



Your complete guide to natural dog care and training

Whole Dog Journal™

Credit: Jeff Goulden, Getty Images



On page 21. Vacation with your dog – Getting away from it all doesn't have to mean finding a dog-sitter! Whether it's a weekend escape or the road trip of a lifetime, these destinations—from New York to Oregon—will welcome you and your dog with open arms.

Credit: Nancy Kemis



On page 4. How dry I am – Freeze-dried and dehydrated diets are convenient, highly palatable and digestible—and expensive to feed.

Credit: Nancy Kemis



On page 24. So tricky! – Spins, shakes, and figure-eights are just the beginning.

In the issue

3

FEEDING A SICK DOG

Try a short fast and then a bland diet.

4

FREEZE-DRIED DOG FOODS

Selecting the best freeze-dried and dehydrated diets.

12

A GOOD GUT FEELING

Why you should support your dog's gut health and how to go about it.

14

DISPLACEMENT BEHAVIORS

Recognizing signs of a dog's conflicting desires.

16

VETERINARY TELEMEDICINE

The pros and cons of telehealth for dogs.

18

FIRST TIME DOG OWNER

Preparing for your very first dog.

21

DOG-FRIENDLY VACATIONS

Epic weekend getaways where dogs are welcomed with open arms.

24

TEACHING TRICKS

These easy tricks are a fun place to start.

28

ALLERGY RELIEF

A guide to common medications for dogs who suffer from allergies.



Like us!

facebook.com/wholedogjournal



Find us!

wholedogjournal.com



Check us out!

instagram.com/dogsofwholedogjournal

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Nancy Kerns

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Kate O'Connor

SENIOR EDITOR

Cynthia Foley

PUBLISHER

Timothy H. Cole

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

Greg King

EDITORIAL OFFICE

WDJEditor@gmail.com

4006 Hildale Avenue

Oroville, CA 95966

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

(800) 829-9165

Whole-Dog-Journal.com/cs

PO Box 8535

Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535

B
Belvoir

Whole Dog Journal (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly, except for two double issues (July/August and December/January) by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 535 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854. 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. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2024, Belvoir Media Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

Whole Dog Journal makes every effort to provide information on dog health, care, and treatment that is authoritative, reliable, and practical. It is not intended, however, to replace diagnosis or treatment from a veterinarian or other qualified dog professional.

Whole Dog Journal does not assume any legal responsibility. Readers should always consult qualified healthcare providers for specific diagnosis and treatment.

Subscriptions: \$39 annually (12 issues).
Bulk rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions available upon request.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to
Whole Dog Journal,
PO Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535



Time Marches On

Take those photos of you and your dogs, folks! You will be glad to have reminders of those wonderful friends.

You may have noticed that there is a different dog's photo in the circle on the back cover of WDJ every month. I have taken every one of those photos, often of my foster dogs or friends' dogs, and so of course, I have met every one of those dogs on the back cover . . . until this month.

I was chatting recently with WDJ's new Executive Editor, Kate O'Connor, and we drifted into talking about our own dogs (as one does), and I said, "Kate, you have to send me a picture of your dog! I want to see what a real Airedale looks like." People were forever telling me that my dog Otto, who passed away a year ago at nearly 16 years of age and is pictured with me above, looked like he was part Airedale.

Kate texted me a picture of Carmen, her 2-year-old Airedale. Folks, Otto didn't look anything like an Airedale! But they are *adorable!* I cracked up at her expression; you can just tell she's a nut! *I had* to put the photo on the back cover; even if I have never met Carmen, I feel like I know her now.

One of these days I will get Kate to send me a picture of herself with Carmen—but we all know that even if we have 10,000 pictures of our dogs in our phones, we don't have any really good ones of us *together*. That's *part* of the reason why, a year after Otto passed, I still haven't replaced the picture of us above with a more current picture of me and Woody and/or Boone. Like most photographers, I rarely have someone take a picture of me—and if they do, they never seem to be able to get my dog looking cute at the same time!

Here's another thing: The progression of photos that have appeared on this page since WDJ's first issue in 1998 show a passage of time that is somewhat unbelievable to me. The first one was a black-and-white photo of me with very short hair and my 8-year-old Border Collie named Rupert. I replaced that photo in 2002 with another black-and-white of me and Rupert. (WDJ was still a black-and-white publication then!) Rupie has gray in his face and I have long hair in that photo. He passed away in December 2003 (and just typing those words makes me burst into tears, even after all these years!). Then there was a picture of me and my father-in-law's dog Cooper; me and our little long-haired Chihuahua, Mokie; and then a progression of me and young Otto, middle-aged Otto, and elderly, dignified senior Otto. Twenty-seven years, and a handful of beloved, wonderful dogs! I hope Kate (and Carmen!) will make as many appearances here, too.



NK



Things to Feed a Sick Dog With No Appetite

If your dog won't eat, start with a short fast and then a bland diet.

A dog who won't eat is probably sick. If he has vomiting and diarrhea, a short fast may be all he needs to let his gastrointestinal tract settle before he starts eating again. A short fast of 12 hours may do the trick, provided he's drinking water. If he's not drinking water, call your veterinarian.

Consider offering small meals frequently. Some dogs will appreciate you offering spoonfuls of food or holding up their bowl for them. Most sick dogs do best with a bland diet, but variety can be appealing. Top choices include:

- **Cooked chicken breast with cooked rice.** This is perhaps the most tempting food for dogs who don't feel well. No butter, spices, or anything extra when making the chicken and rice.

- **Oatmeal works for some dogs.** Cook his rolled oats with water and nothing else. Oatmeal has plenty of fiber, which can help with diarrhea, and lots of B vitamins.

- **Plain mashed potatoes.** These are another favorite of sick dogs who aren't eating well, but skip the butter, milk, and seasonings.

- **Smelly canned mackerel.** This may do the trick, especially if the dog is having a respiratory issue and can't smell his food.

- **Canned cat food.** While you don't want your dog on a steady diet of cat food, some small offerings are smelly and tasty. For short-term use, these are fine, but check with your veterinarian to be sure your dog can handle the high protein and fat content of many cat foods, especially if he has a history of pancreatitis.



Credit: Cavan Images | Getty Images

DOG SNIFFS AND WALKS AWAY

Very often a sick dog will walk over, sniff the food, and walk away. This could be from nausea, or he may not be able to smell well. Ask your veterinarian for medications if you think he is nauseous. Drooling and your dog's facial expression are clues to nausea.

If he has a respiratory infection, keep your dog's nose clean. Use warm compresses to loosen any crusts. Make his food savory by warming it carefully and/or adding a good smelling topping. The bland foods listed above may need some smelly toppings. Low-sodium broth works well and will help with hydration. The juice from a can of tuna packed in water also adds plenty of aroma.

If none of your efforts work, and the dog hasn't eaten for 12 to 24 hours or missed two meals, call your veterinarian, who will want to determine the cause and may prescribe an appetite stimulant if needed. 🐾

A dog who doesn't feel well usually appears depressed and uninterested in food and life around him. If your dog ignores food and water, call your veterinarian.

Deb M. Eldredge, DVM, is retired from clinics but actively competes her dogs in dog sports and breed shows.



Air-Dried, Freeze-Dried, and Dehydrated Diets

More and more pet food companies are entering this diet niche — and innovating all-new manufacturing methods and food forms.

It's getting increasingly difficult to neatly categorize non-kibble dry dog foods. Freeze-dried foods, which once seemed novel, are now quite common, either as stand-alone diets or as meal “toppers” or treats. There are also ever-more dog diets being made with dehydrated meats.

It seems obvious that we should include dehydrated diets—from low-moisture, powdery or muesli-like products to chewy, jerky-like products with moisture levels that are a bit higher than those seen in kibble (usually, 9% to 10%)—in the same review category as freeze-dried. After all, these products all have a high inclusion of raw meat and animal organs (such as heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, and tripe), and just a few other ingredients.

Today, though, we're seeing a burgeoning number of diets that incorporate freeze-dried or dehydrated raw meats but that are made in truly innovative ways, resulting in some novel, niche-defying products. Some contain

higher inclusions of carbohydrate sources than most freeze-dried diets; some even resemble kibble in appearance and texture! “Cold-pressing,” steaming, and air-drying processes have also become much more common methods for manufacturing foods that are as lightly processed as possible, leaving the vitamins and vital enzymes in the products minimally damaged or reduced.

What do they have in common, then?

SHARED TRAITS

First, all of these products are made with relatively low-temperature, slow processes that remove moisture from fresh ingredients while protecting and preserving their nutrients. The removal of moisture not only creates shelf-stable products, but foods that are light and inexpensive to ship.

