



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

THIS JUST IN Oh That Amazing Nose!

Again, dogs to the rescue

A new pilot training program from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine shows promise to help thwart the Spotted Lanternfly. By utilizing scent detection dogs to identify Spotted Lanternfly egg masses, researchers hope to proactively neutralize the destructive insects.

The launch of the training program comes at a critical time for Spotted Lanternfly management in Pennsylvania. First identified in the Commonwealth in 2014, 26 of the state's counties have since been placed under quarantine parameters in an effort to stop the spread of the invasive species. As of August 31, 2020, there were 62,924 public reports of Spotted Lanternfly in Pennsylvania for the year, up nearly 72 percent from the same time period last year.

The insects damage trees and pose a significant threat to the grape, apple, hops, and hardwood industries.

Due to their elusive nature, these egg masses are difficult to identify. This pioneering study harnesses dogs' powerful scent detection capabilities to seek out the masses so that they can be destroyed. ■



Spotted lantern fly

Unconditional Love

An adopted "tripawd" rescue dog is helped by Cornell

This story was written by Mary Monopoli, whose Golden Retriever Marshall was a patient at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals. The story was originally published in the online news section of the Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine website.

"He has a lot going on," said Christopher Frye, DVM '11, who was assessing Marshall, my Golden Retriever rescue, to determine whether he was a candidate for therapy offered at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals (CUHA). "But I think we can help him," added Dr. Frye, who is chief of the sports medicine and rehabilitation service.



Marshall in therapy at Cornell.

Marshall came to live with me in upstate New York in June 2019. I had applied to adopt a dog through the Golden Retriever Rescue (GRR) and received a phone call two weeks later, saying they had a 5-month-old Golden puppy was arriving soon from Cairo and needed a home. Would I take him? One caveat: His right front leg was congenitally malformed, making him what is known as a "tripawd" dog.

Fast forward to January 2020. Marshall has turned out to be a wonderful dog, full of life and love. He has the "typical golden personality" and is a bundle of happy energy with the occasional mischievous streak. However, when an X-ray indicated osteoarthritis in his left foreleg, a referral was made to Dr. Frye.

Marshall has "significant" elbow dysplasia as well as arthritis in the weight-bearing front leg, including the shoulder, and both hips have dysplasia as well. While Marshall was not a candidate for surgery, Dr. Frye identified options to maximize his mobility and minimize his pain. In addition to basic exercises, joint supplements, and pain medication, Frye recommended shockwave and underwater treadmill therapies.

Three shockwave treatments, plus several underwater treadmill workouts, have made a noticeable difference in Marshall's stamina and strength. He has gone from being able to swim for less than 10 minutes to 30 minutes.

Marshall's activity level at home has increased. He is once again bounding up the stairs and playing with his German Shepherd housemate and my (sometimes reluctant) cat. While Cornell's treatment regimen is not curative, it has enhanced Marshall's quality of life.

Marshall and I were lucky in so many ways—in having a primary veterinarian who knew that Cornell offered these treatments, and in having Frye and his team share their skill, knowledge and encouragement.

We are also fortunate to be the recipients of a generous grant through the Remington Fund, established by the family of a dog who benefitted from these therapies at Cornell. This grant helped make the therapy financially feasible. I am grateful that all of these pieces have come together to help my beautiful, brave boy live as full a life as possible. This debt of gratitude also extends to the people at GRR who brought Marshall from Cairo and continue to provide support and encouragement, my family who helped me complete the adoption and are totally in love with Marshall, and mostly, to Marshall himself, for showing me every day what unconditional love looks like. ■

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Tracking the Working Dogs of 9/11 2
- Children and the Death of a Pet 2
- Coprophagia Can Be Concerning 3
- Shopping For Joint Support 4
- Teach the "Drop It" Cue 6
- 2020 Annual Index 7
- Fighting Females Not Uncommon 8
- Happening Now 8

Tracking the Working Dogs of 9/11

Study shows little difference in longevity or cause of death

When veterinarian Cynthia Otto was in Manhattan in the wake of the 9/11 attacks helping support the search and rescue dogs, she heard rumors about the possible impact on the dogs' long-term health, with comments that dogs that responded to the bombing in Oklahoma City had died or that dogs responding to 9/11 had died. "It was really disconcerting," she said.

It also underscored to her the importance of collecting rigorous data on the health of dogs deployed to disaster sites. An initiative that launched in the weeks after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks did just that, and this week, 19 years later, Otto's findings offer reassurance.

Dogs that participated in search-and-rescue efforts following 9/11 lived a similar length of time, on average, compared to a control group of search-and-rescue dogs and outlived their breed-average life spans. There was also no discernable difference in the dogs' cause of death.

