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## **Crate Training/ Housetraining**

Congratulations on the new addition to your family. Puppyhood is a fun and exciting time but can also be very stressful. We would like to offer some helpful information on raising a healthy dog.

### **Why is crate training recommended?**

- The crate provides a sanctuary for your dog
- It provides a safe environment while you are away from the house or sleeping
- Greatly aids in housetraining your puppy

### **How do I crate train my puppy?**

First you will want to find an appropriate crate that suites your dog. Your puppy should have enough room to stand up and turn around. For large breed dogs we recommend a crate that can be sectioned off or expand to meet the needs of your growing puppy. Avoid placing the crate in an area that is scary to your puppy (laundry room/furnace room).

It is recommended to introduce your puppy to the crate as soon as possible. Always make the crate a positive place and NEVER use it for punishment (this may make your dog become anxious and fearful of the crate). Since most dogs tend to be food motivated you could feed your puppy its' meals in the crate with the door open. Give treats to your puppy each time it goes into the crate. To help reduce your pet's anxiety when you are leaving the house you may consider getting an "interactive" toy like a Kong or Busy Buddy that can be filled with kibble, treats, and even peanut butter. These toys can occupy your puppy for several minutes and keep their mind off of being left alone.

Avoid letting your puppy out of the crate when he whines or cries. Responding to the whines and cries can reinforce the behavior. Instead, ignore the cries until your puppy stops (even if it is a brief moment) and then let them out of the crate.

You may also want to avoid placing toys, blankets, and bedding in the crate that may be easily be destroyed or ingested by your puppy. This can be costly to you and harmful to your puppy.

See reverse ...

### **How does crate training help with house training?**

Dogs are particularly clean animals, they prefer not to sleep or lay in urine or feces. This is why having an appropriate size crate is very important. If the crate is too large your puppy may use one corner to eliminate in and the other corner to nap in.

To reinforce housetraining it is smart to place the puppy in the crate when direct supervision is difficult such as: when you are cooking, showering, or on the phone.

Each time your puppy comes out of the crate you should head straight outside for a potty break. If your puppy does not eliminate then you may put him back into the crate for a few minutes (5-10 minutes) and then try another potty break. This process can be repeated until your puppy eliminates outside. Remember, puppies are not physically able to hold their urine or bowel movements for an extended period of time until they are about 4 months old. Therefore, you should make sure that the puppy is getting outside frequently to eliminate.

### **How else can I help reinforce housetraining?**

- Be sure to **immediately** reward your puppy for eliminating outside (small treats/praise)
- Always take your puppy out on a leash (even with a fenced yard), so that you are available to reward your puppy immediately
- NEVER punish your puppy for eliminating in the house; this can cause puppies to develop fearful behaviors.
- Always take your puppy out the same door.
- Look for cues from your puppy: abruptly stopping play to sniff, restlessness, whining
- Meal feed your puppy (i.e. breakfast/dinner)
- Chart your puppy's meal/elimination habits for a week. You might notice a trend!

If you feel that your puppy is having a hard time adjusting to its crate or housetraining is not going well, please call our office for additional advice or information. 231-861-8196