from chewing on all other objects, it must be supervised at all times. Whenever supervision is not possible, you must prevent access to any object or area that might be chewed.

In general, we advise caution when owners offer rawhides, cow hooves, or pig's ears for chewing treats. They tend to damage the enamel of teeth over time. Despite the fact that they were designed to be eaten, some dogs do not digest rawhide well. Many dogs will get an inflammatory reaction to the treat and will vomit or get diarrhea. Some dogs will not chew them properly or thoroughly enough so the rawhide will be digested too slowly or cause a partial intestinal obstruction.

### ***How else can my dog's activity be reduced?***

The needs of most working dogs are usually satisfied with daily work sessions (retrieving, herding, sledding, etc),



A Kong Toy For Dogs Who Like To Chew. They are hollow and can be filled with treats. Visit [www.kongcompany.com](http://www.kongcompany.com)

while non-working house-pets will require alternative forms of activity to meet their requirements for work and play. Games such as tug-of-war, retrieving, catching a ball or Frisbee, jogging, or even long walks are often an acceptable alternative to work, allow the dog an opportunity to expend unused energy, and provide regular attention periods. Obedience training, agility classes and simply teaching your dog a few tricks are not only pleasant interactive activities for you and your dog, but they also provide some stimulation and “work” to the dog’s daily schedule.

### ***How can I stop the chewing on household objects?***

Access to all areas that the dog might chew must be prevented unless the owner is present to supervise, or the area is effectively booby-trapped. Your dog can only be punished for chewing if it is caught in the act. Even then, punishment must be humane, immediate and effective. A shake can, verbal reprimand, or alarm (audible or ultrasonic) can deter the pet in your presence, but the behavior will continue in your absence. Remote punishment (where the owner is out of sight while administering punishment) may teach the dog that the behavior itself is inappropriate (see our handout on ‘Canine punishment’). A head halter and long remote leash pulled each time the dog chews, a water rifle, remote citronella collar or one of the audible or ultrasonic alarms may be effective. However, none of these products are practical when the owner is absent or cannot supervise. Arriving home and punishing a pet for an act that is already completed will only serve to increase the pet’s anxiety.

The only way that chewing might be deterred when your dog cannot be supervised, is to booby-trap the areas where the dog might chew. To be successful the punishment must be noxious enough to immediately deter the pet. Taste or odor aversion is often the simplest and most practical type of booby trap but many pets will have to be conditioned in advance to detest the smell or taste by squirting anti-chew spray (eg. bitter apple,) into the pet’s mouth or across its nose. A small amount of cayenne pepper mixed with water, oil of citronella or commercial anti-chew sprays may also be successful as deterrents. Alternatively, the spray could be placed on any object that the dog might chew and a fishing line can be attached from the object to a stack of empty cans on a nearby table or counter. At the instant chewing begins the stack will come crashing down. Most dogs are then conditioned after a few events to avoid the particular taste or odor for fear of another “can attack”. A shock or alarm mat, mousetrap trainers, indoor invisible fencing (citronella spray or “shock”), or motion detectors are a few other examples of environmental punishment (see our handouts on ‘Behavior management products’ and ‘Canine punishment’).

### ***What if the dog continues to chew household objects?***



Whenever you cannot supervise or monitor your dog's behavior, he or she should be confined to a cage or dog-proof room with any potential chewing sites effectively booby-trapped.





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## **AGGRESSION – INTRODUCTION TO AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR**

### *What is aggression?*

Aggression is defined as threats or harmful actions directed toward another individual. In animals, aggressive behaviors are a means of communication. Dogs and cats use aggressive displays, threats and attacks to resolve competitive disputes over resources (territory, food) or to increase their reproductive potential. “Aggression” describes the behavior, but does not give any information about underlying motives or causes. Aggression can have multiple motivations.

### *How is aggression classified?*

Aggression can be subdivided into type based on intended victim, body postures during aggression, and other factors such as the animal may want, estrus status of animals involved, and location of the aggressive encounter. In determining the diagnosis, the factors surrounding the initial aggressive event are important considerations, since over time the effects of learning (consequences) including the actions of the owner and the stimulus (i.e. person or other pet retaliates or retreats) will affect how the aggression is displayed.



Ethologists, persons who study animal behavior, use the term ‘agonistic’ to refer to the behavior of animals (usually of the same species) that involves conflict or contest. These encounters can involve fighting, escape, dominant and submissive gestures and posturing. Aggressive behavior can also be divided into offensive and defensive aggression. In dogs and cats the supposed function of the aggression is most commonly used as the basis of classification:

Dominance (status related) related, possessive, protective and territorial, predatory, fear induced, pain-induced, parental, redirected, play, intermale, interfemale, and pathophysiologic (medical) in origin.

Note that there is no one single cause of aggression. In addition, an individual pet can display one or more forms of aggression and that multiple factors and stimuli may combine to push the dog or cat to a point where aggression is displayed. For example, a dog may be territorial as well as fearful of children. This dog can only exhibit aggression however, when it is cornered or tied up and cannot escape, and a strange child comes onto the dog’s property. When the dog learns that snapping or growls are successful at chasing the child away who has been hugging the dog, the dog may begin to generalize its aggression toward similar stimuli (e.g. other children) and similar situations (hugging).

### *Are aggressive dogs and cats abnormal?*

Aggressive behaviors may be “normal”, but when they result in human or animal injury, the behavior is dangerous and unacceptable. Human safety must always be a primary consideration when discussing

aggression. More than two million bite wounds occur annually across North America and most people are bitten by animals they own or are known to them. It is important to be able to identify aggressive dogs and cats to prevent injuries wherever possible.