Shipping might be the only thing that is inexpensive about them, however. The pet food makers who are competing in this category tend to use very high-quality ingredients; many of them are using human-grade meats (the legal term is “edible”) and organic produce. And both freeze-drying and dehydration are energy-intensive processes; these foods are not cheap to make, so they are not cheap to buy, either.

However, the makers of these products would hasten to tell you that due to the superior digestibility and high energy density of these products, their cost is comparable to—or even less than—the cost of feeding a fresh refrigerated, canned, or frozen raw diet.

All of these products contain mostly meat and other animal ingredients (including organs, ground bone, and plasma or blood products). Many of the companies claim that their products consist of 80% or more animal protein sources; some claim to contain as much as 95%! The resulting diets are highly digestible and highly palatable.

Also, most of the products that we are lumping together in this category have a very low carbohydrate inclusion. Remember, dogs

We recommend buying food from independent pet supply stores whenever possible, as these owners and managers are often better educated about nutrition and can help you make buying decisions based on your dog's needs.



don't require carbs; they *can* live on fat and protein alone, as long as they get the vitamins and minerals they need.

But also keep in mind that if you don't include carbs in a diet, only protein and fat remain, and that fat contains more than twice the calories as protein or carbohydrates. (Carbohydrates and protein both contain 4 calories per gram; fat contains 9 calories per gram!) Many of these products may contain more fat than is healthy for dogs who are overweight and/or sedentary, or who are intolerant of fat (such as dogs who are prone to pancreatitis).

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR DEHYDRATED OR FREEZE-DRIED DOG FOODS

"Well," you may be saying, "These foods sound like a nice addition to my dog's diet—or a replacement for my dog's current diet. How do I choose which ones might work best for me and my dog?"

■ **Price.** For most of us, price will be a consideration. The high cost of these foods might not matter if you have one or two very small dogs, or one very precious larger dog, or you're wealthy, but I couldn't afford to feed them all the time to my two large dogs.

That said, I love having some on hand to use as treats and food toppers (to boost nutrition and the palatability of their regular food). And when I'm fostering sickly shelter dogs, freeze-dried foods are my magic remedy; I've helped all sorts of sick puppies back from the brink with these high-quality diets. So, though I could not afford to feed them full time, I fit a certain amount of these products into my monthly dog-food budget. You have to do what works for you.

■ **Ingredients that work for your dog.** It should be obvious, but you have to check product labels to make sure that any prospective diet doesn't contain ingredients that are problematic for your dog. Is he

allergic to or intolerant of certain proteins? (Are you keeping a food calendar or journal of what you feed and how your dog looks and feels? That's the best way to learn about and keep track of that.)

Fortunately, many of these diets are limited-ingredient, with single sources of animal proteins in each formula. It's much easier to find foods with a small number of ingredients in this category than in kibbled products.

■ **Appropriate protein and fat levels.** Look at the guaranteed analysis of any product you are considering. These diets are high, high, *high* in protein and fat. They can be just the thing for thin, young, active dogs, sport dogs, working dogs, and pregnant or nursing dogs, but they are likely not a great idea for your couch potato Labrador or the Dachshund who gains weight from breathing.

■ **Complete information about products on the company website; ease of contacting company.** In our view, there is absolutely no excuse for a company to fail to inform consumers about the nutritional adequacy of its products. If you are in the nutrition business, provide basic nutrition information!

We actually cut a few companies who have been on our "Approved Foods" list in past years for lacking *basic* information about their products on their websites or labels such as "nutritional adequacy statements." These statements tell consumers which criteria the food met in order to qualify as a "complete and balanced diet" for dogs, and, importantly, *which* dogs the food is intended for. Adult dogs only? Dogs of all life stages? What about large-breed puppies? This statement is the bare minimum—and companies that don't display this information for each of their products shouldn't even be considered, in our opinion.

We feel equally strongly about companies that make it difficult to reach them. A few don't publish their

phone numbers anywhere; we're not fans of this (though we haven't eliminated a company from our consideration for this alone—yet). Some do publish their numbers but don't answer their phones or return calls left in voice mailboxes! One company we called recently had a full phone mailbox—for days!

■ **Ease of purchasing.** Some of these products can be found in chain pet supply stores and online retailers. Others are sold only in independent pet supply stores and some can be purchased by subscription and are direct-shipped. All of these methods have pros and cons.

APPROVED FREEZE-DRIED/DEHYDRATED FOODS

If you're ready to try some of these products, we're giving you six pages of candidates to choose from. On the table that starts on the next page, we've included companies that make diets that meet our selection criteria, which can be abbreviated thusly: No unnamed meats or fats; only whole, lightly processed, "real food" ingredients; and no artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives.

We listed each the contact information for each company whose "Approved Foods" appear on our list, along with the number of varieties they offer in this category.

We've selected one variety of each company's products to highlight, listing the first 10 ingredients in each food. In most cases, we chose a beef-based variety, so similar products could be compared side by side. If the company offers several lines, we highlighted two or three products.

The notes include the range of protein and fat levels found in the products offered by each manufacturer. We'll repeat this, because it's important: Virtually all of the products in this category are high in protein *and* fat. It might be impossible to find an appropriate diet in this category for a dog who cannot tolerate high fat levels. 🐾

Nancy Kerns is WDJ's Editor-in-Chief.

WDJ'S 2024 APPROVED FREEZE-DRIED/DEHYDRATED DOG FOODS

Products are listed alphabetically by their most recognized name (printed in **RED**). Some are best known by the product name, not the company. Companies with more than one differently named product line (such as Champion Petfoods' Acana and Orijen) may appear separately under those product-line names, rather than the company. We apologize in advance for any confusion.

We have added whatever information we could find on the company websites and product labels about whether their products are subjected to a pathogen-killing process of any kind. HPP is "high pressure processing," also known as "high pressure pasteurization." "Not Avail" means we were unable to find any reference to any kill steps that are used by the company. This doesn't necessarily mean that no kill step is used (although it might)—or it might be that, in an effort to avoid scaring

off raw-food purists, some companies may not want to draw attention to their pathogen-control process.

Irradiation is another safe kill step available to pet food makers, but we didn't find any company disclosing their use of irradiation. It seems that while irradiation is in wide use for *human* food—and where irradiated products must be labeled as such by law—the stigma of irradiation is too great for pet food makers to risk admitting its use. Also, they don't *have to* admit it; there is no law that requires that an irradiated *pet food* must be labeled as such.



This "radura" symbol indicates a product that has been treated with irradiation.

Name of Product Line/s Company Information	Kill Step	Notes	First 10 Ingredients of Highlighted Product
ACANA FREEZE DRIED Champion Petfoods Edmonton, AB (877) 939-0006 acana.com	Not Avail.	Four grain-free varieties are available, each in patties or "morsels": beef, chicken, duck, and turkey. The products contain 36% to 46% protein and 23% to 32% fat; they are all formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, except for the growth of large size dogs. Company says they utilize a "test and hold" program for pathogen evaluation; products are not shipped until test results indicate that the products is free of pathogenic bacteria.	Acana Freeze Dried Turkey variety: Duck with ground bone, turkey with ground bone, chicken liver, whole herring, pumpkin, natural fish flavor, chicken heart, turkey giblets (liver, heart, gizzard), calcium carbonate, turkey bone broth.
LIBERTY FREEZE-DRIED RAWBBLE FREEZE-DRIED Bixbi Pet Boulder, CO (303) 666-1070 bixbi.com	Not Avail.	Bixbi Pet makes two lines of freeze-dried foods. Liberty Freeze Dried offers just one grain-free variety (lamb). It contains 45% protein and 36% fat and is formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs. Seven grain-free varieties of Rawbble Freeze Dried are available: beef, chicken, duck, lamb, pork, turkey, and chicken & salmon. All of them are formulated for dogs of all life stages, but some formulas can be fed to growing large size dogs (beef, chicken, chicken & salmon, lamb, pork, turkey); one variety is <i>not</i> formulated for the growth of large size dogs (duck). The products range from 45% to 58% protein and 20% to 40% fat. Complete nutrient analyses are available for each product on the manufacturer's website. Company says poultry is all cage-free and beef and lamb is "pasture-raised."	Rawbble Turkey variety: Turkey with ground bone, turkey gizzard, turkey liver, pumpkin, fenugreek seed, salmon oil, coconut oil, selenium yeast, vitamin E supplement.
BRAVO HOMESTYLE Bravo Pet Foods Dayton, OH (800) 635-2044 bravopetfoods.com	HPP	Three grain-free varieties are available: beef, pork, and turkey. All the varieties contain 38% protein and 8% to 13% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages (whether the products are appropriate for large size puppies is not specified). Complete nutrient analyses and country of origin for each ingredient are available for each product on the manufacturer's website. Products are tested for food safety before being shipped. Bravo Pet Foods is now owned by the BrightPet Nutrition Group.	Bravo Homestyle Turkey variety contains: Turkey, turkey liver, sweet potatoes, chickpeas, turkey hearts, green beans, turkey gizzards, cranberries, dried eggs, tricalcium phosphate.
DR. HARVEY'S COMPLETE MEALS Dr. Harvey's Atlantic Highlands, NJ (866) 362-4123 drharveys.com	Not Avail.	Dr. Harvey's comes in two varieties, chicken or beef. The meat in the products is freeze-dried, but the other ingredients are dehydrated. The foods contain 20% to 26% protein and 7% to 9% fat. Both products are formulated to be complete and balanced for adult maintenance.	Dr. Harvey's Whole Grain Beef & Garden Veggies formula contains: Beef, beef hearts, broccoli, green beans, carrots, pumpkin, organic oats, chia seeds, whole egg, parsley.
FRESH IS BEST Fresh Is Best Milwaukee, WI (866) 617-7735 freshisbest.com	Not Avail.	Five grain-free freeze-dried varieties are available: beef, chicken, duck, lamb, and pork. All the varieties contain 45% to 62% protein and 7% to 30% fat. They are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages (but whether the products are formulated for the growth of large size dogs is not indicated). Complete nutrient analyses are available for each product on the manufacturer's website.	Fresh Is Best Freeze-Dried Beef variety: Beef, beef livers, beef hearts, cantaloupes, cabbages, beef kidneys, kale, collards, fish bone meal, oyster shell powder.

