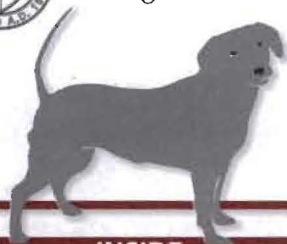




Cornell University
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DOG Watch

Expert information on medicine, behavior and health from a world leader in veterinary medicine

Vol. 17, No. 9 ♦ September 2013

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IN THE NEWS ...

Who's Onboard for the Pets On Trains Act?

Amtrak has had a longstanding policy prohibiting dogs and cats onboard its trains. The only animals it accepts are assistance dogs. That could change if legislation recently introduced in the House of Representatives becomes law. The *Pets on Trains Act* of 2013 would allow dogs and cats on trips of 750 miles or less. They would have to be kenneled and stowed according to Amtrak's size requirements for carry-on baggage.

Bipartisan co-sponsors of the bill are avowed dog lovers Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Calif.) and Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.). "My dog, Lily, is a part of our family and travels with us to and from California all the time," says Rep. Denham.

"If I can take her on a plane, why can't I travel with her on Amtrak, too? Allowing families to bring their animals with them will facilitate transportation and efficiency while also providing a much-needed source of revenue for Amtrak." ♦

The Most Likely Dog Bite Victims

Surprisingly, they're owners, especially those with two or more dogs in the household — the more dogs, the more bites

If we want to eliminate dog bites, animal behaviorist Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., has the solution: "Eliminate dogs' fear and pain, and you've probably eliminated about 80 percent of the causes for bites."

More than 4.5 million people are bitten every year in the U.S. with children disproportionately impacted and — more surprisingly — dog owners themselves, according



Jack Russell Terriers are among prime offenders for bites or attempts.

to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, bites are highly preventable through education of both owners and local governments.

Lacking Socialization.

Understanding why dogs use their teeth to make a point is a key step toward resolving the problem. In addition to fear and pain, the other reasons for canine aggression range from breed disposition to lack of socialization,

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The Benefits of a Higher-Protein Diet

It won't reverse the inevitable loss of muscle mass that accompanies aging but can help slow it down

Conventional wisdom has long held that dogs need less protein as they age. The truth is exactly the opposite, says Joseph Wakshlag, DVM, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Nutrition at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

"We're starting to realize you lose muscle mass as you age — humans and dogs — and you can't reverse it. You have to lift weights to maintain current muscle mass, so unless you can figure out how to lift weights with your dog, it would be hard to diminish the loss of lean mass over time. The only thing you can do is have a higher-protein diet, which may make a small but important difference. That's why it's necessary to do

a geriatric blood screen to make sure your dog does not have kidney or liver issues that may turn you toward a lower-protein diet for management."

If an old Irish Setter is thin, Dr. Wakshlag would recommend a diet with a high level of protein. "But because we need to preserve the kidneys, we need to make sure the kidney is functioning correctly," he says. "Getting rid of extra nitrogen from that protein in the body will make the dog feel a little sick if he has kidney issues, so then you have to have a low-protein diet so the dog doesn't retain nitrogen."

Dr. Wakshlag discusses other essentials of nutrition for seniors in this Q & A.

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A Rescued Bulldog Mix Rescues Her Ailing Owner

Heidi Parker felt sleepy after receiving her allergy shots — a result of a higher than usual dose of antihistamine — and returned to her home in Mineral, Va., to nap. She awoke an hour later with Chilly, her 3-year-old English Bulldog mix, whining, pawing and licking her face. To Parker's alarm, her throat was swelling shut in a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction to the injections. She could barely breathe but was able to call 911. Responders treated her and rushed her to the hospital.

But it was Chilly, whom she had adopted from an animal shelter, who saved Parker's life. Without the dog's intervention, her throat would have continued to swell, causing her to be one of the 1,500 people who die each year in this country from anaphylaxis, says the Human Society of the U.S.