Some aggression in dogs and cats may have abnormal components and be the result of genetics, disease conditions ranging from hormonal imbalances to organ disease, environmental influences or experience and learning. However, even though health problems and degenerative changes may be present, they may or may not contribute to the aggressive behavior.

### ***How do dogs communicate their aggressive behaviors?***

By watching the body postures and facial expressions of dogs, it is possible to find an indication of what the dog may do. When a dog is reacting to intrusion, the first sign may be eye contact as when two dogs meet. In some cases, the more dominant dog will maintain eye contact, until the more subordinate dog looks away.



Prolonged eye contact may be considered a threat by both dominant and subordinate dogs. Dogs that are acting subordinate by looking away may feel threatened by continued eye contact and bite out of fear. A dominant and/or assertive dog can react to continued eye contact by holding the stare and escalating its aggressive threat. In some dogs a dark iris or hair occluding the eyes may make eye contact difficult to ascertain.

### ***What happens next?***

If the dog believes the intrusion is continuing, the dog may escalate the threat by exposing the teeth and snarling. Snarling is not always accompanied by growling and may only be an upward movement of the lips. Long pendulous lips, long hair or beards on the face may obscure seeing such lip movements. Ear position in dogs can also give clues to canine intentions. A subordinate dog will usually place the ears back as will a fearful dog. An assertive dog will have ears erect. Again, visualization of these positions can be inhibited by conformation, coat and cosmetic surgery.

Dogs will also attempt to change the way they position their body in reaction to a perceived threat. A dog standing its ground tries to look "bigger" by raising the hair along the neck and back, raising the tail in a high position and slowly wagging its tail from side to side. Other dogs attempt to look "smaller" by crouching down, tucking the tail between the legs and even rolling over. Crouching and a lowered body posture in dogs is an appeasement posture designed to decrease the aggressive threat. While maintaining either of these postures a dog may be growling, snarling or barking. These postures can result in a stand off, a decrease or an increase in the aggression.

### ***What does an aggressive cat look like?***

Often the first sign is a dilation of the pupils (the dark part of the eye) and rapid lateral movements of the tail. This may be accompanied by putting the ears back and hissing or growling. In addition, the cat may "swipe" at the intruder with a front paw, either with the claws sheathed or exposed. Sometimes the cat will gather its legs under and appear ready to pounce. If the intruder is not too close, or begins to leave, the aggressive encounter may end.

Cats have other more dramatic body postures that signal "go away". Cats frequently try to enhance their size and ferocity to make the threat more menacing. They will do this by turning sideways to the intruder, arching their back, holding the tail upright or straight down, and having their fur stand up. They may hiss,



growl and yowl at the same time. In other situations a cat may crouch down, tail switching back and forth with the ears tight against the head, again with accompanying vocalization. A cat anticipating a fight may roll onto its back with claws extended ready to fend off a foe.

### *How should I respond to these behaviors?*

The distance between the animal and the intruder can be influential in determining response. This is often called the "flight" distance. If the intrusion is far away the animal may choose to flee, but if the intrusion is very close the animal may choose to fight. If flight is inhibited, as in a dog or cat that is cornered or tied up, aggression or fight is likely to occur. Most dogs, and some cats, on their own territory are more likely to fight than retreat and dogs with their owners may also stay close rather than retreating. When approached rapidly, a dog or cat may go through the stages of aggressive behavior very quickly and bite without the intruder being able to react. This may happen in encounters between people and their pets because they may approach too close, too fast. On a similar note, dogs that are highly aroused may react with a defensive response almost reflexively in comparison to a dog that is calm enough to make a quick assessment of the approaching stimulus and "decide" on the appropriate response. Dogs and cats that are mildly fearful may calm down if the intruder shows no fear, waits until the pet settles, and then offers a food reward. Reaching for a dog or cat, while continuing to advance is most likely to lead to aggression. Standing still is often the best way to reduce aggression in the dog that is chasing.



Cats will often flee if given the opportunity. However some cats will stand their ground and will scratch or bite if reached for. Bites are most likely if the cat is cornered or restrained and cannot escape, but some bold, confident cats will exhibit territorial displays to intruders on their property in much the same manner as they might chase another cat off of the territory.

In some cases, despite standing still, avoiding further advance or retreating, the aggression continues. Since aggression depends on the situation, the pet's level of motivation, previous experiences and the type of aggression, it will be necessary for you to provide a detailed history to your veterinarian in order that an accurate diagnosis, and appropriate treatment plan be established. Details on the diagnosis and types of aggression in dogs and cats can be found in separate handouts.





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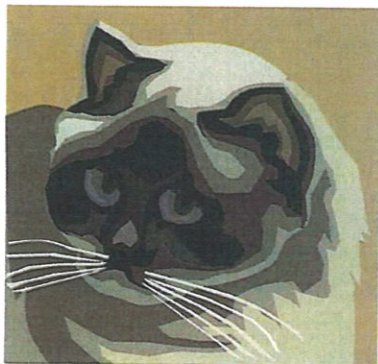
## **General Neutering and Spaying Information For Pet Owners**

### **When can I have this procedure done?**

Both procedures can be performed as early as six weeks of age. Most pets are done close to six months of age though.

