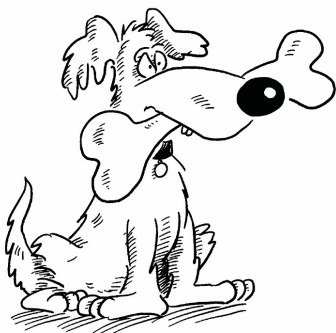


FEEDING and TOILETING ROUTINES



Dogs are creatures of habit and are happiest when they have a familiar schedule or routine to follow. This needn't be cast in stone but in general they should be fed and walked at a similar time each day. There are two main areas in which you should establish routines for your dog: feeding and toileting.

FEEDING: WHEN, WHAT AND HOW MUCH

Frequency of meals

How often should you feed your dog? In the early stages you stick to the feeding schedule that he was on at the Adoption Centre. That may be twice or three times a day. By doing this you reduce the chance of diarrhea associated with a change in feeding regimen. Most people prefer to feed their dogs twice a day.

Give your dog only ten minutes to finish his meal and remove any leftovers. If he doesn't want it he may have been given too much. Overfeeding him will lead to obesity and its associated health problems: arthritis, heart disease and diabetes. Similarly, don't leave food out for your dog to have an all you can eat doggie buffet. This too will lead to excessive weight gain and it is not a natural way of feeding. If your dog eats too fast, you can find special bowls in pet shops to slow them down or that help to challenge their mind.

Young puppies will need three meals a day until they are four to six months old.

What to feed your dog

At Dogwatch dogs are fed on a variety of food, ie. dry and tinned, dog roll or a balanced raw diet which includes the occasional appropriate raw beef or lamb bone. Many dogs enjoy chewing on bones, hard raw bones are recommended, do not feed any bone that will splinter such as fish bones or cooked bones; these bones can perforate the gut which can result in very costly surgery or even death. Never feed your dog chocolate, raisins or corn cobs.

Many people are choosing to feed their dogs a raw diet and at Dogwatch many of our dogs are fed a balanced raw diet. We have seen great results with emaciated dogs and puppies in our care, also noting big improvements with dogs with skin issues (see 'Contacts and Links' - page 38). Feeding your dog comes down to personal choice and we will advise you on what your new dog is being fed at the time of adoption.

When you first bring your dog home, feed him the same food he was given at the Adoption Centre to avoid diarrhea. After that, if you are transitioning from one type of dry food to another, gradually transition to your preferred food over the course of seven to ten days by increasing the amount of his new food and reducing the amount of his old food each day.

If you are transitioning from dry or processed food to a raw food diet then do not feed your dog for a 12 hour period (usually overnight) to ensure that his stomach is completely empty then feed him with the raw food for his next meal. Do not mix raw and dry/processed food together as this will cause digestion problems.

After meals let your dog rest for an hour or so. Don't run around with him or take him for a walk. Dogs, particularly those with a deep chest, are at risk of bloat if they exercise too soon after a meal and this can be life threatening.

How much to feed your dog

The feeding guide on the bag of dog food is a good starting point when it comes to working out how much to feed your dog. However, it is only a guide. Watch your dog and adjust how much you feed him based on his body condition. You should be able to feel your dog's ribs as you run your hands over his body, also his abdomen should be tucked up. If he's a bit curvaceous cut back on the amount you are feeding him.

Treats

Many people associate treats with love - they give their dogs a yummy snack to show them how much they care. This can be killing them with kindness as many dog treats are high in fat. Instead of showing your affection with food why not give him some extra attention or play time? He'll appreciate that just as much. If you want to give your dog a treat keep them for when you want to train him. Your dog will quickly learn to sit, drop and stay if there is a delicious reward in it for him.

Puppies

We recommend puppies be fed a diet of either a balanced, complete raw food or puppy food until they are 12 months old.

Make sure there is always plenty of clean, fresh water available. Do not feed non-pet milk as it may cause diarrhea.

Your puppy will need three meals a day until it's about 6 months old. After 6 months, reduce to two meals a day. It's better to feed your puppy little and often rather than a large amount in one go.

The amount of food a puppy needs will change as your puppy grows; refer to the feeding guidelines on your puppy food packaging to help with this. If in doubt, discuss your pup's diet with your vet or vet nurse.

Remember, as with an adult dog, when changing your puppy's diet:

- dry to dry: always change it gradually over about seven days slowly mixing the old diet with the new diet. A rapid change in diet could upset the puppy's stomach and give them diarrhea.
- dry to raw / raw to dry: ensure your dog has a 12 hour break (usually overnight) between meals when changing from dry to raw food or vice versa.



TOILET TRAINING

Remember, be patient. Toilet training can take a little time.

Puppies

This is the first opportunity you'll have to train your puppy. Puppies and dogs learn best by repetition and consistency. Puppies need to be taught where to go to the toilet - they're just like young children, they need toilet training. Your puppy doesn't know it's not allowed to toilet in the house, it needs to be taught where to go.

Two definite times a puppy or dog will want to go to the toilet are when it wakes up after a sleep and after eating or drinking and often after play. Always take your puppy outside to the same area so it knows what it's going outside for. Tell it to do “wee wee” or “be quick” or something similar and ensure you use the same words every time. When your puppy goes to the toilet immediately praise it; you can use a treat to reinforce this behaviour and take it back inside. If/when your puppy has an accident inside, **do not rub its nose in it**, as this tells the puppy that toileting is bad!