Chilly's quick action earned her the title of the HSUS' Pets of Valor winner. "The award celebrates the human-animal bond by honoring rescued or adopted dogs and cats who have exhibited an extraordinary sense of courage or resolve by heroically helping a person in need," the society says. Chilly was chosen by online voting.

"Her story is yet another powerful example of the amazing bond shared by rescued pets and their new families," says Betsy McFarland, the HSUS vice president for companion animal issues. "Heidi gave Chilly a second chance at life and to become her hero."

Chilly was awarded an original sterling silver pet tag and personalized crystal dog figurine. The Fluvanna SPCA, the shelter in Troy, Va., that cared for Chilly, received 500 pounds of dog food, a one-year supply, from BOGO Bowl pet food.

Help for Cancer Patients

Owners who can't afford treatment for their dogs with cancer will benefit from a \$50,000 grant the Petco Foundation awarded to the Magic Bullet Fund. The fund



Chilly pawed and licked her sleeping owner whose throat was swelling in an anaphylactic reaction.

will then assign \$500 to \$1,000 to a dog's fundraising campaign. It will also provide additional funding for families unable to fundraise because of disability or other circumstances. The remainder of funds needed for each dog's treatment will be generated by the organization's volunteers and sponsors. For more information: www.themagicbullet.fund.org.

Extensive pet food recall

Natura Pet Products has voluntarily recalled all Innova, California Natural, EVO, Healthwise, Mother Nature and Karma dry pet food and biscuit/bar/treats with expiration dates before June 10, 2014. The foods, intended for dogs, cats and ferrets, are sold online and through veterinary clinics and pet food stores in the U.S. and Canada.

"We made this decision in part due to a single positive salmonella test by the FDA," the company says. "Normally, this would have resulted in retrieval of product manufactured over just a few days. However, we are taking the additional precautionary measure to recall all products in the marketplace. Our first priority is the well-being of the pets we serve."

For information on requesting replacement vouchers or refunds: www.naturapet.com/about/contact-us or (800) 224-6123. ♦

What to Expect Pre- and Post-Surgery

Innovative techniques offer greater success today, but some aspects like withholding food remain the same

Chances are your dog will face a surgical procedure at least once in his lifetime if he hasn't already. Fortunately, the nature of veterinary surgery is changing, which may mean that your dog's next date with a surgeon could differ considerably from previous encounters.

"Better anesthetic protocols, better postoperative pain relief and innovative surgical techniques have broadened the veterinarian's ability to successfully do surgery on a wider variety of animals, such as older animals, very ill animals and animals with multiple health problems," says surgical specialist James A. Flanders, DVM, Medical Director of the Cornell University Hospital for Animals. "Minimally invasive surgery is now available at some veterinary practices. Advances in imaging techniques allow veterinarians to have a better idea of the disease state of an animal prior to surgery, so veterinarians can have a more informed conversation with pet owners."

Despite such changes, certain aspects of surgery remain the same. Here's what you should expect before, during and after your dog undergoes a surgical procedure.

First, a Consultation. The process begins when the veterinarian confers with you. "I always recommend that the pet owner knows why we are recommending a particular procedure, and I want them to be fully informed about the expected outcome, potential complications and possible risks," Dr. Flanders says. "These parameters vary tremendously depending on the procedure and the condition of the pet. Each owner — and each animal — is unique."

Dr. Flanders also makes sure that owners understand the surgery fee and costs of testing such as blood work and imaging; treatment such as anesthesia, antibiotics and intravenous fluids; and pain medication and hospitalization.

Next, Blood Tests. Pre-surgical work is most likely to focus on performing blood tests. They help identify problems that might complicate the surgery, especially with the anesthetic. The veterinarian may also order diagnostic imaging such as an X-ray or ultrasound.