While postmortem results showed that dogs that deployed after the 9/11 attacks had more particulate material in their lungs upon their death, it seems this exposure didn't cause serious problems for the animals in life. The most common cause of death were age-related conditions, such as arthritis and cancer, similar to the control group. ■

Otto, Cynthia M. et al. Fifteen-year surveillance of pathological findings associated with death or euthanasia in search-and-rescue dogs deployed to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack sites. Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, 2020; 257 (7): 734 DOI: 10.2460/javma.257.7.734 Science Daily.



Children and the Death of a Pet

The experience can lead to mental health issues

The death of a family pet can trigger a sense of grief in children that is profound and prolonged, potentially leading to subsequent mental health issues, according to a recent study by researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). The researchers found that the strong emotional attachment of youngsters to pets might result in measurable psychological distress that can serve as an indicator of depression in children and adolescents for three years or more after the loss of a beloved pet.

The bonds that children form with pets can resemble secure human relationships in terms of providing affection, protection, and reassurance. Previous studies showed that children often turn to pets for comfort and to voice their fears and emotional experiences, but this is the first study to examine mental health responses in children. Prior research focused on the attachment of adults to pets and the consequences of an animal's death.

The analysis is based on a sample of 6,260 children in Bristol, England. Researchers were able to track the experience of pet ownership and pet loss from a child's early age up to 8 years old. Researchers found that the relationship between pet death and increased psychopathology was more pronounced in male than female children and that the strength of the association was independent of when the pet's death occurred during childhood, how many times a death occurred, or how recently it happened. ■

Crawford, KM, et al. The mental health effects of pet death during childhood: is it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all? European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2020; DOI: 10.1007/s00787-020-01594-5



EDITOR IN CHIEF

William H. Miller, VMD, Dipl ACVD,
Emeritus, Professor, Clinical Sciences

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Cynthia Foley

TECHNICAL EDITOR

Debra M. Eldredge, DVM

ADVISORY BOARD

James A. Flanders, DVM, Dipl ACVS, Emeritus,
Associate Professor, Clinical Sciences

Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., Dipl ACVB,
Emeritus, Professor of Behavior Medicine

Joseph Wakshlag, MS, DVM, Ph.D., Dipl ACVN,
Associate Professor, Clinical Nutrition

Margaret C. McEntee, DVM, Dipl ACVIM, DACVR
Professor of Oncology

Meredith L. Miller, DVM, Dip ACVIM
Lecturer, Small Animal Medicine

Leni K. Kaplan, MS, DVM
Lecturer, Community Practice Service

DogWatch is an independent newsletter
produced in collaboration with Cornell
College of Veterinary Medicine



Cornell University
College of
Veterinary Medicine

For information on pet health, visit the Cornell
University College of Veterinary Medicine,
website at vet.cornell.edu

Send reader questions
and letters to the editor:

DogWatch

535 Connecticut Ave.
Norwalk, CT 06854-1713

dogwatcheditor@cornell.edu

Subscriptions: \$39 per year (U.S.) • \$49
per year (Canada). For subscription and
customer service information, visit
www.dogwatchnewsletter.com/cs
or write to: DogWatch, P.O. Box 8535,
Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535. 800-829-5574



DogWatch* (ISSN: 1098-2639) is
published monthly for \$39 per
year by Belvoir Media Group, LLC,
535 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk,
CT 06854-1713. Robert Englander,
Chairman and CEO; Timothy H.
Cole, Chief Content Officer; Philip L.
Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Chief
Marketing Officer; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial
Officer; Tom Canfield, Chief Circulation Officer.
©2020 Belvoir Media Group, LLC.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to
DogWatch, P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535.

Express written permission is required to
reproduce, in any manner, the contents of this
issue, either in full or in part. For more information:
Permissions, DogWatch, 535 Connecticut Ave.,
Norwalk, Connecticut 06854-1713.

Coprophagia Can Be Concerning

Some dogs can't seem to resist a bite of feces

Dogs can be pretty gross sometimes, and coprophagia, or eating poop, is a particularly nasty example.

Why do they insist on this? Well, poop often contains undigested food. Stool will contain extra nutrients if the dog is not digesting food properly, either due to gastrointestinal upset (diarrhea) or a lack of digestive enzymes. Those extra nutrients, especially protein, make the stool smell more appealing.

Your dog also could be hungry due to either problems with his diet, a health condition, or a medication causing increased appetite. If your dog is at a healthy weight and you're feeding a nutritionally complete and balanced commercial diet, it probably isn't a nutritional problem. If you feed a homemade diet, consult with a veterinary nutritionist to ensure it meets the requirements for a complete and balanced diet.

Diseases that can cause an increased appetite include Cushing's disease, diabetes mellitus, and thyroid disease. Steroids such as prednisone have a reputation for increasing appetite.

