



Welcoming a new dog into your foster or foster-to-adopt home

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This handout was created to answer questions and provide resources for Dog Bless Rescue Partners foster and foster-to-adopt families. This handout is only a guide and does not replace the advice of your trainer and veterinarian. If you have any specific concerns, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to answer any questions you may have.

Below you will find the most commonly asked questions asked by foster-to-adopt and foster families as well as some important information about how to manage the new addition to your family. Always remember that every dog is different and no dog is perfect.

How the Dog Bless foster-to-adopt program works

With the foster-to-adopt program potential adopters can take a dog home with them and see how the dog fits in with their lifestyle and gets along with the family members and pets. Our main focus is ensuring the dog is comfortable and relaxed in its new home. In some cases, even though the potential adopters may love the dog, we won't be able to adopt the dog to that family if the dog is showing signs of a changed behaviour, unhappiness or stress.

The foster-to-adopt period usually lasts for about seven to ten days. In most cases potential adopters will know within the first three days if things are working out or not. Once the foster period is over, potential adopters can either;

- a) adopt the dog
- b) return the dog and have Dog Bless try to find a more suitable dog
- c) return the dog and end the search for a dog

Feeding your dog

Dog Bless Rescue sometimes receives dog food donations and we will provide a bag to foster families and foster-to-adopt families if we have any spare food on hand.

Once you adopt a dog, we recommend that you choose a high quality dry food, avoiding generic or low price foods (often found in supermarkets or discount stores). Since it is often difficult to determine which food is good quality versus poor quality based on the ingredients alone, we recommend you purchase your food from a pet store. In addition we do not recommend foods that contain wheat or corn and we do recommend raw diet foods.

Adult dogs should have their daily recommended food amount (printed on the bag of food based on their weight) split into morning and evening feedings. A good time to feed your dog is when you are eating your own breakfast and dinner and after their walk.

Let your dog eat for fifteen minutes and then pick up any uneaten food dishes. Having food continually available to them encourages overeating and because free-fed dogs never get hungry, they don't enjoy their food unless given special treats. This can lead to difficulties with training.

Recommended food; Acana, Taste of the Wild, Fromm, Natural Balance, Honest Kitchen and Raw

Canned dog food and people food

We don't recommend regularly feeding your dog canned dog food but it is okay to supplement their kibble with a little canned food from time to time if that is your desire. Instead, we recommend adding items like pumpkin, cooked yams, rice and other vegetables in limited amounts.

However, you should use caution when feeding people food to your dog. Some dogs will simply get diarrhea if given a constantly changing diet. Also, never allow your dog to eat cooked bones. They splinter easily and will cause major issues for your dog.

According to The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals website, you should avoid giving the following people foods to your dog since they can be dangerous and even lethal to your pet; alcohol, avocado, chocolate, coffee, caffeine, citrus, coconut and coconut oil, grapes and raisins, macadamia nuts, milk and dairy-based products, nuts, garlic, onion and chives, raw undercooked meat, eggs and bones, salt and salty snack foods, xylitol, yeast dough. Please visit <https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/people-foods-avoid-feeding-your-pets> for further information.

Treats

We recommend good treats for training like liver bits or salmon jerky. Dog biscuits are usually OK, but since they are not really all that nutritious, they should not become a regular part of the dog's diet. In particular you should avoid buying bulk milk bone type of biscuits.

Instead visit a pet store that will have a variety of treats to choose from. One that we particularly like is Grandpaw's Treats.

Raw soup bones are also something that dogs find as a treat but do use caution since some may be harmful to dog's gums depending on how sharp the cut is on the bone.

Exercise

Most adult dogs will require about one to two hours of vigorous exercise a day – the old adage “a tired dog is a good dog” is quite accurate. Go easy in the first few days since some dogs are intimidated by city noise and need time to build up their fitness level.

Foster dogs will be provided with a collar and tag with a phone number on it. **NEVER** take the collar off during the foster period even when the dog is inside your home.

NEVER allow the dog to be off leash during the foster period. During the foster period, dogs need to be walked using a leash and harness for safety reasons since it is easy for some dogs to slip out of a collar especially if they are startled. We have lost (and found) countless dogs due to fosters/owners walking their dog using just the collar alone.

When walking the foster dog, ensure you securely hang onto the leash. If the dog sees something it wants to chase like a squirrel or another dog they may unexpectedly pull the leash from your hands. Extra caution in holding onto the leash is required when children are involved in walking the dog since they may not be paying attention to the surroundings and the dog can unexpectedly dart off in another direction causing the child to drop the leash.

NEVER use a flexi-leash when walking a dog during the foster period since those leashes do not provide enough control of the dog. A four to six foot leash is recommended. Some dogs have never

been on a leash before so it may take them some time for them to get used to the idea of walking in a straight line and not pulling on a leash.