The main task for the owner is to withhold food and water from the dog for at least several hours before the procedure to reduce a significant risk. "Sedatives and anesthetic drugs can make pets nauseous," explains Dr. Flanders. "If the dog happens to vomit during the recovery from anesthesia, he may inhale the vomitus and get aspiration pneumonia, a very serious condition. If the stomach is empty, the chance of severe aspiration pneumonia is lessened."

Afterward, Recovery. The surgeon usually contacts an owner immediately after completing the procedure to explain how it went. However, Dr. Flanders says, "If I find something very unexpected during the surgery and I feel the owner needs to know immediately in order to make a decision, I will scrub out of surgery and call them." One example: discovery of an advanced cancer.

If all has gone as expected, emphasis shifts to recovery, both immediate and longer term. "Depending on the type of anesthesia used, the condition of the patient and the duration of the procedure, pets can take anywhere from 5 minutes to several hours to completely recover," says Dr. Flanders.

Reactions to anesthesia vary, too. "Initially a dog may be uncoordinated, and they may not recognize their surroundings or even their owners," says Dr. Flanders. "They may not gain their normal appetite or thirst until the next day. And they may not have a bowel movement for several days."

Another factor is age. "In general, young animals do recover more rapidly than older animals," says Dr. Flanders.

"Young pets have faster metabolic rates, so they metabolize drugs faster."

Location Matters.

Still another variable is where the pet recovers. For most patients, home is usually best — but not always. "Sometimes pets need to stay in the hospital to receive additional support such as special intravenous fluid therapy, post-operative catheterization, special drainage procedures, specialized bandage changes or continuous monitoring and support for a critical patient by a trained nursing staff," says Dr. Flanders.

In any case, managing post-surgical pain optimizes recovery. "The veterinarian now has many choices of anti-pain drugs specifically designed for pets that can be dispensed before, during and after surgery," says Dr. Flanders. "Many of these drugs are similar to human pain medications."

With an uncomplicated recovery, a patient generally can resume normal activities within two weeks unless an orthopedic procedure was performed, says Dr. Flanders. Then restrictions or exercises and physical therapy may be recommended.

Sometimes recovery doesn't proceed smoothly, and a return trip to the clinic might be necessary. Excessive swelling, unexpected pain, bleeding, evidence of infection, consistently poor appetite, vomiting and lethargy are signs that should prompt an immediate visit to the surgeon.

Modern veterinary medicine has helped reduce surgery's risks and stress. Knowing what to expect can further lessen those stresses — for you and your dog alike. ♦



Some surgical patients require the specialized support hospitalization provides, such as monitoring and intravenous fluid therapy.

BETTY LIDDICK

An Unmistakable Sign of Anal Problems: Scooting

The glands can become impacted, inflamed or infected if they're not emptying normally

Scent is one of the remarkable ways dogs communicate, and anal glands help in that effort. The pea-sized glands, or sacs, produce an odor that aids dogs in establishing identity and territory. When a dog defecates, the scent glands empty through ducts at the 4 and 8 o'clock positions of the anal sphincter, the band of muscle encircling the anus.

"During defecation, the rectal musculature pushes the anal sac toward the stool in the rectum and squeezes out its contents — sort of like squeezing a tube of toothpaste at its bottom," says dermatologist William H. Miller, VMD, Medical Director of the Companion Animal Hospital at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. In effect, this allows the dog to say "I was here" or "This is my place."

The Duct Swells. The anal glands generally cause little problem, Dr. Miller says. However, in some cases they can become impacted, inflamed or infected, which can be related conditions. Impaction occurs when the secretion isn't expressed, or emptied, normally, leaving a thick, dark brown or grayish brown buildup in the sac. It's thought that inflammation causes the opening of the anal sac duct to swell, plugging the duct, Dr. Miller says. Small dogs and overweight dogs appear to be most at risk.

In other cases, the stools may not exert enough pressure on the glands during defecation. Anal gland impaction is a common problem in animals with chronically soft stools because the musculature has nothing to push the sac against. The same is true of dogs with neurological disease.