### **Why should I have my pet neutered?**

Animal shelters, both public and private, unfortunately are faced with an incredible burden: What to do with the overpopulation of dogs and cats that they cannot find homes for. Estimates across the country indicate that over 10 million animals will be humanely euthanized at shelters each year, due to the sheer fact that there are not enough homes. Having your pet neutered or spayed ensures that you will not be adding to this tremendous burden.



### **What are some of the health benefits?**

Through neutering or spaying, you can help your dog and cat live a happier, healthier, and longer life.

Spaying eliminates the constant crying and nervous pacing that is a sign that a cat is in heat. Spaying also prevents uterine infections (common in pets not spayed and not bred) and uterine and ovarian cancers. Early spaying also prevents breast cancer.

Neutering stops the mating drive in males, reducing the urge to roam, which in turn, reduces the risk of fights, injury, poisoning, accidents, and contracting diseases. If you have more than one pet in your household, all the pets will get along better if they are neutered. It also prevents testicular cancer and helps to prevent other tumors of the anal area. Neutering also prevents the bladder from herniating through the pelvic canal.

### **Isn't it true that you only need to "fix" female dogs or cats?**

Absolutely not! A male animal can father thousands of offspring in his lifetime. Roaming tomcats fighting other cats are a neighborhood nuisance and are prone to develop infections and abscesses from their fighting. An intact male may also develop the bad habit of marking its territory by urine marking.

### **Neutering just costs too much!**

The cost of caring for a pet, including providing veterinary care, should be considered before acquiring an animal. If you would like to provide a good home for a pet, but cannot pay for the neuter, call your local animal shelter. They will be happy to provide information on low-cost neutering. The costs of having a litter are often more than the cost of neutering. There could be complications requiring hospitalization or surgery. You will be faced with finding homes or keeping the offspring yourself or placing more animals into your local shelter. The cost of the well-being of not just your companion animal but of future generations should be considered.

**Can't I allow my purebred dog to have just one litter?**

Mixed breed or purebred -- there just aren't enough homes. Animal shelters receive purebred animals everyday. *Responsible purebred breeders have homes for their pets before they are born.*

**I don't even own a pet! Why is this my problem?**

All of us are affected by animal overpopulation. Millions of tax dollars are spent annually to round up lost, abandoned, and unwanted pets. Much of that money is spent to destroy these animals when homes cannot be found. Health is threatened by the danger of transmittable diseases, including rabies, animal bites, and attacks. Property may be damaged and livestock killed when pets roam in search of food. Animal waste, proving a serious environment hazard, foul yards and parks. It is only when all of us assume the responsibility for pet overpopulation that we will see any decrease in the problem.

**Isn't it wrong to deprive an animal of the natural right to reproduce?**

No, it's wrong to allow these animals to reproduce millions of unwanted offspring that are eventually killed because there aren't enough responsible homes.

**If I find homes for my pets' litters then I won't contribute to the problem, right?**

Wrong. Only a certain number of people want pets. So every home you find for your pet's offspring takes away a home from a loving animal already at a shelter.

**Shouldn't every female pet have at least one litter before being spayed?**

No. In fact, your pet will be healthier if she never sexually matures. Her personality will not improve if she has a litter.

**Shouldn't children experience the miracle of birth?**

Yes, they can experience this. But to have a pet bred for that reason is irresponsible. There are other venues to have children experience this. A more important lesson to teach your child would be responsible pet ownership and concern for life by explaining why their pet should not have babies.

**Doesn't neutering or spaying alter an animal's personality?**

No. Personality changes that may result from neutering or spaying are for the better. Not being distracted by the instinctual need to find a mate helps your pet stop roaming and become calmer; though not less protective of their territory.

**Won't animal shelters take care of the surplus animals?**

No. Shelters do their best to place animals in loving homes, but the number of homeless animals far exceeds the number of available homes. This leaves many loving and healthy animals in our community that must be euthanized as the only humane solution to this tragic dilemma. Only spaying and neutering can end the overpopulation problem.







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# Your Pets Are Counting On You To

## Learn About Laser Surgery



Westonka Animal Hospital/ Lake Minnetonka Pet Wellness Center are some of the first private practices in the country to use a laser surgical unit. This breakthrough technology, which was only available before to research institutions is now available to your pet.

Rather than a scalpel blade, a laser uses a highly focused beam of light about the size of this

period, → . ← to vaporize cells and nerve endings.

### **Why use laser surgery?**

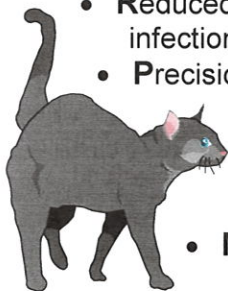
- Less pain – the laser seals nerve endings as it “cuts”, so your pet may require less anesthesia during the operation, reducing the risk of complications. Pain and swelling after surgery is also significantly reduced.
- Less bleeding – The laser seals small blood vessels during surgery, making the routine procedures virtually “bloodless”.
- Less swelling – Laser surgery does not crush, tear, or bruise because there is no physical contact with the tissue.

### **What does this mean for my pet?**

- **Reduced risk of infection** – the laser sterilizes as it removes diseased tissue, killing bacteria that cause infection.
- **Precision** – the laser can remove unhealthy tissue without affecting or removing surrounding healthy tissue. For example, the laser will vaporize any cancer cells and will not potentially allow cancer cells to break off or “seed” adjacent tissue such as might happen with a scalpel blade. Also, it allows the surgeon to remove as little as one skin layer at a time for extreme precision.
- **More Effective Cancer Surgeries** - the laser will vaporize any cancer cells and will not allow cancer cells to break off or “seed” adjacent tissue such as might happen with a scalpel blade. Broken off cancer cells, which may occur with a scalpel blade, may travel through lymphatic ducts to other distant parts of the body while the surgery site is healing. That is why ethically, we feel we must mandate that all cancer surgeries be performed with the laser.
- We do not want the surgery to be the cause for a cancer to spread to other parts of the body.
- **Quick Return to Normal Activities** – Healing is rapid and there is less post-operative discomfort.