Name of Product Line/s Company Information	Kill Step	Notes	First 10 Ingredients of Highlighted Product
<p>3 BEARS ARTISAN MACANNA MOXIE PUREFORMANCE</p> <p>Grandma Lucy's Rancho Santa Margarita, CA (800) 906-5829 grandmalucys.com</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Grandma Lucy's has five lines of freeze-dried foods (four grain-free), and each line has two to five varieties. Each of these foods are formulated for dogs of all life stages (however, whether these foods are appropriate for the growth of large size dogs is not specified). Grandma Lucy's does not identify its freeze-dried meats as "raw"—rather, they say, "Our recipes follow our 2-step braising/freeze-drying process which means our meats are lightly cooked before freeze-drying to eliminate the harmful bacteria found in raw meats." Each Grandma Lucy's features a unique carb source or carb combination:</p> <p>3 Bears contains grain (oats, third on ingredients list) and comes in three varieties (beef, chicken, fish). The products contain 24% to 28% protein and 14% fat.</p> <p>Artisan contains potatoes (second on ingredients list). There are four grain-free varieties (chicken, lamb, pork, venison), containing 26% to 34% protein and 13% to 15% fat.</p> <p>Macanna contains pinto beans (second on ingredients list). There are three varieties (beef, salmon, turkey), containing 28% to 30% protein and 14% to 15% fat.</p> <p>Moxie foods are grain-free. They contain sunflower seeds, squash, and pumpkin (4th through 6th on ingredients list). There are two varieties (beef, chicken) containing 52% to 55% protein and 32% to 33% fat.</p> <p>Pureformance contains chickpeas (second on ingredients list). There are four varieties (chicken, fish, lamb, rabbit), containing 31% to 36% protein and 14% to 16% fat.</p>	<p>3 Bears Chicken formula: Chicken, chicken liver, oats, flax, carrots, coconut, kale, cranberry, turmeric, ginger.</p> <p>Artisan Lamb formula: Lamb, potatoes, flax, carrots, celery, apples, blueberries, cranberries, garlic, vitamin A supplement.</p> <p>Macanna Beef formula: Beef, pinto beans, hemp hearts, carrots, coconut, pumpkin, kale, blueberries, turmeric, vitamin A supplement.</p> <p>Moxie Chicken formula: Chicken, chicken liver, chicken gizzards, sunflower seeds, squash, pumpkin, coconut, beets, apples, blueberries.</p> <p>Pureformance Rabbit formula: Rabbit, chickpeas, flax, carrots, celery, apples, bananas, blueberries, cranberries, pumpkin.</p>
<p>INSTINCT</p> <p>Instinct St. Louis, MO (888) 519-7387 instinctpetfood.com</p>	HPP	<p>Instinct offers two lines of freeze-dried foods. Raw Longevity has 10 grain-free varieties, nine of which (two beef varieties, beef/cod, two chicken formulas, lamb, rabbit, two pollock) are formulated for adult maintenance and one (a puppy variety made with chicken) is formulated for all life stages, except the growth of large size dogs. These foods range from 36% to 58% protein and 12% to 36% fat and are sold only in independent pet supply stores.</p> <p>Instinct's Freeze-Dried Raw Meals line has five grain-free varieties; one meant for puppies (chicken, formulated for all life stages, except the growth of large size dogs) and four are formulated for adult maintenance (beef, chicken, lamb, pollock). These contain from 36% to 39% protein and 29% to 33% fat.</p>	<p>Instinct Raw Longevity Beef variety: Beef, beef liver, beef kidney, beef spleen, beef heart, ground beef bone, yellow squash, apples, carrots, ground miscanthus grass.</p> <p>Instinct Freeze-Dried Raw Meals Beef variety: Beef, beef liver, beef kidney, beef spleen, pumpkin seeds, carrots, apples, sweet potato, butternut squash, montmorillonite clay.</p>
<p>K9 NATURAL</p> <p>K9 Natural Food Ltd Christchurch, New Zealand Phone # not available us.k9natural.com/</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Five freeze-dried, grain-free varieties are available: beef, hoki (fish) & beef, chicken, lamb, lamb & salmon). All recipes are complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs. They contain from 35% to 48% protein and 34% to 38% fat. All of the ingredients are sourced in New Zealand and the products are made in New Zealand.</p>	<p>K9 Natural Beef Feast variety: Beef, beef liver, beef tripe, beef kidney, beef heart, beef blood, eggs, beef spleen, ground beef bone, sunflower oil.</p>
<p>KIWI KITCHENS</p> <p>Pet Nutrition NZ Ltd Christchurch, New Zealand + 64 21 706 621 kiwikitchens.nz</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Kiwi Kitchens offers six freeze-dried, grain-free varieties. Four are formulated for adult dog maintenance (beef, chicken, fish, lamb) and two are formulated for puppies (all life stages), with one specified for the growth of large size dogs and one for the growth of medium and small breeds. These products range from 33% to 43% in protein and 23% to 35% fat with a maximum of 5% moisture.</p> <p>Kiwi also has four "air-dried" (dehydrated) foods: beef, chicken, lamb, venison. These contain from 30% to 34% protein and 22% to 32% fat, and have a maximum of 16% moisture. They are formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs.</p> <p>All of Kiwi Kitchen's ingredients are sourced in New Zealand. The beef, lamb, and venison are grass-fed, chickens are cage-free, and fish is wild-caught. The products are made in New Zealand. Complete nutrient analyses are available for each food on the company website.</p>	<p>Kiwi Kitchen Raw Freeze-Dried Beef Dinner variety: Beef, beef lung, beef liver, beef tripe, salmon, flaxseed, beef kidney, NZ green mussels, mussel digest, fish oil.</p> <p>Kiwi Kitchen Gently Air-Dried Beef Dinner variety: Beef, beef liver, beef lung, vegetable glycerine, flaxseed, fish oil, sunflower oil (mixed tocopherols), calcium carbonate, salt, choline chloride.</p>