Dogs with skin disease of the perianal region are also prone to anal sac problems. And some dogs simply develop anal gland problems for no apparent reason.

Inflamed or infected anal sacs are swollen and tender. In an attempt to ease the discomfort, the dog may scoot on, lick or bite at his rear. Inflamed or infected anal glands may also abscess or even rupture. An abscess is a red or deep purple swelling accompanied by fever, as well as by the scooting, licking and biting that signal infection. An abscess that ruptures drains fluid through the break in the skin.

"If the sac is infected, topical antibiotics, with or without steroids and antifungal agents, are infused into the anal sac," Dr. Miller says. "In chronic or severe infections, oral medications may be given in conjunction with expressing the glands and the infusion of topical antibiotic."

Warm Compresses. Treatment for anal sac abscesses includes warm water soaks, warm compresses and oral antibiotics. If the abscess ruptures, the veterinarian may have you flush the area daily with an antiseptic solution and apply warm compresses for a week or two until the swelling and infection resolve.

If a dog has chronically soft stools, increasing the amount of fiber in the diet may help to firm the stool. The veterinarian may recommend a switch to a food with higher amounts of fiber. If your dog has a food allergy causing soft stools or perianal itching, replacing the food with a hypoallergenic diet should help, Dr. Miller says.

Fiber supplements made for people or plain canned pumpkin are other ways to boost fiber in the diet. Ask the veterinarian about the type and amount to give.

Expressing impacted anal glands manually can provide relief. The vet-



BIGSTOCK

Overweight dogs and small breeds like Pomeranians seem to be at most risk.

erinarian can perform this procedure or show you how to do it at home, but it's an odorous process and most people prefer to leave it to the professionals.

Expressing the anal glands regularly won't necessarily prevent problems, Dr. Miller says. "Every time an anal sac is expressed, there is a chance, small as it might be, that the mechanical manipulation will trigger an anal sacculitis [inflammation], so I am in the camp of 'Don't squeeze it if it doesn't need it.'"

If your dog has recurring anal sac problems, take him to the clinic on a schedule so the veterinarian can palpate the glands. If they are filling excessively and frequently, they may need to be expressed routinely. When the anal sacs must be expressed so frequently that it becomes a nuisance or if expressing them fails to prevent frequent infections, consider having these vestigial scent glands removed surgically. You and your dog will both be relieved. ♦

PROTEIN ... (continued from the cover)

Q: Are senior foods necessary for geriatric dogs?

A: There is no evidence to say that seniors need it, and it is always based on the individual. Whether or not it's necessary doesn't depend on your dog's age but on his health.

Q: When does a dog become a senior? Is it breed-specific?

A: It's based on size. Those weighing under 20 pounds are geriatric at 12 to 13 years; those weighing 20 to 70 pounds at around 8 to 9 years; and those over 70 pounds at around age 6 to 7.

Q: Do senior dogs have different nutritional needs compared to adults, or is that need simply promoted by the pet food industry?

A: It is pretty much marketing from the pet food industry. Every senior is a little different, and you simply can't say, "Use this kind of food because your dog is this age."

Q: When is it a good idea to switch to senior food?

A: It's important to base it on what you see happening. Is he getting fat, in which case he needs a light food.

Q: Do dogs tend to either gain or lose weight as they age, as people do?

A: Yes, they do.

Q: Are all senior foods pretty much the same?

A: There is quite a variety because it depends on the manufacturer's philosophy. Some will make higher protein and higher fat, and some the opposite, all based on two basic philosophies. The first philosophy is that older dogs tend to get obese and develop metabolic problems in the liver and kidneys, and because they can develop these problems, the manufacturers think you should put your dog on these foods to decrease these problems. It creates a marketing niche for low-protein, low-fat food.

The second philosophy is that since some senior dogs tend to lose weight, use a higher protein and higher fat

content because the digestive capability is slightly diminished in older patients. That's why it's important to know a geriatric's weight and body condition, and having a yearly blood screen is a great idea because it allows you to tailor your food choice. Don't just grab Senior Food X because it can be different from Senior Food Y. Work with your dog's veterinarian to figure out what your dog needs.