Veterinary Checkup

Your veterinarian will likely start with a fecal exam to check for intestinal parasites that may be stealing nutrients from your dog. Tell your veterinarian what you feed your dog, how often he poops, and what the usual consistency of his stool is, which may tip your veterinarian off to other potential issues.

If your dog is only seeking out one particular dog's stool, the other dog could have a health problem that is causing her stool to be attractive to your dog.

Eating feces, especially from an unknown animal, can open the door for diseases like parasites and infectious disease. If your dog is showing any signs of illness, such as diarrhea, vomiting, or fatigue, your veterinarian may run some diagnostic tests.

How to Stop It

So, what do you do? Clean up all stool promptly. Most dogs defecate on a regular schedule. Pay attention to your dog's routine, and when he is likely to go, head out to the yard to pick up his poop before leaving him to play unattended.



Dogs like Border Collies may have a multidrug-resistance gene mutation that makes them highly sensitive to ivermectin. They can become ill if they eat horse manure from horses dewormed with ivermectin.

Discourage your dog from sniffing poop. When he starts to sniff at a deposit, call him to you and reward him with a treat or some play. For example, arm yourself with some high-value treats, like chicken. As soon as he is done

defecating, call him to you and reward. With repetition, he will learn to expect a tasty treat right after he poops and come to you rather than snacking.

A study published in the July 12, 2003, issue of *The Veterinary Record* found both remote-controlled citronella-spray collars and remote-controlled sound devices distracted dogs from sniffing at poop and prevented the behavior, but the citronella spray collars had a longer effect.

Changing the protein source in your dogs' food may help by changing the scent of the stool. You also can purchase enzyme supplements and meat tenderizers that help to break down the protein in the food, decreasing what will pass in the stool.

Most dogs seem to prefer fully-formed stools, so feeding laxatives or stool softeners may make the stool less appealing. Some commercial supplements are intended to make the poop taste bad. Consult with your veterinarian before starting any supplement and to determine ideal dosage. Taste deterrents often only work for a short time before the dog adjusts to them, and need to be odorless or the dog will just seek out "normal" stools.

While some of these solutions work for some dogs, the only sure way to stop your dog from eating poop is to pick it up regularly so he doesn't have access to it. ■

Behavioral Causes

Coprophagia can be a behavioral issue, especially in puppies. It is normal for a mother dog to eat her puppies' feces to keep them and the area clean. The puppies may be mimicking their mother's behavior, or it may simply be part of normal exploration and practice scavenging.

Dogs who underwent a period of starvation may try to eat anything they can access, even when provided with regular, balanced meals. This is a behavioral condition called pica. If your veterinarian has ruled out any medical conditions, consider a consultation with a veterinary behaviorist, who can help you evaluate issues in your dog's life and help form a plan for treatment.

A study from the University of California, Davis, published in the November-December 2018 *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, looked at the factors associated with the occurrence of coprophagy and evaluated the efficacy of commercial products marketed for treating coprophagy as well as behavior modification procedures.

Of the 3,000 survey responses they received, 16% indicated their dogs ate stool at least six times a day. No evidence was found relating the coprophagy to diet or the dog's age. Coprophagic dogs were as easily house trained as non-coprophagic dogs, suggesting a normal aversion to feces. However, coprophagic dogs were more likely to be reported as greedy eaters than non-coprophagic dogs.

The study found a near-zero success rate of stopping the behavior using commercial products and/or behavior modification.

Shopping For Joint Support

The science supporting oral supplements is increasing

Dog owners know how important it is to keep dogs mobile and comfortable. Whether it's walking or hiking with their dogs or playing active games like fetch or agility, a moving dog is a healthy dog. But, in order to do so, your dog needs healthy joints.

Genetics play a big part in your dog's joint health, but so does your dog's body weight. No joint supplements can overcome the ill effects of that added stress on joints. "Overweight pets are more affected by, and develop, diseases like hip dysplasia faster than those that weigh the correct amount," says Chris Frye, DVM DACVSMR, Assistant Clinical Professor, Section of Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation at Cornell. It's important to keep your dog trim and fit right from puppyhood, especially if he's an active dog.

Joint Supplements

Over-the-counter joint supplements don't directly influence pain from osteoarthritis. For pain relief, your dog will most likely need a prescription medication from your veterinarian. That said, over time, some supplements will give your dog relief due to their ability to improve cartilage health and/or joint fluid. Omega 3 fatty acids, chondroitin, green-lipped mussel, and glucosamine have been shown to help to relieve pain by improving cartilage and joint fluid.

A variety of substances are advertised as good for canine joint health. Be



Our dogs are capable of amazing athletic maneuvers that stress their joints.

careful. To be effective, the ingredients in the supplement should be:

- ▶ Supported with research.
- ▶ Present in a quantifiable amount substantiated by science.
- ▶ Absorbed by a dog orally or via injection.
- ▶ Able to reach the area of action, i.e., the cartilage/fluid in joints.