Name of Product Line/s Company Information	Kill Step	Notes	First 10 Ingredients of Highlighted Product
<p>NATURE'S DIET</p> <p>Nature's Diet Provo, UT Phone # not available naturesdietpet.com</p>	HPP	<p>Three freeze-dried, grain-free varieties are available: beef, chicken, turkey. All recipes are formulated for dogs of all life stages, except for the growth of large size dogs. Each variety contains 40% protein and 15% fat. The freeze-dried meat chunks in this food were freeze-dried separately from the rest of the ingredients, giving the food a muesli-like appearance.</p>	<p>Nature's Diet Simply Raw Beef variety contains: Freeze-dried raw beef, freeze-dried raw beef liver, beef bone broth, whole egg, carrots, sweet potato, pumpkin, peas, banana, cranberries.</p>
<p>NORTHWEST NATURALS</p> <p>Northwest Naturals Portland, OR (866) 637-1872 nw-naturals.net</p>	HPP	<p>Seven freeze-dried, grain-free varieties are available. All are formulated for dogs of all life stages, with three of them formulated for the growth of large size dogs (beef & trout, chicken, turkey) and four (beef, chicken & salmon, lamb, whitefish & salmon) that are <i>not</i> formulated for the growth of large size dogs. The products contain from 21% to 52% protein and 29% to 44% fat.</p>	<p>Northwest Naturals Beef variety: Beef, beef heart, beef liver, ground beef bone, beef kidney, broccoli, carrots, apples, romaine lettuce, ground flaxseed.</p>
<p>NULO FREESTYLE FREEZE-DRIED RAW</p> <p>Nulo Austin, TX (512) 476-6856 nulo.com</p>	HPP	<p>Six grain-free varieties are available, five in the Freestyle line (beef, duck, lamb, salmon/turkey, and turkey) and one more simply called Nulo Freeze-Dried Raw Chicken & Blueberries. The varieties range from 40% to 44% protein and 26% to 29% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, except for the growth of large size dogs.</p> <p>Nulo also has a newer product line called Nulo Cold Pressed Meals. These four foods (beef, chicken, salmon, turkey) are mixed and formed while cold, then steamed, and then oven-dried. These products are effectively an all-new category of dog food—kibble-like, but very low in carbohydrates.</p> <p>According to Nulo COO Dr. Greg Aldrich, the cold-pressed product creation system “eliminates the use of non-essential starches like sweet potato and oats,” and results in foods that are “85% animal ingredients by weight, and 95% of protein from animal versus plant sources.” Each of these foods are formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs. They range in protein from 30% to 35% and fat from 20% to 25%. They contain a maximum of 12% moisture (a little bit more than most kibble, and a lot more than freeze-dried foods, which typically contain 5% moisture).</p> <p>Complete nutrient analyses are available for each product on the manufacturer’s website.</p>	<p>Nulo Freestyle Freeze-Dried Beef variety: Beef, beef heart, beef liver, beef kidneys, ground beef bone, apples, broccoli, sweet potato, carrot, kale.</p> <p>Nulo Cold Pressed Meals Beef Recipe: Beef, lamb, beef liver, lamb liver, ground miscanthus grass, spray-dried porcine plasma, pumpkin, apples, tuna oil, sunflower oil.</p>
<p>NUTRA COMPLETE</p> <p>Ultimate Pet Nutrition Encino, CA (800) 604-5827 ultimatepetnutrition.com</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Nutra Complete comes in five varieties: beef, chicken, duck, fish & beef, and pork. The products range from 33% to 46% protein and 23% to 38% fat; all of them are formulated for adult maintenance. These products were developed by Gary Richter, DVM, a holistic veterinarian and author of <i>The Ultimate Pet Health Guide</i>.</p>	<p>Nutra Complete Premium Beef Recipe: Beef, beef liver, beef kidney, flaxseed, dried kelp, blueberry, carrot, sweet potato, spinach, broccoli.</p>
<p>ONLY NATURAL PET MAXBLENDS</p> <p>ONLY NATURAL PET MAXMEAT</p> <p>Only Natural Pet Boulder, CO (888) 937-6677 onlynaturalpet.com</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Only Natural Pet has two lines. MaxMeat (two varieties, beef and chicken) are jerky-like air-dried foods, containing a maximum of 25% moisture. These foods are formulated for adult maintenance and contain 31% to 34% protein and 16% to 18% fat.</p> <p>The MaxBlends line features six dehydrated grain-free varieties (beef, beef & sweet potato, chicken, chicken & sweet potato, lamb & sweet potato, turkey & sweet potato). These products range from 28% to 32% protein and 8% to 12% fat; they have a maximum moisture content of either 10% or 11%. The beef and chicken varieties are formulated for adult dog maintenance; the other four varieties are formulated for dogs of all life stages, except for the growth of large size dogs.</p>	<p>Only Natural Pet MaxMeat Beef variety: Beef, beef lung, beef liver, vegetable glycerin, dried pumpkin, ground flaxseed, calcium carbonate, dicalcium phosphate, dried chicory root, vitamins.</p> <p>Only Natural Pet MaxBlends Beef variety: Dehydrated beef, flaxseed, dehydrated white potato, dehydrated sweet potato, dried yeast, whey powder, dehydrated apple, flaxseed oil, dehydrated spinach, dried carrot.</p>

Name of Product Line/ Company Information	Kill Step	Notes	First 10 Ingredients of Highlighted Product
<p>OPEN FARM FREEZE-DRIED RAW</p> <p>Open Farm Toronto, ON (833) 399-3403 openfarmpet.com</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Ten grain-free varieties are available, four in patty form (beef, beef & salmon, chicken, turkey) and six in nugget form (beef, beef & salmon, chicken, lamb, pork, turkey). Many organic ingredients are included and only certified humanely raised meats are used. All the varieties contain 37% to 42% protein and 30% to 40% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs.</p> <p>Though a Canadian company, Open Farm's products are manufactured in the U.S. The company utilizes a "test and hold" program; products are not shipped until test results confirm they are pathogen-free.</p>	Open Farm Freeze-Dried Beef variety: Humanely raised beef, beef heart, beef kidneys, beef livers, ground beef bone, organic carrots, organic blueberries, organic squash, organic sunflower seeds, organic cranberries.
<p>ORIJEN FREEZE DRIED</p> <p>Champion Petfoods Edmonton, AB (877) 939-0006 acana.com</p>	NA	<p>Three grain-free formulas are available, in both nugget and "medallion" form (for a total of six products). Each formula is made with multiple animal protein sources. The "Original" formula ingredients list starts with chicken; the "Regional Red" formula ingredients list starts with beef; the "Tundra" formula starts with venison and duck. The varieties range from 36% to 40% protein and 34% to 35% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, except for the growth of large size dogs.</p>	Orijen Freeze Dried Regional Red variety: Beef, beef liver, lamb, wild boar, flounder, pork, beef tripe, pork liver, whole herring, lamb liver.
<p>PRIMAL FREEZE-DRIED</p> <p>Primal Pet Foods Fairfield, CA (800) 742-1312 primalpetfoods.com</p>	HPP	<p>Primal now offers three lines of freeze-dried or air-dried foods. There are eight products in the Primal Freeze-Dried Nuggets line: beef, chicken, duck, lamb, pork, rabbit, turkey & sardine, and venison. Many organic ingredients are included in each. These varieties range from 41% to 58% protein and 19% to 35% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for adult maintenance.</p> <p>The Primal Freeze-Dried Raw Pronto line offers five formulas; four are formulated for adult maintenance: beef, chicken, lamb, pork. The Puppy formula contains chicken, chicken liver, beef, and salmon and is formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs. These foods range from 28% to 42% protein and 18% to 37% fat. The Pronto and Nuggets formulas that use the same animal protein source have identical ingredients lists through the first 10 ingredients, but then vary in the following ingredients, and the Pronto products generally contain slightly lower amounts of protein and fat than their analogous Nugget formula.</p> <p>Primal's newest line is called Kibble In The Raw, with five formulas. Four are formulated for the maintenance of adult dogs: beef, chicken, chicken for small breed dogs, fish & pork. The fifth product, a puppy formula that contains chicken and pork, is formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large breed dogs. These products contain from 25% to 32% protein and 21% to 23% fat; they contain slightly more moisture (8%) than Primal's freeze-dried products (which have 5% moisture). Kibble In The Raw is made through a unique process, somewhat similar to Nulo's "Cold Pressed" line—only Primal mixes freeze-dried meats, air-dried (dehydrated) produce, steamed sorghum, and cold-pressed oil together; shapes the dough into small kibble-like nuggets, and then freeze-dries that.</p> <p>Primal utilizes a "test and hold" program so that products are not shipped until test results confirm the products are free of pathogenic bacteria. Complete nutrient analyses, expressed in as-fed, dry matter, and caloric form, are available on the Primal website for all formulas.</p>	<p>Primal Freeze Dried Nuggets Beef variety: Beef (with ground bone), beef livers, organic carrots, organic squash, organic kale, organic apples, organic parsley, organic pumpkin seeds, organic sunflower seeds, organic blueberries.</p> <p>Primal Freeze-Dried Raw Pronto Beef Variety: Beef (with ground bone), beef livers, organic carrots, organic squash, organic kale, organic apples, organic parsley, organic pumpkin seeds, organic sunflower seeds, organic blueberries.</p> <p>Primal Kibble In The Raw Beef variety: Beef (with ground bone), beef liver, sorghum, organic apple, beef tallow, egg, salmon oil, organic sweet potato, organic carrot, beef plasma.</p>
<p>SMALLBATCH</p> <p>Smallbatch Pets Portland, OR (888) 507-2712 smallbatchpets.com</p>	HPP	<p>Six grain-free varieties are available: beef, chicken, duck, lamb, pork, turkey. Many organic ingredients are included. These varieties range from 44% to 57% protein and 25% to 43% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, excluding the growth of large size dogs. Smallbatch says it does not use synthetic vitamin sources; vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and EFAs are from whole food sources. The company also employs a "test and hold" program, refraining from shipping any products until tests results confirm they are free of pathogens.</p>	Smallbatch Beefbatch variety: Beef hearts, beef livers, beef kidneys, beef bone, organic carrots, organic squash, organic sweet potatoes, organic broccoli, organic kale, organic collards.