Q: Is there an ideal ratio of ingredients that we should look for?

A: It depends on what the blood panel indicates.

Q: Do seniors digest food more slowly?

A: It's not more slowly but a little less efficiently. Look for more digestible foods, and look for lower fiber. If you have an overweight dog, you have to have higher fiber because you're trying to decrease calories. But ingredients should be digestible. If you can't find information about digestibility on the label, then choose a food and feed it and see if the feces are smaller and look better; then it's likely more digestible.



Q: Do seniors need less phosphorus to help avoid kidney disease or is that an outdated notion?

A: Phosphorus needs are completely dependent on whether or not you have kidney problems. A blood panel will indicate any kidney problems.

Q: Many seniors seem to be on therapeutic food. Are those acceptable for long-term health?



Have a geriatric blood screen for your dog before beginning a higher-protein diet, says nutritionist Joseph Wakshlag, DVM, at Cornell. High protein can be detrimental to some conditions like kidney failure.

A: Most of them, yes. It depends on the problem. Those made for urinary stones are high in sodium. If a senior dog has a heart or kidney problem, you shouldn't be feeding those.

Q: Because seniors tend to take more pills than adults, what are the best foods or treats to hide the pills?

A: Usually people push the pill down a dog's throat. If you want to use food, try a low-sodium peanut butter or a banana. Pill Pockets aren't too bad. Stay away from hotdogs and lunch meat because they're high in salt.

Q: If there is no need for senior food, should owners choose all-life stages or adult food?

A: A lot of adult foods are all-life stages anyway. The reality is if the dog is doing fine and doesn't have any problems, is not too lean or heavy, stick with what you've been doing.

Q: How do you know when and how much to decrease your dog's food?

A: You can tell by body condition. ♦

BITES ... (continued from the cover)

says Dr. Houpt, emeritus professor at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists.

If the onset of aggression in a generally docile dog is sudden, there's a good chance the source is a health problem such as arthritis, hip dysplasia or untreated periodontal disease. "The primary cause of medically based aggression is pain, no matter what the source of that pain," Dr. Houpt says. Successfully treating the condition — extracting a diseased tooth, for example — should eliminate the behavior, and painkillers are usually effective in treating conditions that can't be cured or that the owner can't afford to treat surgically. It's important to schedule a visit to the veterinarian to determine if pain is the source of behavior changes even if your dog shows no obvious signs of discomfort.

Whereas dogs tend to hide signs of pain that isn't sharp, they give off clear signals of fear. If you know what to look for, you can read, and react to, these signals before your dog's stress esca-

lates. "When a dog licks his lips, raises a paw, yawns or you can see the whites of his eyes, these are all signs of anxiety," Dr. Houpt says. "Fear also causes a dog's ears and tail to go down."

Other signs of anxiety include a tensed body, furrowed brow and, most obvious, backing away. Dogs will usually growl or snap as a final warning, behaviors that should never be discouraged lest your dog go straight into bite mode.

The best way to respond to your dog's early indications of anxiety, according to the Humane Society of the United States, is to avert your eyes — dogs consider direct eye contact to be a sign of aggression — and give your dog space.

Resource Guarding. Another cause of canine aggression is resource guarding. "Your dog might be defending his food or a favorite resting place," Dr. Houpt explains. "Some dogs guard the bed from a spouse, which is called mate guarding." A training program may be required to deal with persistent cases, but it's always wise not to disturb a dog who is sleeping, eating, chewing on a toy, or especially, caring for puppies.

Although the CDC suggests that neutering will help prevent aggression in male dogs, Dr. Houpt notes that most studies show that fewer than 20 percent of dogs are less aggressive after surgery. "Neutering is a good way to prevent roaming and leg-hugging, but it's not going to be a cure for aggression."