Currently, few clinical trials are available that support the effects of joint supplements on dogs with osteoarthritis. "Some supplements have strong support for use in scientific studies such as fish oil, while others have mild to no support of efficacy," says Dr. Frye. "Many combination supplements are dosed

lower than when tested as supportive in a study. So, I look closely at the ingredient list to determine which ingredients may help, which ingredients are safe, and if the dosage in the supplement meets that shown to have effect in scientific studies. There are many supplements out on the market, and they should be reliable, applicable to our patient, safe, and appropriately dosed to affect." Many supplements marketed for dogs are based on human or equine studies.

Oral Joint Supplements

Glycosaminoglycans, or GAGs, are building blocks for joint cartilage, which means they are important for joint health, especially in degenerative conditions like arthritis. GAGs help decrease the production of inflammatory compounds like prostaglandins that may harm cartilage.

One of the most common GAGs is glucosamine, which is available as glucosamine hydrochloride and glucosamine sulfate. While the sulfate form is more readily absorbed overall, only the hydrochloride form has been shown to get into the joint fluids to help build healthy cartilage and repair damaged cartilage.

Most joint supplements for dogs combine glucosamine with chondroitin sulfate as it's been shown that the two ingredients have a synergistic effect. Like glucosamine, chondroitin acts to protect the cartilage and aid in repair. It specifically acts to inhibit cartilage damaging enzymes.

Most dogs will take one to two months before showing a definitive improvement from feeding a glucosamine supplement, and the recommended "loading dose" must be given in order for the GAGs to build up to a therapeutic level in the dogs. Not doing the loading dose prolongs seeing any effect.

MSM, or methylsulfonylmethane, is often combined with glucosamine and chondroitin. MSM is a natural anti-inflammatory and helps reduce pain. It has a considerable amount of strong research supporting its use.

Green lipped mussels, sometimes listed as "perna caniculus," are a natural source of glycosaminoglycans that have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Studies have shown green lipped mussels can fight osteoarthritic pain with minimal side effects.

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in fish oil, which contains docosahexaenoic acid

How Does CBD Oil Fit?

Cornell's research about the use of CBD, or cannabidiol-based oil, as a treatment for osteoarthritis (OA) in dogs was the first of its kind (*Frontiers of Veterinary Science*, July 23, 2018), looking to determine basic oral pharmacokinetics and assess safety and analgesic efficacy of CBD oil use in dogs with osteoarthritis. Overall, the study determined that 2 mg/kg of CBD twice daily can help increase comfort and activity in dogs with OA.

However, the researchers found an increase in serum alkaline phosphatase (ALP) during CBD treatment. (ALP is an enzyme found in the blood that may indicate liver abnormalities.) A study done at Colorado State University, using CBD for epilepsy in dogs, also found evidence of increased levels of ALP in the dogs' blood.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has only approved one CBD product, a prescription drug for use in people with epilepsy. CBD is not approved for animals. As we've written in the past, the use of CBD for your dog remains a buyer-beware decision. A discussion with your veterinarian may be helpful.

(DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA). EPA and DHA have documented anti-inflammatory effects on painful joints. Studies done with these components showed force-plate improvements for the dogs taking them and anecdotal positive effects noted by owners, such as ease in getting up after lying down.

Not as widely known as omega-3 fatty acids, the fatty acid combo **1-TDC (1-Tetra-Decanol Complex)** has been shown to reduce inflammation in dogs. Originally looked at for treating periodontal inflammation, it is now being used for arthritis. In a human study, this ingredient helped with lubrication and flexibility in joints.

Hyaluronic acid (HA) is a glucosamine compound. HA occurs naturally in your dog's joint fluid, working as a lubricant and to help absorb shock. In degenerative joint disease, the natural concentration of HA is reduced, which contributes to the pain and decrease in mobility you may see in your arthritic dog.

A study from Hungary with a limited number of dogs did show an uptake of HA into tissues, including joints and bones. Another study done in Brazil showed that giving oral HA after surgery to repair torn cranial cruciate ligaments could improve healing for these dogs and was bioavailable in the injured/repared joints. HA can be used in conjunction with glucosamine and chondroitin.

Avocado soybean unsaponifiables (ASUs) are believed to help protect cartilage from damage by healing defects in the cartilage, possible by increasing growth. When combined with glucosamine and chondroitin, ASUs can increase the effects of the GAGs, possibly reducing the required dose.

The Injectables

Your veterinarian may recommend you try **injectable HA** instead, as some evidence shows that a portion of the oral HA your dog consumes is not readily absorbed. Synovial-fluid injections have shown some positive results in people, horses, and dogs. When injected, it helps restore joint health and repair damage to the joint, although there is always risk with a joint injection.

