

## **Puppy Biting, Mouthing, Teething, Chewing**

Biting and mouthing is common in young puppies especially in play and while teething. It is up to you to teach Puppy what is acceptable and what is not.

A biting dog is usually loving, sweet, adorable, affectionate and wonderful 99% of the time. Only 1% of the time does something specific happen that makes a dog bite.

### **Inhibit Biting**

Puppies must learn to inhibit their bite before they are 4 months old. They would normally learn this from their mother, their littermates and other members of the pack, but, because we have taken Puppy away from this environment before this learning is completed, we must take over the training.

### **Socialization Prevents Biting**

By allowing your puppy to socialize with other socialized dogs they can pick up where they left off. Puppies need to roll, tumble and play with each other. When they play, they bite each other everywhere and anywhere. This is where they learn to inhibit their biting. This is where they learn to control themselves. If they are too rough or rambunctious, they will find out because of how the other dogs and puppies react and interact with them. This is something that happens naturally and it is something we cannot accomplish. It can only be learned from trial and error. There is nothing you can say or do to educate them in this realm. They must learn from their own experience.

Another major advantage of socialization besides the fact that it will help Puppy grow up not being fearful of other dogs is that they can vent their energy in an acceptable manner. Puppies that have other puppies to play with do not need to treat you like littermates. So the amount of play biting on you and your family should dramatically decrease. Puppies that do not play with other puppies are more often hyperactive in the home as well.

### **Lack of Socialization Causes Biting**

A major cause of biting is lack of socialization. Lack of socialization often results in fearful or aggressive behavior. The two major reactions a dog has to something it is afraid of are to avoid it or to act aggressive in an attempt to make it go away. This is the most common cause of children

being bitten. Dogs that are not socialized with children might end up biting them. The optimum time to socialize is before the dog reaches 4 months. If there is anything you do not want Puppy to be afraid of or aggressive towards, you must begin to socialize Puppy with them before it is 4 months old.

### **Use of Reprimands and Biting**

**Never** hit, kick or slap Puppy. This is the quickest way to erode Puppy's trust in you. Yes, he/she will still love you. Even abused dogs love their owners. I don't know why, but they do. A unique characteristic of dogs is their unconditional love. You don't have to do anything to acquire your Puppy's love, but you must do a lot to gain your Puppy's trust and respect. Another area where we destroy our Puppy's trust in us is when we scold or punish them for house soiling mistakes and accidents. When house training Puppy, there is never an appropriate time to punish or reprimand. If you catch Puppy in the act, just head for the towels and cleaner. If you find an accident after the fact, just clean it up.

### **Summary Tips on Biting**

Reprimand alone will never stop biting.

If no respect exists, the biting will get worse. If you act like a littermate, Puppy will treat you as one.

If trust is not there, Puppy may eventually bite out of fear or lack of confidence.

Inconsistency sabotages training. If you let Puppy bite some of the time, then biting will never be completely eliminated.

Don't forget follow up. Puppy must understand that it is the biting that you don't like, not him/her. Make up afterwards, but on your terms, not Puppy's.

Prevent Puppy from chewing and destroying your house and belongings by providing proper training and chew toys. Chewing and playtime are part of normal puppy growth and development.

### **Puppy Chewing Do's**

Provide several toys for Puppy.

Teach Puppy to play with these toys.

Praise Puppy every time you see him/her chewing or playing with the correct toys.

Any area that Puppy has access to must be kept clear and clean. Put out of Puppy's reach anything you don't want him/her to chew or destroy, such as trash, shoes, hazards, etc. Puppy does not know what is valuable or dangerous and what is not.

If you find Puppy with your best shoe in mouth, distract him/her away from it and replace the shoe with one of his/her toys. Praise Puppy for chewing the toy. Do not reprimand Puppy for chewing your shoe. Reprimand yourself for leaving it out where he/she could find it. Most dogs chew shoes because they are leather and they smell like you.

Use bitter apple to on items and articles to show your puppy that these things are no fun to chew.

### **Puppy Chewing Don'ts**

Do not allow unsupervised access to 'unchewables.'

Do not chase Puppy in an attempt to take something away.

Do not reprimand excessively. A verbal warning should be enough. A loud startling noise is even better. It gets Puppy's attention without Puppy associating it with you. As soon as Puppy is distracted, show him/her what to chew and give praise when it is chewed.