Name of Product Line/s Company Information	Kill Step	Notes	First 10 Ingredients of Highlighted Product
<p>SOJO'S COMPLETE</p> <p>Sojourner Farms, LLC S. St. Paul, MN (888) 867-6567 sojos.com</p>	Not Avail.	Sojo's Complete comes in five grain-free varieties: beef, chicken, lamb, turkey, and a turkey/salmon diet for senior dogs. The meats in these foods are freeze-dried chunks and the fruits and vegetables are dehydrated; the product resembles muesli. All are formulated for adult maintenance. The products contain from 24% to 28% protein and 12% to 14% fat. Complete nutrient profiles for all varieties appear on the Sojo's website.	Sojo's Complete Beef Recipe variety: Beef, sweet potatoes, carrots, whole egg, cabbage, flax seeds, cranberries, celery, beef liver, tricalcium phosphate.
<p>SPOT & TANGO UNKIBBLE</p> <p>Spot & Tango Dayton, OH (718) 514-6292 spotandtango.com</p>	Not Avail.	Four "gently fresh dried" nugget varieties (beef & barley, chicken & brown rice, cod & salmon, and turkey & sweet potato) are available. The products contain 25% to 27% protein and 16% to 22% fat and are formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs. These foods are sold by subscription and direct-shipped in amounts determined by the manufacturer based on your report of your dog's weight, age, and activity level.	Spot & Tango Beef & Barley Rice variety: Beef, barley, flaxseeds, carrots, green beans, beef livers, beef hearts, beets, cranberries, S&T nutrient blend.
<p>STELLA & CHEWY'S FREEZE-DRIED</p> <p>Stella & Chewy's Oak Creek, WI (888) 477-8977 stellaandchewys.com</p>	HPP	<p>Stella & Chewy's offers 13 varieties of Freeze-Dried Dinner Patties; 11 of these are intended for adults but formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs: beef; beef, goat, & lamb; chicken; duck; lamb; pork; rabbit; turkey; venison; venison/lamb. Two varieties are intended for puppies of all sizes: beef & salmon and chicken & salmon.</p> <p>There are 17 varieties of nugget-style foods. There are eight varieties of "Meal Mixers," which can be fed as treats or a food topper but are also complete and balanced. Seven of these are intended for adults but formulated for dogs of all life stages, including growth of large size dogs: beef, beef & salmon, chicken, duck, lamb, salmon & cod, turkey, pork) and one is indicated for puppies of all sizes (beef & salmon). There are also three varieties of "SuperBlend Meal Mixers"—nugget-shaped foods that contain several animal protein sources each. Two all-life-stage varieties are offered in a small size nugget for small dogs ("Lil Bites"). And finally, there are four complete and balanced nugget-shaped varieties that are formulated to "support" health issues (digestion, hip/joint, immune, skin/coat); these are formulated for adult maintenance. The products contain from 32% to 48% protein and from 28% to 38% fat. Complete nutrient analyses are available for each product on the manufacturer's website.</p>	Stella & Chewy's Chicken Dinner Patties variety contains: Chicken with ground bone, chicken liver, chicken gizzard, pumpkin seed, organic cranberries, organic spinach, organic broccoli, organic beets, organic carrots, organic squash.
<p>SUNDAYS FOOD FOR DOGS</p> <p>Sundays Food For Dogs Cleveland, OH No phone # available sundaysfordogs.com</p>	Not Avail.	Sundays Food For Dogs is available in three air-dried, jerky-like varieties with a maximum of 15% moisture. All three are formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs. The products contain 35% to 38% protein and 20% to 25% fat. A website FAQ states, "Sundays' unique air-drying process involves a 'kill step,' which eliminates pathogens," but that process is not identified. The package also says "Human Grade" on it; the website adds, "Sundays Beef Dog Food Recipe is made in a USA-based facility that makes food you'd buy at the supermarket for yourself."	Sunday's Beef variety: USDA Beef, beef heart, beef liver, beef bone, quinoa, pumpkin, fish oil, sunflower oil, zucchini, kale.

RAW FOOD DIETS ARE HEALTHY—UNLESS THEY CONTAIN PATHOGENIC BACTERIA

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is well aware that there is pathogenic bacteria present in much of the meat supply—yes, even meat that is meant for human consumption. But humans usually eat their meat after it's been cooked at temperatures that kill whatever *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, *e. Coli*, or *Campylobacter* bacteria might be present in the meat. Many of the canine diets discussed here are made with raw meat—and freeze-drying does not kill those pathogens.

In order to protect the (human) public from health risks posed by pathogenic bacteria in pet foods made with raw meat, the FDA imposes a "zero tolerance" regulation for

pathogens in raw dog food. In order to avoid penalty (and causing illness in humans and canines alike) some pet food makers use a "kill step" (such as high-pressure processing) that eliminates the threat of food-borne pathogens. Others rely solely on ingredient testing, good manufacturing practices, and/or test-and-hold systems—but none of these can guarantee pathogen-free foods.

When handling products that contain raw meat (even freeze-dried raw meat), consumers must employ raw-food safety practices, including washing hands and dog bowls in soap and water, and protecting immune-compromised family members from contact with the products.

Name of Product Line/s Company Information	Kill Step	Notes	First 10 Ingredients of Highlighted Product
<p>THE HONEST KITCHEN</p> <p>The Honest Kitchen San Diego, CA (866) 437-9729 thehonestkitchen.com</p>	None	<p>There are 16 products in The Honest Kitchen's Dehydrated Foods line: three "Gourmet Grain" varieties, four grain-free, four "Whole Grain," and five "Limited Ingredient." Seven of the products are formulated for adult maintenance only; the other nine are formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth large size dogs. All of these products have a flour-like consistency with chunks of identifiable dehydrated vegetables in the mix. These products range from 22% to 34% protein, 7% to 18% fat, and 8% to 9% moisture.</p> <p>THK's Whole Food Clusters offers eight varieties of dehydrated, kibble-like foods. The dehydrated ingredients are mixed, cold-pressed into kibble-shapes, and dehydrated. Five are grain-free formulas and three contain grain. All are formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large-breed dogs. They range from 23% to 26% protein and 14% to 17% fat, and contain a maximum of 12% moisture.</p> <p>THK makes all of its products in human food manufacturing facilities and is legally able to state "human-grade pet food" on its label. All of its foods are formulated for dogs of all life stages. Full nutrient profiles are available for all of THK's foods on its website. THK employs a "test and hold program," refraining from shipping products until test results indicate a lack of pathogenic bacteria. The company credits its human-edible ingredients and human-food manufacturing plant for ensuring pathogen-free products despite the lack of a kill step.</p>	<p>THK's Dehydrated Grain-Free Beef variety: Dehydrated beef, dehydrated sweet potatoes, dehydrated potatoes, flaxseed, dried organic coconut, dried parsley, dried papayas, dried cranberries, dehydrated pumpkin, dehydrated honey.</p> <p>THK's Whole Grain Beef Clusters variety: Beef, oats, beef liver, barley, eggs, tricalcium phosphate, dehydrated carrots, ground flaxseed, natural beef flavor, dicalcium phosphate.</p>
<p>TUCKER'S FREEZE-DRIED RAW</p> <p>Raw Basics, LLC Pleasant Prairie, WI (800) 219-3650 mytuckers.com</p>	None	<p>Tucker's Freeze-Dried Raw comes in eight grain-free varieties: chicken & pumpkin; pork, bison, & pumpkin; pork, beef, & pumpkin; pork, duck, & pumpkin; salmon & pumpkin; beef & salmon; beef & pumpkin; pork, lamb, & pumpkin. They range from 35% to 60% protein and 15% to 38% fat and are formulated dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs. Tucker's says it uses a probiotic blend in its foods that "prevents and eliminates pathogens."</p>	<p>Tucker's Freeze-Dried Raw Beef & Pumpkin variety: Beef, beef heart, beef liver, pumpkin, beef bone and marrow, mixed tocopherols (preservative), rosemary extract, taurine, zinc amino acid complex, vitamin E supplement.</p>
<p>VISIONARY KETO PET</p> <p>Visionary Keto Pet Santa Monica, CA (800) 325-0043 visionarypet.com</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Visionary Keto Pet's comes in two varieties: beef and chicken. The products contain 36% protein and 31% fat; both are formulated for adult maintenance. The ingredients are chosen for their low glycemic index; no potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, or peas are included.</p>	<p>Visionary Keto Pet's Beef variety: Beef, beef heart, broccoli, green beans, coconut oil, chia seeds, dried red cabbage, sunflower seeds, beef liver, calcium carbonate.</p>
<p>VITAL ESSENTIALS</p> <p>Carnivore Meat Co. Bellevue, WI (800) 743-0322 vitalessentialsraw.com</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Vital Essentials makes 13 grain-free freeze-dried diets. They are formed in patties (beef); mini patties (beef, chicken, duck, rabbit, turkey); "nibs" (beef, chicken); and "mini-nibs" (beef, chicken, duck, rabbit, turkey). The products contain 40% to 55% protein and 15% to 32% fat. They are all formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs. No vitamin/mineral premixes are added to these foods.</p>	<p>Vital Essentials Beef Entree (Patties) variety: Beef, beef liver, beef heart, beef lung, beef kidney, beef fat, beef tripe, herring oil, mixed tocopherols (preservative), vitamin E supplement.</p>
<p>WISDOM</p> <p>Earth Animal Southport, CT (855) 326-4625 earthanimal.com</p>	Not Avail.	<p>Five varieties of air-dried (dehydrated) foods are available: Venison & beef, catfish, chicken, turkey, and a vegan recipe. All the varieties contain 24% to 28% protein and 12% to 15% fat. Formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, including growth of large size dogs. Company website says each batch is tested (does not specify for what!) and that test results are available for viewing—but no results for 2024 were present on site.</p>	<p>Wisdom From the Land variety: Venison, beef, beef liver, dried sardine, quinoa, coconut glycerin, flaxseed, oats, bison, beef heart.</p>
<p>ZIWI PEAK AIR DRIED ZIWI PEAK STEAM & DRIED</p> <p>Ziwi Peak Christchurch, New Zealand (877) 464-9494 us.ziwi.com</p>	Not Avail.	<p>All Ziwi Peak foods are formulated for dogs of all life stages, including the growth of large size dogs.</p> <p>Ziwi Peak now offers two lines of higher-moisture, jerky-like products. Its six "Original" grain-free air-dried formulas (beef, chicken, lamb, mackerel/lamb, tripe/lamb, and venison) contain 38% to 44% protein, 24% to 30% fat, and 14% moisture.</p> <p>Ziwi's new "Steam & Dried" line offers three varieties (beef, chicken, lamb) which have been, well, steamed and then "air-dried" at "proprietary" temperatures. They range from 34% to 38% protein and 28% to 30% fat and have a maximum of 12% moisture.</p>	<p>Ziwi Peak Beef With Pumpkin (Steam & Dried) variety: Beef, beef lung, beef tripe, beef liver, beef heart, beef plasma, beef spleen, beef bone, lecithin, beef fat.</p>