The king of the injectable lot, however, is **Adequan Canine**, still the only FDA-approved disease-modifying osteoarthritis drug (DMOAD) that inhibits cartilage loss in a dog's joints. Adequan contains polysulfated

glucosaminoglycans that are given via intramuscular injections on a decreasing load schedule. It reduces joint inflammation, inhibits destructive enzymes, and promotes healthy cartilage and joint fluid.

Choices

Many dog foods boast that they contain glucosamine or another oral joint ingredient. It's a marketing ploy. By and large, with the exception of prescription/veterinary diets, most of these do not contain enough of the joint supplement ingredients to have an effect on your dog.

If you feel your dog may benefit from a joint supplement (such as a high-powered performance dog, breed risk for joint problems, or known damage to a joint or joints), start with an appointment with your veterinarian. Some veterinarians recommend beginning a joint supplement for high-risk dogs once they are physically mature (the age depends upon the breed).

"I doubt it would hurt to start other joint supplements at a young age in predisposed dogs but essentially there is no evidence yet that they help in the prevention of joint dysplasia or arthritis," says Dr. Frye. "Some supplements cost more than others. Therefore, we must weigh the effect of treatment with that of any potential risks (like weight gain with fish oil), and then examine costs and practicality of dosing. My recommendations are mainly catered for the individual."

What Should You Do

- ▶ Begin joint supplements before you see signs of wear, starting at a young age (12 to 24 months), especially with a large-breed dog.
- ▶ Choose a product with ingredients that are supported by research.
- ▶ Consider products from a manufacturer who is a member of the National Animal Supplement Council or from Nutramax.

The FDA does not oversee the sales of these products, although they do watch for marketing ploys that make the products sound like drugs (supplements are not medications). To help ensure you're getting what you're paying for, look for supplements from manufacturers who are members of the National Animal Supplement Council (NASC). These companies must meet certain quality standards and checks to have the seal on their products.

One notable exception to the NASC umbrella is Nutramax, makers of Cosequin and Dasuquin. Your veterinarian may recommend a Nutramax product because the research behind their products is recognized as solid. He or she also will know which products have worked for other dogs, as well as reputable sources for any supplements you may be considering. ■

Genetics Matter

If you are purchasing a puppy, ask about health clearances such as hip and elbow radiographic evaluations and patellar palpations. The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals maintains records for dogs who have had health clearances. A sire and dam who are clear doesn't guarantee healthy joints, but the risk of problems is lower.

Where's It From?

Sources of any supplements are important. For example, with omega 3 fatty acids, supplements from wild-caught cold-water fish are shown to provide the best combination. Farm-raised fish tend to have lower levels of omega-3s and high levels of omega 6s, which can counteract the effects of the omega 3s.

Buyer Beware

Ingredients not discussed in this article are on the market. Be careful. Most of these products have little-to-no clinical evidence for safety and efficacy, despite anecdotal support. Or the evidence may be heavily based on human, equine, or rat studies. While they may be effective for an individual dog, they may not help your dog, and in rare cases, they could be harmful. Among the substances we would be wary of are turmeric, hemp oil, and eggshell membrane.

Teach the "Drop It" Cue

So your dog will let go of an object when you ask for it

Your dog's training should include knowing how to relinquish something when you ask for it.

Drop It or Give

These cues are for when your dog is holding something that you want her to release, like a stolen shoe. The goal is for the dog to drop it on the ground or release it to your hand. To train your dog to "drop it," you need an item that your dog likes to carry and some tasty treats:

1. Get your dog excited and let her have the toy.
2. Call her to you.
3. Hold out the treat so she will drop the toy to grab the treat. When she does, pick up the toy yourself. Praise her.
4. Toss the toy or give it back to her.
5. Repeat several times and repeat again the next day and the next day.

Repetition is key, and the treat is a reward for giving up the stolen shoe.

She will soon start to loosen her grip on the toy automatically as she approaches you. This is when you can start introducing your cue ("drop it," "give," or another phrase of your choice—just be consistent!). As she gets close to you and you reach out your hand, say your cue word and then reward and praise before repeating the game.

Once she has the idea, you can start reaching out your hand while the treat stays in your pocket. Reward her with the treat after she has given up the item. This



Rather than trying to pry away an object, teach your dog to give it to you on command.

teaches her that releasing an item will still pay even if she can't see the treat.

For dogs who love to put their mouths on everything, either carry treats with you or stash them in strategic locations throughout the house. Whenever she picks up something she shouldn't, offer a treat to trade and give your cue word. Some dogs start bringing items to you intentionally for treats. If this is the case, decrease your reward frequency and just pet her quietly most of the time. You also can use toys for trades.

If your dog isn't willing to give up her prize, you may need a higher value treat (or toy). Hot dogs, cheese, and peanut butter are some tasty options.