Laser procedures reduce the trauma to your pet, improve healing, and may shorten time spent in the veterinary hospital.

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## What Do I Need To Do Before My Pet's Surgery?

**Thank you for choosing us to perform your pet's surgery. We have prepared this sheet for you as reminder of what you'll need to do in preparation for your pet's hospital admission.**

We need your cooperation to help your pet. We would like you to:

- ✓ No food after 10 p.m. the evening before surgery. Water is OK. They can have water till they get here. Sometimes, vomiting occurs when we are sedating pets for surgery or when pets are under anesthesia. Food vomited during sedation can be inadvertently aspirated into the lungs and cause respiratory problems. For dogs 5 pounds or less, it is recommended to give a small breakfast to your dog the morning of surgery as they do not store energy as well as cats or larger dogs
- ✓ If your pet is staying overnight please bring enough of their own food for two meals. If your pet is on a Special Diet please bring 1-2 meals worth of that food and give feeding instructions at time of check-in.
- ✓ There are no restrictions from water. Your pet is not restricted from drinking water; your pet may even have water the morning of surgery.
- ✓ Your pet's surgery date and drop-off time is: \_\_\_\_\_  
If you are unable to keep your surgery appointment, please tell us at least 48 hours in advance.  
  
If you have a pet scheduled to have surgery with a board certified surgeon, it is absolutely critical you tell us at least 48 hours in advance. Because the surgeon charges us for his/her time even if the client forgot to bring the pet in, we are obligated to pass this cost on to the client who forgot or who did not inform us of a cancellation.  
  
We are closed Wednesday mornings from 8:00am – 10:00am for our weekly staff meeting.
- ✓ After your pet's surgery we will set up a discharge appointment. This appointment can be made for any appointment time after 10 AM on the day that your pet can be released. There is no charge for this brief appointment during which a staff member will go over home care for your pet and answer any questions you may have. In order for you to get the most convenient time, we ask that you schedule this appointment when you drop your pet off for surgery.

We will email an estimate and a surgery and anesthesia consent form for you review and print out in the comfort of your home or office.

**If you have any questions prior to your pet's surgery please do not hesitate to call us at (952) 472-4900.**



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## PUPPY – TRAINING BASICS

### *At what age can I start training my new puppy?*

You will be training your puppy from the moment you bring it home and start to house train. Puppies start learning from birth. Good breeders encourage handling and socialization from birth. Some training can begin as soon as the puppy can open its eyes and walk. Young puppies have short attention spans but expect them to begin to learn simple obedience commands such as 'sit', 'down' and 'stay', from as young as 7 to 8 weeks of age. (Ask for our handouts on 'Rewards - learning and reinforcement', 'Puppy training – sit, down, stand, and stay'; and 'Puppy training – come, wait and follow' for training on the specific tasks).

Formal dog training has traditionally been delayed until 6 months of age. Actually this juvenile stage is a very poor time to start. The dog is beginning to solidify adult behavioral patterns, dominance behavior is beginning to emerge, and behaviors learned in puppyhood may need to be changed. In addition anything that has already been learned or trained incorrectly will need to be undone and retaught.

When training is started at 7 to 8 weeks of age, use methods that rely on positive reinforcement and gentle teaching. Puppies have short attention spans, so training sessions should be brief, but daily. Puppies can be taught to 'sit', 'down', and 'stand' using a method called food-lure training. We use food treats to entice the dog to follow its nose into the proper positions for 'sit', 'down', 'stand', and 'stay'.



### *How do I get started using food lure training?*



Small pieces of food or a favored toy can be used to motivate your puppy to perform most tasks. Provided the reward is sufficiently appealing, the puppy can be prompted to get the desired response by showing the puppy the reward, giving a command, and moving it to get the desired response. For example, food held up over the puppy's nose and moved slowly backwards should get a 'sit' response; food drawn down to the floor should get a 'down' response; food brought back up should get a 'stand' response; food held out at a distance should get a 'come' response; and food held at your thigh as you walk should get the puppy to 'hee'l or 'follow'. By pairing a command phrase or word with each action, and giving the reward for each appropriate response, the puppy should soon learn the meaning of each command. The use of rewards and the specific training commands are covered in separate handouts on Rewards – learning and reinforcement for dogs and cats; Controlling stealing and teaching the "give" command; Teaching – sit, down, stand and stay; and Training puppies – come, wait and follow.

### ***How often should I give the command?***

Ideally you should give the command phrase once and then use your food to move the puppy into positions. Once the puppy has performed the task, add in verbal praise and an affectionate pat, which are known as secondary reinforcers (see below). Some trainers also use clickers as secondary reinforcers. If the puppy does not immediately obey on the first command, then you are likely proceeding a little too quickly. If you keep repeating the command, the puppy will learn that several repetitions are acceptable before it needs to obey. Keeping a leash attached can help to gain an immediate response if the puppy does not obey.

Remember that early in training your puppy does not know the meaning of the word. Therefore you could just as easily teach your puppy to sit with the word bananas, (or sit in any other language) as you could with the word sit. The key is to associate the word, in this case "sit", with the action of placing the hind end on the floor.

