



HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

Puppy Beginner Class

Handout #4

Nutrition

Nutrition is important to a puppy's development and behavioral health. When picking out a food for your puppy be sure you check the label. Look to see if a meat product is listed first. If so it is probably a good quality food. If the first ingredient is a by product such as meat by product or bone meal these products would be less desirable. Avoid foods that list corn products. Corn, corn by products and corn gluten are inexpensive fillers. It is also a good idea to avoid added sweeteners, artificial preservatives such as BHA or BHT and artificial coloring. Food should always be fresh. Do not store foods for more than 2 weeks at a time. Foods stored for long periods lose much of its nutritional value. Remember what goes into your pet will ultimately affect his health and behavior. A good resource for any dog owner when choosing a good food is the "Whole Dog Journal". This newsletter has information about nutrition, training and health issues and can be a valuable tool for you as a consumer.

Good things to look for:

- Animal protein at the top of the ingredient list
- Named animal protein sources
- Whole vegetables, fruits and grains

You ideally should be feeding your puppy 2 – 3 times a day. Make sure you feed him at the same time each day, establishing a routine is very important. Try mixing a small amount of wet food with the dry if you have a picky eater. Stay with the same brand of food, changing foods can cause digestive upset. You can change the protein source such as; beef or chicken to add variety and ward off food allergies. Do not feed your puppy table scraps. It teaches begging at the table and different foods can upset their system and it is not healthy balanced nutrition. Make sure your puppy always has access to fresh water (not recommended in crate).

Food and Feeding

Feeding times should be scheduled and the dog should have his own bowl and space when eating. Should your puppy show signs of agitation or guarding behaviors around his food you need to correct this behavior immediately. Hand feeding is a good way to communicate to the pup that food comes from you and your hand around his food is a good thing. Hand feeding also builds a very strong human – animal bond. Hand feed his entire meal one piece at a time for a few days then try these desensitizing exercises. The purpose of the exercise is to desensitize the dog to people's hands around his bowl and food and counter condition his emotional response from fear to friendly acceptance. Continue each step for approximately 1 week. Each member of the family should participate in the training and remember children **MUST** be supervised at all times when around your dog. For safety reasons, if your puppy has bitten or if you are afraid your

puppy may bite, you should consult with a trainer to help you complete these exercises at home with you.

- Step 1 – Take a meal portion of kibble and sit on the floor next to your puppy near his food bowl. Have him sit, then put one piece of kibble in his bowl. Drop a few more pieces of kibble in his bowl. Ask for sit occasionally to help slow down a dog that gobbles or gulps his food. Sit, then a few more pieces. Do not talk to him unless he is doing well and behaving nicely. Continue this until you have fed the entire meal portion.
- Step 2 – Put full meal portion into your dog’s bowl. Have him sit, put bowl down. While he is eating put a small piece of something yummy in the bowl such as chicken or hot dog. Each time your hand comes near his bowl something wonderful appears. Repeat several times during the meal.
- Step 3 – Put ½ of the meal portion into the bowl. Have him sit, put bowl down. Halfway through the meal pick up his bowl and put in a special treat (as above). Have him sit again and replace his bowl. Each time you take his bowl away something wonderful appears in his food. You can continue this process at least one more time before he finishes the meal.

Most puppies are very gregarious and will love to have you around at dinner time and practicing these hand feeding exercises will be a good way to ensure he stays that way.

Other Helpful Cues for Your Puppy

Hopefully you have learned a lot from your time in class and with a few more tools you will be off to great start in training your new best friend!

“Off” – This cue is a must. “Off” means to get off what ever he is on (the couch, you, the neighbor’s cat). When your puppy is on something he should not be, toss a small treat on the floor, point to it and say “Off”. When your puppy jumps off to retrieve the treat tell him “Good dog”. If used consistently this cue is learned quickly and can be used easily. Remember to use “off”, not “down” or “get down”. “Down” will be another cue used to ask your puppy to lie down.

“Leave it” – You will use this cue to stop your dog as he approaches something you do not want him to (a dead frog you come across during your evening walk). If used consistently this cue will be quickly learned and used easily. It is important to remember realistic expectations. If the target of your dog’s interest is a high value item (pork chop bone) you need to be pro active and be prepared to restrain, redirect and remove the item quickly. Complete “leave it” training instructions are on the Tricks and Other Fun Things handout. You may also go to our web page www.humanebroward.com to download it.

“Drop it” – If your puppy has something in his mouth this cue will instruct him to spit it out or “drop it”. This cue can be a life saver. If your puppy has an item that could be dangerous if ingested it is important to get it away from him quickly. Most puppies enjoy a rousing game of keep away. He has a sock in his mouth and then you proceed to chase him around the house and the yard to try and get it away from him. Don’t start this bad

habit! Teaching and using a good reliable “drop it” cue will eliminate the need to chase your dog and reinforce appropriate play behaviors. When playing fetch use this cue to have your pup relinquish the toy for another toss. If a particular game has become over arousing and your puppy needs to take a break use the cue to remove the toy and engage in something less stimulating. You can always come back to the game later once your puppy has calmed down. It is important to remember realistic expectations. If the target of your dog’s interest is a high value item (pork chop bone) you need to be pro active and be prepared to restrain, redirect and remove the item quickly. Complete “drop it” training instructions are on the Tricks and Other Fun Things handout. You may also go to our web page www.humanebroward.com to download it.