Do not let the puppy see you cleaning up any accidents as watching the clean up can encourage the dog that it was doing the correct thing. **Clean up with no punishment.** The best way to train a puppy in anything is to always praise good behaviour and ignore bad behaviour. Use a deodoriser to neutralise the smell as the puppy will return to the same spot if it can smell it.

Unfortunately if your puppy has been going to the toilet in the house it may associate going in a particular area and will need to be retrained. A 50/50 mixture of white vinegar and water can be used on areas where accidents have happened, then rinse off with warm water and pat dry with a towel. Spray the area with lemon juice or citronella oil to remove all scent; some chemical cleaning products can actually attract the puppy back to the same spot to toilet. Place a water bowl or empty food bowl over the spot, a puppy will not go to the toilet in the same area that it eats and drinks.

If your puppy is outside make it go to the toilet before taking it inside. Don't think because the puppy was outside it would have gone to the toilet; it's more likely to go to the toilet as soon as it gets inside the house!

Remember to confine the puppy to a small area overnight so it won't learn bad toileting habits. This also assists in teaching the puppy not to go to the toilet throughout the night as dogs will generally not soil their sleeping area.

Another option with puppies or dogs is to confine it to a crate (See 'Crate Training' - page 23). The idea behind this is the dog won't want to soil the area directly around it. Keeping the dog confined for a period of time and then allowing the dog out for regular toilet outings will quickly teach the dog where it should and shouldn't be toileting. Again, use a command like "go toilet" and praise the dog when it goes to the toilet. It may take young puppies a little time to stop soiling when in a confined area until it has full control over bodily functions.

Above all, the key to successful toilet training is constant supervision in the early stages. Keep watch over the puppy at all times when it's inside.

***** REMEMBER *****

Be calm and patient at all times - it takes a little time for puppies to learn.

NEVER physically or verbally reprimand a puppy for toileting mistakes, (whether you did or didn't catch the puppy in the act), eg. smacking, rubbing it's nose in the mess, yelling, etc.

Adult Dogs

House training a fully grown dog can be achieved by using the puppy techniques, or by initially keeping the dog on a lead in the house or keeping it by your side (most dogs won't go to the toilet on the lead if they're used to being free).

Take the dog outside regularly and command it to "go toilet". Remember to praise the dog for going to the toilet in the right area as this will encourage it to go there again.

Never leave a dog alone in the house unless you are sure good toilet habits have been established. If the dog is kept inside at night, ensure it is confined to one area to avoid accidents throughout the house.

Most dogs are fully toilet trained within a matter of weeks, however it can take longer if he has developed bad habits in the past.

Remember...

Having a regular feeding schedule will allow you to better predict when your dog or puppy needs to go outside and will reduce the risk of accidents. For quickest results, follow these simple rules for toilet training your dog.

1. Never punish him if you catch him going to the toilet in the wrong place. This will only teach him that he mustn't be caught and he will become more secretive in his toileting habits.
2. Don't punish him if you come home and find an accident. He won't connect your anger with his toileting and it won't teach him anything. Not only that, it will teach him that you are someone to be feared.
3. Never leave your dog unattended inside. Keep him on a leash and bring him with you wherever you go. If you see him sniffing or looking like he needs to go to the toilet take him outside to his toilet area and praise him enthusiastically when he goes.
4. If you can't watch your dog, confine him in his crate. Make sure you have the appropriate size crate, if it is too big he may still toilet in there. Dogs don't usually soil their den so he's not likely to go to the toilet there. Make sure you take him outside regularly and praise him for toileting in the right place.
5. When your dog is reliably toileting in the right spot you can start to add a verbal command to this behaviour. As he goes to the toilet, tell him to "be quick" or "wee wee". It won't take long for him to associate the words with going to the toilet and you can then use the words when you need him to go in a hurry such as before bed time.
6. Make sure you take him outside to go to the toilet even if it's raining. He needs to know that he must go outside to toilet whether or not the weather is bad.



Marking

Firstly, do not confuse marking with submission/excitement urination. If unsure how to recognise the difference consult a behaviourist for assistance.

Dogs may signify their ownership, territory or dominance by urinating or defecating in strategic areas that will inform intruders and other dogs that this territory is already claimed. This is called "marking" and is not always restricted by the sex of the dog (although it is usually male dogs). Most dogs will become clean in their toilet habits once toilet trained and after an initial settling in period.

Most dogs generally don't go to the toilet where they eat, drink, sleep or in their common walking/playing areas. Although there are some dogs that will be an exception to this rule and will 'mark' anything and everything given a chance.

Some techniques will work on some dogs and other techniques will work on others, trial and error is the key to success. Here's some suggestions:

- Check with your vet. The dog's health may be compromised.
- Is the dog desexed? Desexing a dog will greatly reduce its need to 'mark'.
- Clean all areas thoroughly and then wipe over the area with citronella oil, lemon juice or bitter apple. These scents deter the dog from marking in certain areas.
- Use a spray bottle with a citronella mixture and regularly spray the area where the dog is 'marking'.
- Place a bowl of drinking water where the dog is 'marking' and encourage the dog to drink from it.
- Feed the dog (in a bowl) where it's 'marking'.
- Rearrange the dog's living area (ie. food, drink, bedding, etc) to where the dog is 'marking' to make the dog go to the toilet in a different place.
- Check out your local pet shop for various dog repellents and toilet training products.

Only ever reprimand the dog if caught in the action of marking and only verbally using the intonation in your voice to convey displeasure. NEVER physically punish the dog.