***How should I phase out the lure and food rewards?*** At first you are going to let the puppy see the food in your hand so that you will have her attention and can



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use it to guide her into position. As your puppy begins to comply more readily, you can start to hide the food in your hand, but give the command and repeat the motion or signal that she has learned to follow. Soon the puppy will come to expect the treat each time she performs the task. Then, signal and give the command, but when she performs the task, reward only with praise and give the puppy an affectionate pat. Next, you can begin to vary the frequency, giving praise with; 'good dog' and perhaps patting each time, but giving the food randomly, perhaps every 3 or 4 times. In time, the puppy should respond to either the hand signal or the command

Over time, the words "good dog" or the affectionate pat become secondary reinforcers. Because they have been paired with food in the past, they take on more meaning and become a reinforcement in themselves. It is important to use secondary reinforcement because you will not always have food with you when you need your pet to obey. In addition, if you rely on food to always get your puppy to comply, you will have a puppy that will only do the task when you have a treat.

At first training may begin in designated sessions throughout the day, with a variety of family members. All rewards should be saved for these training sessions. Over time however, you should begin to ask your puppy to perform the tasks at other times.

### ***How much time should I spend training my puppy every day?***

You do not necessarily need to train in a set session daily. Rather, integrate these tasks throughout the day. A goal to strive for is at least 15 minutes of training every day. These can be short 5 minute sessions spread throughout the day. Try to have all family members ask your puppy to do these tasks. Remember to try and train in every room of your house. You want your puppy to 'sit', 'lie down' and 'stay' everywhere, not just in the training location.

Use these training tasks as you integrate the puppy into your life. For example, ask your puppy to 'sit' prior to receiving her food, 'sit' before you let her in or out the door, and 'sit' before you pet her. These are times when your puppy wants something and is more likely to comply. In this way you are training your dog all the time, throughout the day and also establishing yourself as the leader, the one



who controls the resources. Training your puppy prior to getting each reward also helps to prevent problems. Having your puppy sit before getting a food or treat prevents begging, while teaching your dog to sit before opening the door can prevent jumping up or running out the door. Be creative. The time you spend training your puppy now will pay off when you have an adult dog. To have a well-trained dog, you need to be committed to reinforcing the training tasks on nearly a daily basis for the first year of your puppy's life. The more you teach and supervise your puppy, the less opportunity it will have to engage in improper behaviors. Dogs do not train themselves, when left to choose their behavior they will act like dogs.

### ***What can be done if my puppy is too distracted or excitable to control?***

Training should begin in a quiet environment with few distractions. The reward chosen should be highly motivating so that the puppy is focused entirely on the trainer and the reward. Although a small food treat generally works best, a favorite toy or a special dog treat might be more appealing. It might also be helpful to train the puppy just before a scheduled mealtime when it is at its hungriest. For difficult puppies or headstrong puppies the best way to ensure that the puppy will perform the desired behavior and respond appropriately to the command is to leave a leash attached and to use a head collar for additional control. In this way, the puppy can be prompted into the correct response if it does not immediately obey and pressure released as soon as the desired response is achieved. (see our handout on 'Management devices in dog training') Clicker training is also an excellent way to immediately and strongly reinforce the desired response. (See our handout on 'Rewards – learning and reinforcement').



### ***Should I also consider training classes?***

Pet owners who are novices at training can begin a training program with these few simple steps. It takes repetition, time and perseverance for the puppy to be able to predictably and reliably respond to commands in a variety of situations. The training class serves many functions. Of course trainers can demonstrate techniques and help guide you through the steps in training. They can help advise you on

puppy training problems, and can help you advance your training to more difficult exercises. The puppy will be learning in a group situation, with some real life distractions. And, considering human nature, the pet owner who takes his or her dog to a puppy class, will be forced to practice (do their homework) throughout the week, if they do not want to fall behind by the next class. A training class is a good place to meet and talk to other new puppy owners and see how all puppies behave.

Training classes for young puppies are also an excellent way to socialize your new puppy to a variety of people, other dogs, and stimuli, in a controlled environment. In addition, you will learn how to prevent problems before they can begin, or deal with them as they emerge, rather than having to find a way to correct problems that have already developed. Your puppy might also make some new friends of the same age. You could then visit these friends (or vice versa) with your puppy for social play and exercise sessions. Since the primary socialization period for dogs ends by 3 months of age, puppy socialization classes are most valuable for puppies 8 weeks of age and older. If all puppies in the class have had initial vaccinations, are healthy and parasite free, the health risks are low and the potential benefits are enormous. Discuss when to start and the location of classes in your area with your veterinarian.





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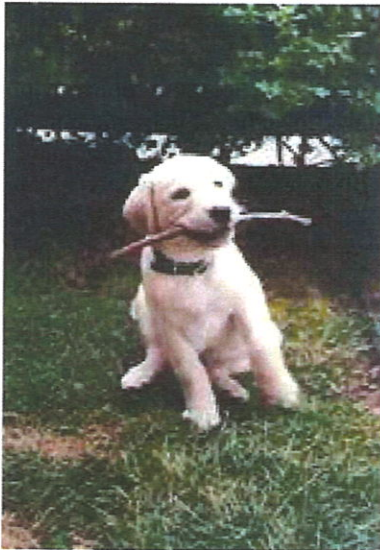
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## **PUPPY TRAINING: SIT, DOWN, STAND, AND STAY**

### ***How do I teach my puppy to 'sit' on command?***

Using a food treat, hold the food over the dog's nose and slowly move it up and back over the dog's head. As the puppy follows the food with its head it will sit down. Now couple the word 'sit' with the action.