If you decide to adopt the dog we ask that you buy a harness, collar, nametag and a dog license if applicable and return our harness and collar so we can reuse them.

Dog behaviour and training

When it comes to training a dog, remember patience, persistence and positive rewards go a long way.

Housetraining

To dogs the world is their toilet so even for dogs that are already housetrained, they need to be shown where the bathroom is at your place and where it isn't until their behaviour is firmly established in their new surroundings.

Younger dogs may not be house-trained at all and will require a lot of consistency and diligence on your part to ensure they are housetrained properly. Our recommendation is that first thing in the morning when you get up; take your dog outside for a walk so they can do their business.

The same applies for when you return home; take them outside before anything else. If your dog has been having accidents indoors, make sure to reward them when they do go to the bathroom outside. Darcie Jennings from CommuniCanine has provided us with an excellent paper on housetraining your pet which is available on our website at <https://www.dogbless.ca/training-resources>.

Do not punish a dog that has had an accident indoors. Use a more positive approach and reward them when they do go to the bathroom outside.

Crate

A dog crate is an excellent training tool and we recommend their use, particularly during periods of housetraining. However, we do not recommend that crates be used for long periods of containment.

We are happy to loan you a crate during the foster period and we do sell crates to our adopters at cost should you require one. We have an article on training dogs to love their crates on our website at <https://www.dogbless.ca/training-resources>

Destructive chewing

It is natural for young dogs to chew--that's one of the ways they explore and learn. Try to keep valuable objects that are chewable safely out of reach and provide a satisfactory alternative like a chew toy or stuffed and frozen Kong. Deer antlers are also an excellent alternative since they are long-lasting.

We do not recommend that you give your dog rawhide chews. Rawhide is made from animal (usually cattle) hide. The hide is first treated in a chemical bath to help preserve the product, and then at the tannery the hides are soaked and treated with either an ash-lye solution or a highly toxic recipe of sodium sulphide liming. Next the hides are treated with chemicals that help "puff" the hide, making it easier to split into layers - the top grain is generally tanned and made into leather products and the inner portion is then made into dog chews. To accomplish that, the hide is first washed using peroxide and/or bleach and then painted with artificial dyes and flavours along with glue in some cases. Some add titanium oxide to make them look more appealing while others use carcinogenic FD&C Red 40

and sodium benzoate. Tests have revealed the presence of lead, arsenic, mercury chromium salts, formaldehyde and other toxic chemical in rawhide chews.

In addition these products pose a choking hazard when they become soft. Many dogs die each year from intestinal blockages as a result. Therefore we do not recommend rawhide or related products like pig ears for your dog.

Classes

There are a number of trainers in town. We highly recommend both CommuniCanine Training and Smart Dog Training. Both focus on positive reinforcement.

Punitive methods and correction have long been established to be counter-productive and some TV trainers (i.e. Cesar Milan) have been widely criticized by trainers and behaviourists for their methods and theories on “dominance”. Animal behaviour is complex and dogs do not fall neatly into either dominant or submissive categories, but rather their behaviour is fluid and changing.

Fireworks and loud noises

Our recommendation is to avoid taking your foster dog to parades and public displays especially at night where there will be a lot of noise and the possibility of fireworks. Dogs can get spooked, frightened and very stressed by these events.

Door dashing

Be cautious with your foster dog dashing out an open door. Especially if you have children or teenagers who may not close the door quickly enough or be paying attention to the fact that you have a new member in your household.

Vaccinations and veterinary care

The foster dog has received the appropriate vaccinations for their age. All of our dogs undertake blood screening for heartworm and fecal screening for any other internal parasites. They are also given prophylactic treatments for fleas/ticks and other potential infestations.

If your dog requires veterinary care during the foster period please contact us immediately. Our veterinarian is Dr. Stacey at Saanichton Village Veterinary Hospital (778) 351-3030. If the matter is absolutely critical Dr. Stacey does provide emergency care. **Please do not take the dog to the Central Victoria Veterinary Hospital without our express consent.**

Next steps

After the fostering period, please contact the Dog Bless representative you have been dealing with to advise them of your decision.

If you decide not to adopt the dog, arrangements will be made for you to drop off the dog and any other items that were on loan to another foster family.

If you decide to adopt, arrangements will be made to finalize the adoption which includes signing a contract and payment. Payment can be either cash, cheque or efund transfer. We ask that you post some photos on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/dogblessrescue since there are many folks whom you may never meet who have been a huge part in saving your dog from a terrible fate. They love to hear how well the dogs are doing and it gives them a reason to go on sometimes when it all seems terribly overwhelming.