HEALTH

Your Dog's Healthy Gut

Processed foods and environmental factors common to modern life may play a role in canine gut imbalances. Here's how to make an affordable investment in your dog's gut health.

DNA research has documented the importance of gut microbes in human and canine health, immunity, and longevity. A healthy microbiome—an umbrella term used to describe communities of bacteria, fungi, and other microbes in the body—destroys pathogenic (disease-causing) viruses, fungi, bacteria, and parasites. Most reside in the intestines, where they are known as the “gut microbiome.”

In a healthy gut, “friendly” or beneficial microbes secrete chemicals that destroy harmful bacteria and, if they are present in sufficient numbers, colonies of beneficial bacteria starve harmful microbes by depriving

them of nutrients and space. In addition, the microbes in a healthy microbiome can bind to toxins, such as allergens and substances that cause cancer, removing them from the body through normal elimination.

- Allergies and food sensitivities
- Indigestion, diarrhea, constipation, and flatulence
- Itching and skin and coat problems
- Dental problems and gum disease
- Bad breath and unpleasant body odors
- Arthritis or joint pain
- Liver disease
- Pancreatitis
- Inflammation
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Susceptibility to infections

CAUSES OF GUT IMBALANCES

Modern life may be the factor that most affects dog gut health. Most American dogs eat processed foods and even the highest-quality kibbles are high in carbohydrates and low in enzymes and nutrients that are damaged by the heat and pressure of manufacturing. Add environmental factors like harmful chemicals, air or water pollution, and other 21st century stressors, and it's no wonder our dogs are affected.

A GUT-HEALTHY DIET

Holistic veterinarians have long argued that the most important factor in a dog's health is food. A species-appropriate diet (also known as a biologically appropriate diet) is modeled after what wild canines consume, which is mostly the raw meat, bones, glands, blood, skin, and organs of prey animals. The natural canine diet is high in protein, moderate in fat, and low in carbohydrates.

According to Karen Becker, DVM, author of *The Forever Dog: Surprising New Science to Help Your Canine Companion Live Younger, Healthier, and Longer* (Harper, 2021), dogs fed fresh in place of dry dog food show positive microbiome changes and improved overall gut function. “A nutritionally optimal, species-specific, fresh raw or gently cooked diet is always a better choice than extruded kibble diets,” she says.

YOUR DOG'S MICROBIOME

At 6 months of age, the gut microbiomes of healthy puppies contain over 500 different types of microbes. Though the numbers decline as dogs age, older dogs still have over 400 different types of bacteria and other microbes in their digestive tracts, approximately 80% of which are beneficial and 20% potentially harmful.

An estimated 70-80% of your dog's immune system is in the microbiome. Dysbiosis (an imbalance of healthy or beneficial microbes in a dog's body) leads to a variety of common symptoms that can be treated by improving a dog's gut health, including:



Credit: Don Mason | Getty Images

An appropriate diet, enriched with prebiotics and probiotics as needed, will help maintain good gut health.

Frozen fresh, lightly cooked, and freeze-dried raw diets represent the fastest growing segment of today's pet-food industry. (See our review of healthy freeze-dried and dehydrated diets on page 3.) You can feed your dog from scratch with the help of books like Dr. Becker's, but brands like these are an easy way to provide the complete nutrition and variety that build a better microbiome.

HEALTHY SUPPLEMENTS

In addition to feeding an appropriate diet, you can enrich your dog's microbiome by adding prebiotics and probiotics to her food.

Prebiotics are indigestible carbohydrates, such as fiber, that feed and support the beneficial bacteria that live in your dog's digestive tract.

Probiotics are live microbes that regulate immune response, produce short-chain fatty acids that have anti-inflammatory properties, prevent the overgrowth of harmful microbes, and help prevent leaky gut syndrome by strengthening the gut barrier.

Both are familiar supplements for pets as well as people, and several brands combine active bacteria with the fibrous foods that feed them. A leading theory about the effectiveness of probiotics is that the more different strains of beneficial bacteria they contain, or the more species-specific they are (derived from cat, dog, or wolf sources), the more likely they are to improve your animal's microbiome. Most probiotic activity occurs in the intestines, which is why recommended brands use strains of beneficial bacteria that survive stomach acid.

Research shows that the popular probiotic strain *Bifidobacterium animalis* helped reduce stress in dogs moved to kennels from their homes and that it was as effective as antibiotics in treating severe diarrhea. The beneficial bacterium *Bifidobacterium longum* reduced overall anxiety in 90% of the dogs tested with it, and *B. longum* and other probiotics have been shown to reduce digestive problems. Probiotics are often prescribed for

BENEFICIAL SUPPLEMENTS FOR THE CANINE GUT ARE NOT ALL THE SAME

The following are just a few examples of supplements that are formulated to promote a healthy gut in dogs. Their contents vary widely, which should demonstrate why you need to compare the contents of any product you buy:

- **Purina's FortiFlora Canine Probiotics Supplement.** Recommended dose of FortiFlora contains 100 million CFUs of a single beneficial bacterium, *Enterococcus faecium*.
- **Bark & Whiskers Complete Probiotics for Pets.** Contains 15 strains of probiotics totaling 38 billion CFUs.
- **Nulo Gut Health Functional Powder For Dogs and Nulo Probiotic Soft Chew Supplements for Dogs.** Each supplement offers five strains of probiotics totaling 1 billion CFUs.
- **Adored Beast Roots.** Contains three species-appropriate ancestral probiotic strains from wolves totaling 15 billion CFUs.
- **Adored Beast Love Bugs.** Contains 14 strains of probiotics for dogs and cats totaling 30 billion CFUs.
- **Primal Frozen Raw Fermented Goat Milk.** Contains three strains of probiotics totaling 5 billion CFUs per fluid ounce (2 tablespoons).

dogs recovering from antibiotic therapy, which kills both harmful and beneficial bacteria.