The upward motion of the hand as you hold the food treat also serves as a visual command for the puppy. If the pup lifts its front legs you are holding the food treat too high. As soon as the puppy sits say 'good sit' and give the treat. Many repetitions will be necessary for the pup to learn the association. Gradually, as the puppy understands what you want it to do, only give the treats intermittently. You should practice sit in many places throughout your home. It is especially important to teach your puppy to sit by the front door. A dog that readily sits by the front door will do better when greeting guests.

### ***How do I teach my puppy to lie down on command?***

Start with your puppy in a sit position. To get the puppy to lie down, take a treat and lower it between the puppy's front paws and say 'down'. Usually the puppy will follow the treat and go down. If the puppy does not lie all the way down, slowly push the treat between the paws and if the puppy lies down give it the treat and of course add 'good dog'. If the puppy stands up, start over.

For some puppies, teaching the 'down' command can be very difficult. An alternative method is instead of pushing the food treat backwards, slowly pull the treat forward. If that does not work, sit on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you and slightly bent at the knees. Take a hand with a treat in it and push it out under your knee from between your legs. As the puppy tries to get the food treat, slowly bring it back under your knee. As the puppy tries to follow, it will usually lie down.

Once the puppy understands the 'down' command, make sure that you vary the starting position. You should try to get your puppy to 'down' from both a stand and a sit.

### ***How can I teach my puppy to 'stay' on command?***

Puppies can be taught to stay for short periods of time at a young age. Once they sit on command each and every time they are asked, without the need for food inducements, training can proceed to more difficult concepts such as "stay".

First the pup is taught to stay without moving as you stand in front for 1-2 seconds. Initially give the puppy the 'sit' command, say 'stay' (using a hand as a stop sign can be a good visual cue), take one step away, and then return to the puppy and reward it for not moving. Be very careful that the puppy does not stand up or move as you present the reward because then you will have rewarded 'getting up'. Gradually increase the distance by a step at a time and the length of the stay by a few seconds at a time, until the puppy can stay for a minute or more with you standing at least 10 feet away. It is important to set up the

puppy to succeed. Proceeding very slowly, and keeping a long lead attached to the puppy so that it can not run away can help ensure success. Be patient. It can take a week or more of daily training to get a puppy to 'sit' and 'stay' for 1-2 minutes. Over a few months it should be possible to increase the 'stay' to 15 minutes or more, and to be able to leave the room and return without the puppy rising from its 'stay'. For these longer stays it may be better to use a 'down-stay' (lying down and staying in place) combination, and to train the dog in a favored resting or sleeping area.

Once extended 'sit-stays' are accomplished, the command can be used to prevent many potential behavior problems. For example, if you practice 'sit and stay' by the front door, this command can then be used to prevent running out the door and jumping on company. Have your puppy sit and stay while you place the food on the floor and then give him an OK or release command. This will help establish your leadership and control.

### *How can I teach my dog to stand on command?*

Place your puppy in a 'sit' position. Take the food treat palm facing up and move it forward and away from the pup as you say 'stand'. Your puppy should again follow his nose and stand up. Don't pull your hand so far away that the puppy follows you, but just until it stands up.

### *What else can I teach my dog?*

Using the concepts discussed above a dog can be trained to perform anything that it is physically capable of. A 'down' or 'sit' can be extended from several seconds to many minutes as long as we progress gradually or "shape" the dog's behavior. In shaping, we determine our ultimate goal, such as a 20 minute stay, and reward successive increments of the behavior until we reach that goal. For example, once the dog will sit for 3 seconds before the reward is given, we can repeat the command and when the puppy sits we wait for 4 seconds before the reward is given. Proceed very slowly, ensuring that the puppy is performing the behavior properly a few times in a row before proceeding to the next step.







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### **PUPPY TRAINING – TAKING CHARGE**

Dogs are a highly social “grouping-living” species that in the wild is often referred to as a pack. Packs have a leader that the other members follow and look to for “direction.” In fact, each individual in the pack generally develops a relationship with each other pack member so that they are either dominant or subordinate to that individual. When puppies enter our homes the family becomes the new social group. Allowing behaviors that are pushy, disobedient or inappropriate may lead to problems that become increasingly difficult to correct. Therefore it is essential that all owners take control over the puppy and gain a position of leadership in the family pack. This control must be achieved by the proper use and timing of rewards and by directing the puppy to display appropriate responses rather than through physical techniques that can lead to fear and anxiety.

#### ***When is the best time to begin training my puppy?***

Formal dog training has traditionally been delayed until 6 months of age. Actually, this juvenile stage is a poor time to begin training. The dog is beginning to solidify adult behavioral patterns, dominance behavior is emerging, and behaviors that they have learned in puppyhood may need to be changed. Therefore, it is best to begin teaching puppies from the time they are obtained. One important task to begin early is to establish yourself as the leader. This can be done by rewarding desirable responses, training the dog to obey commands, avoiding the reinforcement of behaviors that are initiated by your dog and training the dog to accept some simple body handling techniques.



#### ***Are physical exercises necessary for gaining control?***

Although there are many physical techniques that have been advocated for gaining control, it is the owners’ attitudes, actions, and responses to the new puppy (along with the puppy’s genetics) that are most important in the puppy becoming either well-mannered and responsive, or stubborn, disobedient and “domineering”.