Some breeds are predisposed to bite, and you may be surprised at the prime offenders. A University of Pennsylvania study, published in the journal *Applied Animal Behavior Science* in 2008, found that Dachshunds, Chihuahuas and Jack Russell Terriers topped the list of 33 breeds rated for exhibiting serious aggression (bites or bite attempts) toward both owners and strangers. "They are small, so people keep them in spite of the fact that they are biters," Dr. Houpt says. "Often, they are not properly trained."

Pit bulls, Rottweilers, Rhodesian Ridgebacks and other breeds generally stereotyped as aggressive fall into the middle to low ranges of dogs cited as biters. But when they sink their teeth into someone, they cause far more damage than small breeds, and their bites often require medical attention. And because dog bite data are often

THE YOUNGEST VICTIMS

According to a survey on dog bites by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- ◆ Children under the age of 14 who were bitten were nearly twice as likely to require medical attention as adults.
- ◆ The rate of dog bite-related injuries is highest for children ages 5 to 9 years.
- ◆ Two-thirds of injuries among children ages 4 years and younger are to the head or neck.

Why are so many children attacked? "Children are natural agitators. They move in a jerky, unpredictable fashion and that can set the dog off," says animal behaviorist Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D. She adds that children may accidentally startle or hurt a dog, or bring out his resource-guarding instincts.



Parents should never leave an infant or young child alone with a dog, the Centers for Disease Control advises, no matter how friendly he seems.

Hugging, staring at or tiring dogs out with constant attention can also be inflammatory. The proximity of a child's face to the dog increases the likelihood of facial injury. Parents should never leave an infant or young child alone with a dog, the CDC advises, no matter how friendly he seems.

gathered from hospitals and clinics, large breeds acquire a reputation for being aggressive.

The statistics most often cited regarding the incidence of dog bites are based on two CDC-sponsored surveys of a large, random sample of U.S. households, one conducted in 1994 and a follow-up in 2003. According to the second survey, nearly half of more than 885,000 cases that were severe enough to warrant medical attention involved children.

The rates at which adults were bitten remained roughly the same between the two surveys, but there was a 47 percent decline in the incidence of dog bites among children. Although the CDC did not determine the reason for the decline, several studies credit better education about how to avoid bites in the intervening years.

Another finding: The greatest number of dog bites involved people in households with dogs. Adults with two or more dogs were almost five times more likely to report being bitten than adults in canine-free households (three times more likely in the case of children). The data didn't indicate whether or not the bites occurred in the home — some studies suggested that this might be the case — or if



Ears down, teeth bared, the whites of the eyes showing? These are final warnings that a bite could ensue.

pet owners were more comfortable around dogs and thus more likely to interact with and be bitten by them in a variety of situations.

Preventive Approaches. There are many different community approaches to preventing dog bites, including breed specific legislation (BSL), laws that ban certain breeds deemed dangerous — most notoriously pit bulls.

“The effect of BSL has been to cause many pit bulls to be called ‘Boxer mixes’ because it’s hard to prove breed,” Dr. Houpt says, adding, “I would much rather have very strict dangerous dogs laws, laws that say dogs can no longer leave the property unless muzzled and on a leash after one close call.”

Dr. Houpt recommends the multi-disciplinary dog bite prevention programs created by the American Veterinary Medical Association and tailored to the different needs of individual communities. “Any community that wants to can contact them and take their advice,” she says. The programs offer ways to coordinate shelters, veterinarians, law enforcement personnel and other groups affected by the problem, and to create an awareness of the repercussions of not having a good plan in place.