The strength or concentration of probiotic products is measured in CFUs, or Colony Forming Units. Most probiotics sold for human or pet use contain at least 1 million CFUs per serving, but many measure their CFUs in the billions. Check labels to compare brands. (See sidebar with a few examples.)

In addition, you can help improve your dog's microbiome by following these simple tips:

- ✓ Keep your dog hydrated by encouraging him to drink, having clean water available indoors and out, and by adding fluids like goat milk, bone broth, or warm water to food.
- ✓ Add fermented foods such as plain (unflavored, unsweetened) yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese, or raw fermented milk from cows or goats. See "Dogs and Dairy Products" (WDJ, May 2022).
- ✓ Examine dog food ingredients. Buy the best you can afford, focusing on good protein sources.
- ✓ Rotate from one protein to another, a strategy that provides more

complete nutrition than feeding the same food at every meal.

✓ Limit or avoid carbohydrates, especially corn, wheat, and soy, which are commonly associated with allergies and digestive problems and which wild canines never consume.

✓ Whenever it's convenient, add fresh, raw, or gently cooked ingredients from your own meal preparation.

✓ Mix small amounts of dandelion greens, brussels sprouts, okra, asparagus, avocado (without the pit or skin), or nori/seaweed into your dog's food.

✓ Replacing as little as 20% of your dog's dry or canned dog food with fresh ingredients can significantly improve gut health.

For more information, see "What Do Probiotics Do for Dogs" (WDJ August 2022) and "A Better Biome" (WDJ, February 2018). 🐾

CJ Puotinen is the author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats. See page 32 for information about purchasing her books.



BEHAVIOR

Displacement Behaviors

Learn to recognize what behaviors your dog may display when she is experiencing conflicting desires and isn't sure what to do. These behaviors can be normal or may be a sign of distress.

Credit: Artur Debat | Getty Images



When a dog displays an otherwise normal behavior—such as licking—at odd times, it may be a sign he is feeling conflicted or frustrated.

Dogs sometimes do things that seem out of place. Maybe your dog runs to get a drink of water whenever company arrives at your house, or he whines and yawns when approaching a friendly dog. These out-of-context moments are examples of displacement behaviors.

Displacement behavior is when your dog does something normal, but at a weird time that feels out of context. This occurs when your dog is experiencing conflict or frustration.

Conflict is when your dog feels pulled between reactions to a situation. The pressure can result from two different things that are positive to the dog but can't be done at once, or one option could come with fear or anxiety. Some examples include if your dog:

- Wants to visit you when you get home but also wants to chase cars.
- Wants to approach another dog but is nervous.
- Wants to pull on the leash but knows he isn't supposed to.
- Wants to go to the person calling him but is scared of an obstacle, such as a shiny floor.

Frustration is when your dog wants to do something but is blocked or otherwise prevented from doing it. For example, she:

- Wants to visit a person but is on a leash.
- Wants to approach another dog but is behind a fence.

EXAMPLES OF DISPLACEMENT BEHAVIOR

There are many things that a dog might do as a displacement behavior. These can include excessive licking, yawning, circling, whining, barking, sniffing, tongue flicking, grabbing a toy, drinking, eating, scratching, or mounting. Which behavior the dog does can vary by the situation and the individual dog.

Here are three examples of displacement behaviors in action:

1 Many dogs want to greet other dogs but are unsure about how the other dog will respond. They respond to this conflict between wanting to play and wanting to maintain a safe distance by eating grass, lip licking, or yawning.

2 My oldest dog prefers to be with me at all times. If my husband is holding her leash – even if I am within sight – she whines and paces side to side. She is with a person she likes but is prevented from reaching me, her favorite person. This frustration comes out as whining and pacing.

3 My youngest dog is always in a hurry and tends to pull on the leash. I have worked on this a lot, primarily by standing still when she puts tension on the leash. She understands that keeping a loose lead means the walk will continue, but she really wants to go fast! Her solution to this conflict (wanting to be good and get to walk, but wanting to go faster) is to smush her face between my knees and walk beneath me for several steps.

WHAT DISPLACEMENT BEHAVIOR MEANS

If you notice your dog showing a displacement behavior, consider his overall body language and the situation that he is in. Is he mostly loosey-goosey and relaxed, or is he tense? Displacement behavior can be a response to stress, but stress isn't always a bad thing.

Stress is a normal part of life. Your dog experiences positive stress when he is excited about something and negative stress when he is anxious. Short bouts of stress from conflict or frustration are nothing to be concerned about. The issue is when stress becomes a frequent occurrence or if it is interfering with your dog's ability to enjoy day-to-day life.

If your dog quickly bounces back and is relaxed and happy or playing after showing displacement behavior, it just means he was temporarily unsure about or frustrated by the situation. For example, maybe he started eating grass as he approached another dog, but then they greeted each other politely and started playing. In this situation, there is nothing to worry about.

However, if your dog continues to show signs of distress even after the initial conflict has resolved, or if frustration can't be addressed, this could be problematic for the dog in the long term.

Let's go back to the example of a dog who is worried about a shiny floor. His owner is calling him, and he wants to go to her, but is afraid of the floor and starts whining and licking his lips. He finally goes to his owner but continues to pant and be tense with the whites of his eyes showing for 10 minutes after the event. This dog is not just frustrated or concerned, he is distressed.

Similarly, if a dog barks hysterically out the window for hours on end at dogs that he can't approach, he is staying in that stressed, hyper-aroused state for an extended period. This prolonged frustration isn't great for him (plus it is probably driving you and your neighbors insane).

WHAT TO DO

When your dog displays displacement behavior, consider what he's doing, why he's doing it, and how he behaves after the displacement behavior ends. All these factors will affect how you should respond.

Does your dog's displacement behavior stem from frustration? Try to identify the cause of the frustration and eliminate it. This will minimize your dog's stress and prevent the reaction from becoming a bad habit. For example, if your dog screams when he sees other dogs out the window because he wants to play, prevent him from looking out the window by blocking access to that room or putting up opaque window clings.

Does your dog's displacement behavior come from a place of insecurity and conflict, but then resolve positively? For example, the dog who is nervous about approaching another dog but then plays happily. You can reduce this displacement behavior by building up your dog's confidence and comfort around other dogs. Arrange playdates with calm, friendly dogs that you know will be gentle with your dog so he can have a lot of positive experiences approaching and interacting with other dogs.

Does your dog's displacement behavior come from fear and have the potential to end badly? For example, consider a dog who alternates between barking and lunging at another dog and retreating fearfully, even if the other dog is calm. This dog is distressed and could potentially bite the other dog if pushed too hard. If you find yourself in this situation, get your dog out of there as quickly and safely as possible. Strong fear of other dogs should be addressed with the help of a veterinary behaviorist and/or your veterinarian.

Does your dog's displacement behavior come from insecurity or fear and lead to prolonged anxiety? Consider the dog who is afraid of the shiny floor and stays stressed out even after getting to his owner. You can reduce this displacement behavior by avoiding shiny floors,

providing rugs or mats for your dog to walk on, and/or a desensitization program to help him become more comfortable with shiny floors.

Does your dog's displacement behavior itself have the potential to cause harm? For example, if a dog obsessively licks one spot on his leg when he experiences conflict or frustration, it may eventually create bald patches and even damage the skin if he continues licking. Try to identify the cause of your dog's behavior and eliminate the source if possible. You will likely also need help from your veterinarian or a behaviorist to prevent physical damage and break the habit.

REDIRECTED AGGRESSION

Redirected aggression is similar to displacement behavior but works a little differently. The classic example of redirected aggression is when a dog wants to attack a dog on the outside of his fence but can't get to it, so he bites his owner or a housemate instead. A dog showing redirected aggression is extremely frustrated, but instead of finding an innocuous displacement behavior such as grabbing a toy or whining to vent that frustration, he does exactly what he wants to do to the first poor soul who gets in his way.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Periodic, mild episodes of displacement behavior are a normal response to conflict or frustration. When possible, identify the source of your dog's conflict or frustration so that you can address both the feelings and the behavior.

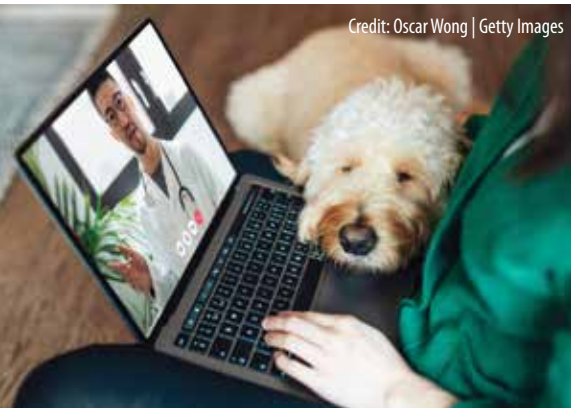
If your dog's displacement behavior itself could cause harm, or if the result of the situation causes distress for anyone involved, start by avoiding the situation while you seek help from your veterinarian and/or a veterinary behaviorist. 🐾

Kate Basedow, LVT, grew up training and showing dogs and is active in a variety of dog sports. She is a licensed veterinary technician and has written professionally about dogs for most of her life.