Dog training literature has often discussed using scruff shakes and rollover techniques to discipline puppies. However, these physical techniques do not necessarily mimic how dogs would communicate with each other and such handling by a human could lead to fear, anxiety and even retaliation. Training is intended to train the dog what you want, rather than discipline what you don't want. This makes a positive, learning environment for the puppy to grow up in. There may be a number of advantages to teaching your puppy to assume subordinate postures (on their side, on their back, hands on neck, hand stroking the top of the head, hand grasping muzzle) but this does not mean that they teach your dog to be subordinate in its relationship to you. Having an obedient, well-behaved, dog that enjoys handling and accepts restraint is best accomplished through reward based obedience training, avoiding punishment and confrontational based training techniques and gradually accustoming your dog to enjoy handling. (See body handling below).

### *How can I gain control without physical exercises?*

The best way for each family member to take control is to teach your puppy that each reward must be earned. This is also the best way to insure that undesirable puppy behaviors are not inadvertently reinforced. The puppy should learn to display subordinate postures through reward training, rather than through any type of force. Begin with some basic obedience training, teaching the puppy to 'sit', 'stay' and 'lie down' for rewards. Practice short sessions, multiple times each day. Whenever the puppy is to receive anything of value (affection, attention, food, play and walks) the puppy should first be taught to



earn its reward by performing a simple obedience task such as 'sit' or 'stay'. Teach the puppy that rewards of any sort will never be given on demand. Also known as 'nothing in life is free', a term coined by veterinary behaviorist, Victoria Voith, or "learn to earn" as described by William Campbell, the puppy must be taught that vocalization, nipping, mouthing, overly rambunctious, or demanding behaviors of any sort will never earn rewards. In fact, these behaviors should be met by inattention, by confining the puppy for a few minutes until it settles down, or with training devices and commands that get the puppy to exhibit the desired response. Another option is to immediately control and calm the puppy with a head collar. (See our handout on Biting – play biting and mouthing in puppies for details). Rewards should be given as soon as the puppy is performing an appropriate response.

You should also handle your puppy so that it will learn to accept all forms of physical contact and restraint. Do this when the puppy is calm, such as after a nap. Avoid any exercise that leads to fear and struggling. Be gentle, progress slowly and only make the puppy be still for a few seconds in the beginning (see body handling below). Gradually you can increase the time you make your puppy comply.

Set limits on the puppy so that it does not learn that it can control you. Having the puppy sleep in its own bed or own cage rather than on your bed or couch, helps to prevent the dog from gaining control or becoming possessive of your resources. When the puppy is taken for walks it should be taught to follow. This should begin at the front door where the puppy should be taught to sit, wait, and follow, and never allowed to lead or pull you through the doorway.

### *What should I do if my puppy misbehaves?*

Undesirable misbehavior must be prevented, or corrected in the act. Allowing the puppy, even once to perform an undesirable behavior such as entering a restricted room, jumping up, mounting or jumping onto the couch will serve to reward and encourage the repetition of the behavior.

There will be times when your new puppy misbehaves. How you respond to the puppy will often influence later interactions. Young puppies are very impressionable. Harsh physical reprimands are contraindicated. They only serve to frighten the puppy and perhaps make them hand shy. Unfortunately, animals can learn in one trial if something is aversive enough. We want young puppies to look toward a human hand as something pleasant that brings comfort, food and affection. Most puppies can be easily interrupted with vocal intonation and loud noises. What is equally important is to redirect the puppy to the correct behavior after you interrupt what you do not like. **Remember that punishment must take place while the behavior is occurring, not after.**

If you catch your puppy misbehaving, try a loud noise such as clapping your hands or a loud "uh-uh". Remember, reprimands need to occur while the behavior is happening, preferably just as it begins, and



never after. Often puppies will be startled when they hear these noises and temporarily stop the behavior. At that time you should redirect the puppy to a more appropriate task and reinforce with an immediate and positive 'good dog'.

Another way to interrupt your puppy is with various types of noise devices. One such device is a "shake can". This is an empty soda can that has a few pennies inside and then is taped shut. When given a vigorous shake it makes a loud noise, which will interrupt the puppy's behavior. Another device that makes a loud noise is the so-called "rape alarm". When activated they make a shrill, loud, piercing noise, which will startle the puppy. Ultrasonic and sonic dog training devices are also available (see our handout on 'Behavior management products').

The most important thing that you can do to avoid undesirable behavior is to supervise your puppy. Unsupervised puppies will chew and destroy objects as part of their natural curiosity and play. Rather than finding yourself with the need to reprimand your puppy, keep your puppy on a leash to avoid bad behaviors. Always provide suitable play objects designed to entertain your puppy so that it will not want to destroy your possessions. (See our handout on 'Destructiveness – chewing' for ideas)

Most importantly, if you find something that your puppy has destroyed but you did not catch him in the act, just clean it up and vow to supervise your puppy better in the future. Do not go get your puppy and bring him over to the mess and yell and physically discipline him. Remember that you need to punish the behavior you wish to change at the time it occurs. If you did not see your puppy chew up the object, all you are doing is disciplining your puppy for being present at a mess on the floor. Since that makes no sense to your puppy, your reprimands could create fear and anxiety, which could lead to aggression and owner avoidance.