Leave It

Teaching a solid "leave it" behavior will

allow you to stop your dog before she grabs something. To start, grab some treats and find a quiet place to train:

1. Hold a treat in your open palm.
2. When your dog dives for the treat, close your hand around it. Ignore any licking or nudging.
3. When she tires herself out and backs off, open your hand so she can see the treat again. Repeat until she stops diving for the treat.
4. As soon as you see her hold back, break off the exercise, praise, and reward her with a treat (it may be helpful to have higher-value treats for the rewards and a plain biscuit as the "bait").
5. Repeat several times until she is consistently showing self-control and not diving for the food.

Practice on multiple days and in multiple locations. Gradually increase the duration that she has to hold back.

Once she has mastered resisting the treat in the hand, you can move your distractor treat to the floor. Place it close to your hand or foot so you can easily cover it if your dog goes for it. When she backs off, let her see it again. When she holds back, praise and reward.

Repeat several times until she is consistently showing self-control and not diving for the food on the floor.

Now you are ready to introduce your cue. Place the treat on the floor and say, "Leave it." Then praise and reward for a job well done.

Once your dog has mastered the stationary treat on the floor, you can start adding motion. Put your dog on a leash and place a treat on the floor.

Walk toward the treat, and say, "leave it," when you get close. If your dog hesitates, praise and reward. If she lunges for the food, calmly return to your starting point and try again.

Repeat until she is consistently avoiding the distraction treat.

Up the ante by putting several treats out on the floor and walking around them. Say "leave it" as soon as your dog notices a treat to redirect her attention away from the object and toward you.

You can use toys as your distraction items. If your dog gets really crazy about toys, it can be beneficial to start out by teaching "leave it" with food and then transition to toys after she knows the concept. Training a solid "leave it" can take a long time for dogs who are highly impulsive or extremely food- or toy-motivated. Be patient, and work on it a little bit every day. ■

OK, Get It

You can release your dog to give her permission to grab the treat or toy. It is often best to wait to do this until she is at least partway through learning "leave it." After a successful rep, give your release word, such as "OK," "free," or "get it," then act excited and encourage your dog to grab the treat or toy. Praise and play with her. Mix up when you ask her to "leave it" and then reward from your hand and when you release her to grab the distractor. This can turn into a fun game that practices self-control while also giving your dog some great mental and physical exercise!

In Case of Emergency

If your dog has grabbed something that she absolutely must give up quickly, such as a cooked chicken bone or an onion from your garden, and won't relinquish it, you may need to pry her jaws open. Use one hand to grasp her upper jaw behind the canine teeth and the other to grasp the lower jaw behind the canine teeth and grasp her tongue. Most dogs do not like having their tongues touched and will let go reflexively. Opening your dog's mouth by force should only be done in an emergency, as it can cause the dog to become head-shy or possibly even injure her.

2020 Annual Index of Articles

ASK DR. H

- ▶ Abused dog adjustment 01/20
- ▶ Aggression, jealousy 08/20
- ▶ Aggressive Westie 11/20
- ▶ Barking cease 03/20
- ▶ Barking out the window 06/20
- ▶ Fighting females 12/20
- ▶ Grief, canine 04/20
- ▶ Leash biting 07/20
- ▶ Mounting behaviors 02/20
- ▶ Phobia, understanding 11/20
- ▶ Ravenous Border Collie 07/20
- ▶ Separation anxiety 05/20
- ▶ Spinning, itching 10/20
- ▶ Truck lunging 10/20
- ▶ Urination, anxiety 08/20

CANCER

- ▶ Electrochemotherapy 07/20
- ▶ Environmental toxins 08/20
- ▶ Facing cancer, 5 things 02/20

GROOMING

- ▶ Dry, itchy skin winter 01/20
- ▶ Mess, urine and feces 11/20
- ▶ Nails, grinding 02/20
- ▶ Smelly dogs 04/20

HEALTH

- ▶ Arthritis 06/20
- ▶ Bee stings treatment 04/20
- ▶ Bleeding problems, inherited 11/20
- ▶ Choking 10/20
- ▶ Coughs 05/20
- ▶ Ear mites 07/20
- ▶ Essential oils 06/20
- ▶ Excess weight and orthopedic health 02/20
- ▶ Extracorporeal shockwave therapy 11/20

A Word to Our Readers: DogWatch Mailing List Policy

Like many other publishers, we make portions of our customer list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we believe you may enjoy. Indeed, in all likelihood, we were able to first reach you only because another company graciously permitted us access to its customer list. If, when we make our list available, you do not wish to receive these offers and/or information, please let us know by contacting us at: DogWatch Opt-Out Program, PO Box 5656, Norwalk, CT 06856-5656. Please include your mailing label.