“When the county has to pay for a biting dog who’s kept in a shelter, and personnel and time have to be devoted to a decision about whether the dog should live or not, it’s likely to cost the community a great deal of money. Not having good dangerous dog laws is not only an emotional issue but a financial one,” Dr. Houpt says. ♦

IF YOU RUN, HIS INSTINCT IS TO GIVE CHASE

In addition to learning how to read a dog’s body language for signs of stress, there are general tactics to avoid being bitten. The Humane Society of the United States advises:

- ◆ Never approach a strange dog, especially one tied up or confined. Always assume that a dog who doesn’t know you may see you as an intruder or a threat.
- ◆ If you come across a dog who’s growling or snarling, avert your eyes and stand still with your arms at your sides. If you run, a dog’s natural instinct will be to chase and catch you. When the dog loses interest, back away slowly.
- ◆ If you are knocked to the ground, curl into a ball with your hands over your ears and remain motionless.
- ◆ If a dog attacks, put whatever you can between you and the dog — jacket, purse, bicycle — anything he can sink his teeth into besides your body.



Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists and emeritus professor at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, provided the answers on this page.

Please Share Your Questions
We welcome questions of general interest on health, medicine and behavior. We regret however, that we cannot comment on specific products and prior diagnoses. Please send correspondence to:

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Introducing a Newcomer When The Resident Dogs Are Hostile

Q I wonder if you might give me some tips for introducing a new puppy to a home where the longtime family dogs are hostile to the newcomer. All are small breeds (Maltese and Toy Poodles).

A From your question, I gather you have tried unsuccessfully to introduce your older dogs to the new puppy. It is important to know whether they attacked without preamble, or the puppy tried to play with them and they objected. The former indicates a more serious problem than the latter. Assuming it is the former, I suggest using the older dogs' senses to introduce them to the puppy:

Olfaction. Rub the puppy with a soft cloth, especially in his ears, under his tail and around the urethral opening if he is male. These are the places dogs sniff one another. Rub the cloth gently on the noses of the adult dogs.

Vision and Audition. It will be helpful to reintroduce the dogs off your property. With a different person holding the leash of each dog, take them for a walk together so they can get used to one another on neutral territory. Next, put the puppy in an exercise pen where he is protected from the adults, but they have visual and auditory contact with him.

Taste. Walk one dog up to the puppy and quickly give that dog a treat when they are close but not within biting range. (I like to use canned cheese, which is very palatable and not messy.) The handler should give the puppy a treat, too. Do this 10 times with the adult approaching the puppy and 10 times with the puppy approaching the adult. Repeat with each adult dog.

If this is going well, you can move on to the next step, which is, "All good things happen near the puppy." Ignore the adult dogs — no touching, talking or looking at them unless you have the puppy nearby. Have harnesses rather than

collars on the adults so that, if they are aggressive, you can pick them up without hurting them. If the adult dogs misbehave when they are near the puppy, lift them away from the puppy without cuddling them. This process will take several weeks, but don't rush it.

When the adults are no longer barking, growling or snapping at the puppy, they can all be free together, but keep leashes on the adults' harnesses so you can quickly separate them.

Fights are most apt to occur at feeding time, when you come home, guests arrive or anything arouses them. If the older dogs are simply intolerant of the incessant play demands of the puppy, you can arrange a play area from which the older dogs, but not the puppy, can escape. That way they can leave before all those play bites with needle-sharp teeth drive them to bite back. Good luck!

Play May Fill Several Roles

Q Why do dogs like to play ball?

A Why animals indulge in any kind of play is something of a mystery. Some hypotheses are that play keeps the animal fit by exercising muscles important in hunting or escape from predators. Another hypothesis is that play is a rehearsal of adult roles — male puppies tend to fight and mount in play more than females. Playing ball is a particularly engaging behavior of dogs that most owners love (until the 50th time the dog wants the ball thrown).

Chasing is predatory behavior; the retrieving presumably arose to bring prey home to the puppies. It is also interesting in that it is very hard to teach this behavior to an adult dog. If the dog doesn't do this as a pup he probably will never do it. There are breed differences because we have selected (bred) for this behavior, especially in Retrievers. Lots of dogs will chase rapidly moving objects, including balls, but the Retriever brings it back. ♦

COMING UP ...

BEE STINGS



PARVOVIRUS



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