***What can be done for the particularly stubborn, disobedient, or headstrong puppy?***

Puppies that are particularly headstrong and stubborn might need some fairly stringent rules. Tug-of-war games should only be allowed if the owner initiates the game, and can successfully call an end to the game, with an 'out', or 'give' command when it is time to call it quits (see our handout on 'Controlling stealing and teaching give'). Rough play must not escalate to uncontrollable play biting that cannot be controlled by the owner.

One of the best management tools for gaining safe and effective control at all times is a head collar. The puppy can be supervised and controlled from a distance by leaving a long line or leash attached to the head halter. The principle of halter training is to gain control over the dog with as much natural communication as possible and without the use of punishment. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage proper behavior. A pull on the leash is used to disrupt misbehavior. Since the halter is attached to the dog's muzzle, common behavior problems (nipping, barking, jumping up, pulling, stealing food, etc.) can immediately be interrupted without fear or pain by pulling on the leash. The halter places pressure around the muzzle and behind the neck. This simulates the muzzle and neck restraint that a leader or mother dog might apply to a subordinate, and therefore is a highly effective and natural form of control. (see our handout on 'Management devices in dog training').





## *What types of handling should I begin with when I start to train my puppy?*

### **A. Body Handling**

You will do yourself and your new pet a favor by teaching your new puppy to allow you to handle his body. Throughout the life of your dog there will be times that you need to restrain your dog, lift your dog or handle various parts of the dog's body. This may become necessary when its time to brush your dog's teeth, trim its nails, give medication, or clean its ears. Yet if you have never handled an adult dog these simple tasks could become impossible. Handling also serves to simulate the physical communication that is exhibited by a bitch controlling her puppies or a leader dog over a subordinate group member. The young puppy must be taught to feel comfortable with this type of handling.

Gently handle your puppy daily. Pick a time when your puppy is calm, like just after a nap. Do not try to start a body handling exercise when your puppy is excited, rambunctious or in the mood for play. Place the puppy in your lap and touch the feet, open the mouth, look in the ears and under the tail. All the while, praise your puppy for being good, even offer a few tasty food treats. Be sure to keep initial sessions very short, since you want your puppy to succeed and not struggle. If the session is too long you run the risk of the puppy struggling and getting free. This could send a message to your puppy that it can "win". Always set up the puppy to succeed, but on your terms. Gradually increase the amount of time you control your puppy so that no struggle ensues. Soon the puppy will allow and perhaps anticipate these handling sessions. All family members should participate in this exercise. An adult should supervise young children. If you see any hesitation or reluctance on the part of the puppy, you will want to repeat the exercise, until you can accomplish the handling without resistance. Do the same exercise a little more gently or in a slightly different location, and give some tasty treats for compliance, and progress gradually to more difficult situations. Never force the puppy to the point that it exhibits fear or attempts escape. On the other hand if you do not gradually overcome the resistance the puppy may never allow the handling as an adult. Over time your puppy should allow you to place pressure on the back of its neck while it is in a down position, to roll it onto its side, to grasp its muzzle and to be lifted (if it is small enough). These forms of handling should not be used for punishment.



### **B. Food guarding, toy guarding**

Another exercise that is so important is to acclimate your puppy to having his food and possessions touched by humans. Dogs in the wild will guard their food to prevent its loss but that is not necessary in the home. We are not going to take away our pet's food and not give it back. Handle the food bowl while your puppy eats, pet the puppy and perhaps lift the bowl, place in a special treat, and return it. When walking past the puppy while it is eating you can place a treat in its food bowl, or reach down, pat the puppy and give a treat. This way the puppy learns to tolerate intrusions and disturbance while it eats and will not be startled and react aggressively should something unexpected happen when eating. If the treat you add is tasty enough, the puppy may even look forward to your approaches during feeding. If any growling should emerge you should seek professional guidance immediately.

You should also practice gently taking toys from the puppy. Quietly and calmly place your hand on the toy and tell your puppy "give" as you remove it from its mouth. Then say 'thank-you' and return the object as you tell your puppy to 'take it'. Repeat this training task multiple times daily in multiple locations. At times take the object and offer a treat instead. This will let your puppy know that sometimes something better comes from relinquishing the object. You should be able to handle any toy that your puppy has. This sends the message to the puppy that it is okay for you to handle its possessions, and that



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you will give them back. The puppy will trust you and then when you need to remove something from the mouth, your dog should accept your interference.



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## Socializing Puppies and Kittens

Socializing puppies and kittens is one of the most frequently overlooked yet important things a new owner can do. This can decrease the chances of unwanted behaviors later in adult pets. We at Westonka Animal Hospital encourage all dogs and cats to be socialized to as many people and situations as possible.

The **socialization period** for dogs and cats is between 4 and 16 weeks of age. During that time, the young pet is very impressionable to social influences. They're "imprinting" on humans. If your pet has positive experiences with men, women, children, and other animals, they're more likely to accept them throughout their life. If the experiences are absent or unpleasant, they may become apprehensive or fearful. Therefore, during the period of socialization, we encourage you to expose your pet to as many types of social events and influences as possible. Men tend to have naturally dominating, intimidating lower voices, and children can play rough (pulling tails, ears, fur, etc), so we recommend that you focus on exposing your puppy to as many different people as you are able to. For puppies, we recommend socializing with as many different well socialized dogs as possible.

We also recommend "playing doctor" by introducing touching and playing with your pet's feet, ears, and mouth. At some point in time, you will need to clean their ears, give medication, and trim their nails. This will make that process a great deal easier. Remember, it is ok for you to put your hand in your pets' mouth, but it isn't ok for your pet to put their mouth around your hands or arm.