- ▶ Flatulence 02/20
- ▶ Glioblastoma 05/20
- ▶ Glyphosate 04/20
- ▶ Heart failure hope 05/20
- ▶ Heartworm 04/20
- ▶ Incision complications 10/20
- ▶ Laryngeal paralysis 01/20
- ▶ Licking, constant 07/20
- ▶ Liver, 5 things 10/20
- ▶ Lyme disease 08/20
- ▶ Mast cell tumors 06/20
- ▶ Preanesthetic testing 08/20
- ▶ Rising dough risk 03/20
- ▶ Runny eyes 06/20
- ▶ Saliva testing, allergies 02/20
- ▶ Summer hazards, 5 things 07/20
- ▶ Teeth, life without 03/20
- ▶ Toys, choosing safe 05/20
- ▶ Upset stomach 10/20
- ▶ Vaccine choices 04/20
- ▶ Weakness, hind end 11/20

MISCELLANEOUS

- ▶ Allergy help for dog lovers 04/20
- ▶ Farmers, dogs 05/20
- ▶ Insurance, health 01/20
- ▶ Puppies, male or female 07/20
- ▶ Scent and working dogs 08/20
- ▶ Wills, caring for your pet 07/20

NEWS

- ▶ CBD labeling 07/20
- ▶ CBD safety, FDA 02/20
- ▶ Clomicalm generic 2/20
- ▶ Coprophagia (eating poop) 12/20
- ▶ Coronavirus and dogs 04/20
- ▶ COVID in German Shepherd 08/20, 10/20
- ▶ Death risk lower, dog ownership 01/20
- ▶ Delivery driver hero 11/20
- ▶ Dog rescues kittens 02/20
- ▶ Dogs, fewer, marine corps 10/20
- ▶ DogWatch awards 05/20
- ▶ Dr. Moose 08/20
- ▶ Emergency room staff dogs 07/20
- ▶ End-of-life care accreditation 12/20
- ▶ Heart failure combo pill 10/20
- ▶ Heart resuscitation 03/20
- ▶ Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis trial 06/20
- ▶ Joint arthritis treatments 12/20
- ▶ Kids, dogs, and reading 03/20
- ▶ Labrador goes "home" 10/20
- ▶ Large cell lymphoma treatment 04/20
- ▶ Microchip law, California 12/20
- ▶ Music for dogs 02/20
- ▶ PACT act 01/20
- ▶ Pet store sales 07/20
- ▶ Pet-food borne illnesses 07/20
- ▶ Puppy remains 18,000 years 02/20

- ▶ Rabies in the USA 04/20
- ▶ Ranitidine recall 06/20
- ▶ Rescue stranded dog 12/20
- ▶ Scent, dogs, spotted lanternfly 12/20
- ▶ Shelters, overwhelmed 07/20
- ▶ Simparica Trio approved 06/20
- ▶ Surgery, open heart 07/20
- ▶ Technology, pet, sales up 12/20
- ▶ Toxic toads 08/20
- ▶ Tranexamic acid study at Cornell 10/20
- ▶ Triapawd dog, Cornell 12/20
- ▶ Vaccine, osteosarcoma 03/20

NUTRITION

- ▶ Coconut meal 01/20
- ▶ Dental diets 03/20
- ▶ Glossy coats 11/20
- ▶ Performance dogs 10/20
- ▶ Supplements, 5 things 03/20
- ▶ Treats 08/20

RESCUE

- ▶ Foster care, get started 03/20

RESEARCH

- ▶ Active lifestyle reduces fear 11/20
- ▶ Addison's, detecting 05/20
- ▶ Amoxicillin-clavulanate 07/20
- ▶ Cardiac parameters and pred 06/20
- ▶ Cats, dogs, peace 11/20
- ▶ CBD cautions 04/20
- ▶ Communication, dogs 11/20
- ▶ Dog age formula, new 03/20
- ▶ Dogs warning, human health 08/20
- ▶ Elizabethan collars 06/20
- ▶ Estrogen and mammary cancer 02/20
- ▶ Food-allergy testing 06/20
- ▶ Gestures, dogs 05/20
- ▶ Hidden genes in purebreds 01/20
- ▶ Mammary masses 02/20
- ▶ MRI canine atlas 08/20
- ▶ Neuter debate 10/20
- ▶ Numerosity, canine 03/20
- ▶ Parasites in dog parks 10/20
- ▶ Pet death, children 12/20
- ▶ Placebo effects in dogs 02/20
- ▶ Positive behavior modification 01/20
- ▶ Skin and behavior link 02/20
- ▶ Snake bites, blood clotting 08/20
- ▶ Tick-borne diseases 10/20
- ▶ Urinary tract infections, new test 01/20
- ▶ Working dogs 9/11 longevity 12/20

THERAPY

- ▶ Warm-up routines 01/20

TRAINING

- ▶ Drop it, Leave it 12/20
- ▶ Jumping on people, stop 05/20
- ▶ Muzzles 01/20

Fighting Females Not Uncommon

Presence of male dog in the house may be a factor

Q I have three dogs: one boy and two girls. The girls are fixed. They have all lived together for the past five years. Now the oldest female dog is attacking the other female dog for no reason.