We hope you and your dog have many long years together and we thank you for considering rescue as opposed to buying a puppy. Our goal is to save lives and end the problem of animal homelessness and you have done your part in helping us achieve that.

Frequently asked questions

- **My dog has diarrhea. What do I do?**

Some dogs may have a loose stool at first. Most of the dogs we rescue have not been fed high quality food so it is quite normal when they are fed a different diet that is high in protein and low in fillers that they get diarrhea. If you add a little pumpkin or cooked rice to their food it should correct the situation. If it persists contact us immediately.

- **Why is my dog scratching all the time?**

We have consulted with our veterinarians and they feel that the itchiness is caused by stress, a change in diet and/or a change in climate. Also many dogs are not used to wearing collars and may be irritated by this.

All of our dogs are given a flea treatment when they are first rescued and again just prior to being transported to Victoria. Please do not bathe your dog within the first 48 hours of your dog arriving in Victoria as it will wash off the flea treatment. After 48 hours, if your dog is still itchy, we recommend giving the dog a bath with an oatmeal shampoo. In addition you might try a small dose of fish oil on their food. If it persists or you spot fleas, contact us immediately.

- **My dog was supposed to be housetrained but isn't. Why is that?**

If your dog is having accidents indoors, you need to be vigilant about their housetraining. Some dogs do not signal to be let outside or the signs are very subtle. Please read the section above on Housetraining.

- **My dog barks at other dogs when we are walking. What should I do?**

Every dog is different and some like to interact with other dogs while on leash and others do not. Many of these dogs have never been walked on a leash before and some have only lived their lives in a back yard or a shelter. As a result they have not been properly socialized with other dogs on a leash.

You will want to be cautious when you first start walking your dog since you do not know how your dog will react to other dogs it meets on your walk. You may need to cross over to the other side of the street to avoid another dog until you know how your dog will react. Sometimes it is trial and error.

There are different reasons why dogs bark at other dogs. It could be fear, aggression, dominance or excitement. Some dogs will also show leash aggression since they feel confined being on the end of a leash because they cannot run away.

*If the dog is reacting to another across the street, you can try distracting your dog with treats so that they associate something good with seeing another dog
If they show stress at a dog park, try walking them quietly around the block instead of taking them to the dog park. If your dog is still showing signs of stress while walking around the block, it may also mean you are pushing them too far out of their comfort zone. Dogs need to adjust*

to their new environment and this may take a few weeks for some dogs. Our recommendation if this behaviour persists is to contact a trainer for guidance and advice.

• **What should I do if I can no longer keep my dog?**

Contact us immediately.

• **My dog cries and whimpers when I go out. Does he have separation anxiety?**

Separation Anxiety (SA) is a serious disorder which can be distinguished from a dog who simply does not wish to be alone. SA may result in serious destructive behaviours, drooling, trembling, urinating or defecating in your absence. Some dogs are simply not used to being alone and need to be shown that it is okay and that you will come back. There are a number of positive methods you can use for this and our recommendation is a book titled "Don't Leave Me" written by Nicole Wilde <http://www.nicolewilde.com/store/dont-leave-me/>

Contact Us

Our email address is dogbless@shaw.ca.

Please feel free to ask us any questions you may have. We are not veterinarians or professional trainers but we will try our best to point you in the right direction or refer you to someone who can help.

www.dogbless.ca

www.facebook.com/dogblesrescue

Recommended Services

Service	Name	Contact
Veterinarians	Saanichton Village Veterinary Hospital	(778) 351-3030 Dr. Phil Stacey
	Grace Veterinary Hospital (Glanford)	(778) 433-9373 Dr. Adrian Russell
	Mill Bay Veterinary Hospital	(250) 743-3223
	Saseenos Veterinary Services	(250) 642-7387
Pet Stores	Paws on Cook (Cook Street Village)	(250) 888-9399
	Island Pet Source (Langford)	(250) 590-4460
	Pet's West in Broadmead Village	(250) 744-1779
	Sidney Pet Centre	(250) 656-3314
Training	Smart Dog Training & Consultation	(250) 744-3017 Sherry Antonishen
	CommuniCanine (Saanich Peninsula)	(250) 216-2416 Darcie Jennings
Daycare	Top Dog Daycare and Spa (Esquimalt)	(250) 920-3647
	Woofability (Prospect Lake)	(250) 686-2558
	Diamond Dogs (James Bay)	(250) 590-5866
Dog Walking	Adventure Dog	(250).818-4364
Boarding	Woofability (Prospect Lake)	(250) 686-2558
	Pawz in the Woods (Saanich Peninsula)	(250) 665-6761
	K9 Country Cottage (North Saanich)	(250) 656-6449
Grooming	Top Dog Daycare and Spa (Esquimalt)	(250) 920-3647
	Island Pet Source (Langford)	(250) 590-4460