I have separated them, but the older female dog is still trying to attack the other dog. The other dog is now fighting back. Is there anything I can do about them fighting? Will they end up killing each other? Should I just let them go? They are drawing blood from each other. I don't want to get rid of either of my girls but I don't know what to do.

A The problem you are having is not uncommon. Two spayed females often fight (see "Do You Want a Boy or a Girl" July 2020 DogWatch, with Dr. Pamela Perry). All veterinary behaviorists have noticed this trend and, in my experience, the presence of a male dog seems to be a factor.

There are predictable situations when dogs will fight. Food, visitors, and cramped spaces. The dogs should eat in separate rooms with the door closed between them. Pick up the dishes before opening the door.

Visitors can trigger aggression so be sure they are separated when you expect a guest or a delivery. Getting into the car or walking through a narrow space like a



This Chihuahua is showing signs of fear: lowered ears, whites of eyes, stiffened posture.

hallway can lead to a fight. Unfortunately, they could kill one another, especially if they are large dogs.

The first thing to do is to keep everyone safe. Keep the dogs separate using baby gates. It is best to use two baby gates so there is a "no man's land" between the dogs so they can't fight through the gate. It is especially important to keep them separated when you can't watch them. Because our goal is to reintroduce them you should have them together, but

safely. Teach each dog to wear a muzzle. Once they are comfortable with their muzzles, you can have them with you while you are relaxing.

Keep an eye on them to catch signs of impending aggression. Does one stiffen up and stare at the other? Does one lower her ears and show the whites of her eyes? These can be signs of heightened tension between them.

Probably the most important advice I can give is: "DO NOT BREAK UP A DOG FIGHT WITH YOUR HANDS!" You are more likely to be injured than they are because they have loose skin and a thick coat of hair; you don't. Instead, keep leashes on the dogs all the time so you can grab a leash and pull one dog away from the other.

Here is the exercise to help them become friends again. Each of you hold a dog at opposite ends of the room or tether one dog while walking the other up to her. Walk them toward each other until they are within three feet of each other. Give each dog a treat. Repeat 10 times.

Do this every day for a week alternating which of you holds which dog. The following week, walk to within two feet before giving treats. Don't wait for the dogs to react; just give them the treat so that they associate the approach of the other dog with something good. ■

© HAPPENING NOW...

Microchip Law—According to the *Long Beach Post News*, the California Senate unanimously passed a bill that mandates local animal-control agencies, shelters, and rescues to microchip any cat or dog who is either adopted out or claimed by the owner unless the pet is already chipped and registered with accurate information or has been deemed medically unfit by a veterinarian. The new law will go into effect Jan. 1, 2021.

New Veterinary Accreditation—In an effort to help veterinarians elevate end-of-life care for pets, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) developed an End-of-Life Care accreditation program. Eligible veterinary practices are those that either provide only end-of-life care or practices that are already AAHA-accredited or preaccredited. Practices that are not AAHA-accredited and are not standalone end-of-life care practices are ineligible for AAHA's End-of-Life Care accreditation.

Technology Sales—*Pet Product News* reports that sales of "smart" pet products—those using Bluetooth, GPS, or radio-frequency identification (RFID), or able to connect to the internet—rose 11% in 2019, hitting \$491 million. Top items were: invisible fencing systems and smart pet doors (36% of the sales), collars/tags (28%), toys (21%), cameras/video systems (7%), and feeders/treat dispensers (5%). Interestingly, smart litterboxes made up only 3% of the sales.

Foamy Rescue—A British coast guard helicopter took rescuers to Porth Beach in Cornwall, England, to rescue a dog trapped on a ledge by deep sea foam and the two people who unsuccessfully attempted to rescue the dog, according to a UPI report. A video on Facebook of the rescue shows a rescuer suspended from the helicopter being lowered to where he could grab hold of the dog and lift it to safety. Neither the dog nor the unsuccessful rescuers were injured. ■

Do You Have a Behavior Concern?

Send your behavior questions to Cornell's renowned behavior expert Katherine Houpt, VMD, Ph.D., shown here with Yuki, her West Highland White Terrier. Email to dogwatcheditor@cornell.edu or send by regular mail to DogWatch, 535 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854-1713.



Coming Up ...

- ▶ When to Worry About Gut Noises
- ▶ End-of-Life Guidelines
- ▶ Dog Coughs After Drinking Water
- ▶ Understanding PEMF Therapy