Understanding Veterinary Telemedicine

Consulting with a veterinarian online can be an important tool when determining how to best care for a sick or injured dog.



Credit: Oscar Wong | Getty Images

While veterinary telemedicine can be helpful in many situations, it has its limits. Since the vet won't be able to directly observe your dog, getting a diagnosis may be more difficult.

It's the middle of the night and something is not quite right with your dog. You're concerned but don't know if your dog needs to see a veterinarian right away. You call the local veterinary emergency hospital but learn that the wait time to be seen by a veterinarian is at least five hours if your dog is not experiencing a life-threatening emergency. Do you take your dog to the emergency hospital? Or do you risk it and wait until the morning when your primary care veterinary hospital opens?

Now there's a third option—consulting with a veterinarian online about your dog's situation. Telemedicine and teletriage are services that are available by phone or online and can be accessed with your smartphone, tablet, or computer.

There is a difference between telemedicine and teletriage. Let's delve into what each service can provide and the pros and cons of each.

VETERINARY TELEMEDICINE

Telemedicine is an extension of the existing relationship you have with your dog's

veterinarian. This type of service requires a previously established veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR)—see the sidebar below for more details.

Your veterinarian's practice may offer an informal telemedicine service, such as the ability to call and speak with a veterinarian after hours. A veterinarian at the practice is assigned to be "on call" and available to consult with you by phone when the hospital is not open. The on-call veterinarian can help you decide if your dog needs immediate veterinary attention or can wait until the practice reopens to seek care.

Some veterinary practices contract with a service that provides telemedicine consultations by phone, text message, or online video chat. These services have access to the practice's electronic medical records. A veterinarian or veterinary technician from the service can consult with you and update your pet's medical record remotely with the information provided during the consultation.

A veterinarian may be able to prescribe medications for your dog based on findings from a telemedicine consultation. However, not all states allow this and an in-person physical examination may still be required once the hospital is open.

Telemedicine has the benefit of utilizing information from your dog's records to facilitate discussion, diagnosis, and

WHAT IS A VETERINARY-CLIENT-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP (VCPR?)

Every state has a set of regulations that govern the practice of veterinary medicine. These regulations are called veterinary practice acts. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the purpose of a veterinary practice act is "to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and animals by ensuring the delivery of competent veterinary care."

One of the regulations stipulated in a veterinary practice act is what constitutes a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR). A VCPR is the relationship between you, your

veterinarian, and your pet for the purpose of diagnosing and treating your pet. Most states require establishment of a VCPR before a veterinarian can prescribe medications for your pet.

In most states, the establishment of a VCPR requires a hands-on physical examination of your pet. As of this writing, only six states allow the establishment of a VCPR by virtual consultation. Once established, a VCPR can be maintained through follow-up consultations that are done virtually, by telephone, or in-person.

recommendations for your dog. However, phone or text message options do not allow the vet or veterinary technician to see your dog. Video chat provides the veterinary professional with the ability to see your dog but even that is not a substitute for a complete physical examination and diagnostics.

TELETRIAGE

Teletriage is an assessment tool that can be used to determine the best course of action for your dog in an urgent or emergent situation. You can consult with a veterinarian or veterinary technician by phone, text message, or video chat. The veterinary professional will make one of three recommendations:

1 Seek veterinary care immediately at the closest emergency hospital. Some teletriage services, like VetTriage, will contact emergency hospitals in your area to see who might be able to see your dog in the most timely fashion and have the services your dog may require.

2 Call your dog's veterinarian first thing in the morning to schedule an appointment for your dog to be examined, diagnosed, and treated.

3 Recommendations on what to do for your dog at home. They may also tell you what signs to look for that indicate your dog is getting worse and needs immediate veterinary care.

A VCPR is not necessary for a teletriage consult. However, this means that the veterinarian cannot diagnose your dog's problem or prescribe medications for your dog. They can only assess your dog and give you advice on whether or not to seek immediate veterinary care.

As with telemedicine, there are limitations on how much the veterinarian can see or hear what is going on with your dog via phone, text message, or video chat. If you have any lingering doubts or concerns about your dog's condition, it may be best to take your dog to the closest

TRIAGE AT THE EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

The first person your dog will see upon arrival at a veterinary emergency hospital is a veterinary technician. A veterinary technician is the equivalent of a nurse in human medicine.

The veterinary technician will obtain your dog's vital signs, a brief history of your dog's illness or injury, and a list of medications your dog is currently taking. Vital signs include heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature, gum color, and pulse quality.

The veterinary technician will assign your dog a triage level based on the information collected. Most emergency hospitals use a four- or five-level triage system. These triage levels are:

Level 1: Requires immediate attention by a veterinarian. These pets are either actively dying or experiencing an event that is life-threatening. Pets in this category may have uncontrolled bleeding due to trauma, difficulty breathing, collapse, be actively having a seizure, or are in cardiopulmonary arrest.

Level 2: Requires emergent attention by a veterinarian. These pets are not actively dying but are likely to worsen if they are not seen as soon as possible. Pets in this category may have a high fever, internal bleeding, a large open wound, a proptosed or ruptured eye, or a urinary obstruction.

Level 3: Requires urgent attention by a veterinarian. These pets are not actively dying and are unlikely to worsen if not seen right away. Pets in this category may be vomiting blood or have bloody diarrhea, a laceration that is not currently bleeding, or an issue affecting the eyes.

Level 4: Stable and can wait for the next available veterinarian. These pets have normal vital signs and can wait with their owners in the waiting room. Pets in this category may be vomiting, limping, having diarrhea, or not eating.

Level 5: Non-urgent. These pets can be seen by their primary-care veterinarian on the next business day. Pets in this category may have skin or ear infections, superficial cuts that do not require sutures, or a ripped claw that is not actively bleeding.

Dogs in triage level 1 are seen immediately. Those in triage level 2 are seen immediately once triage level 1 cases have been seen. Dogs in triage level 3 may have up to a two-hour wait to be seen by a veterinarian. Triage level 4 patients may have a wait of four hours or more. Owners whose dogs are in triage level 5 will be encouraged to leave and see their primary-care veterinarian on the next business day.

Dogs are seen by the emergency veterinarians in the order of their triage level. That means that some pets that have arrived after you may be seen before your dog if their triage level is higher. Being first at the emergency hospital is not the position you want to have—it means that your dog is in the worst condition of any pet currently there.

emergency hospital for assessment. Upon arrival at the emergency hospital, a veterinary technician will assess your dog's vital signs and obtain a brief history from you. Your dog will then be assessed a triage level (see "Triage at the Emergency Hospital," above).

Telemedicine and teletriage can play an important role in your dog's

veterinary care. But understanding their limitations is important, too. You are your dog's advocate—trust your gut and be their voice. It's better safe than sorry! 🐾

Dr. Jennifer Bailey is an emergency and urgent care veterinarian (and a certified Fear-Free practitioner) at an emergency/specialty practice in Syracuse, New York.



CONSUMER
ALERT

What to Know as a First-Time Dog Owner

There is a lot to prepare for when bringing a dog into the family, especially for a first-time dog owner.

Even if you grew up in a family that had dogs, getting a dog of your own for the first time is a big step. From picking a vet to coming up with a training plan, there's just so much to figure out! So, once you've decided to go for it, what do you need to know as a first-time dog owner?

One of the most important things to understand is that by bringing a dog into the family, you are taking responsibility for a living being. Far too many dogs end up in rescues or shelters for being “difficult” or “unmanageable,” often in ways that could have been avoided with more knowledge, better training, and good exercise. You can save a lot of heartache by making—and sticking to—a good plan and by consulting with experts promptly when an issue arises that you aren't sure how to deal with.

In addition to training and exercise, caring for a dog requires a plan for diet, health care, and grooming, and some basic equipment. You will also want to decide where the dog will eat, sleep, and play before she arrives.

STUFF TO BUY

If you are a first-time dog owner, chances are you won't have a lot of dog equipment

on hand. To get started, it's a good idea to have the following before you bring your new dog home:

✓ **A collar or harness and leash.** You will need a safe way to keep your dog with you. Never assume a puppy or dog will just follow along with you—a rock-solid recall takes time and effort to train and, even if you achieve it, there are plenty of places where leashes are required. A well-fitted flat collar or martingale and a soft nylon leash is my go-to. For a look at some of the top products we've found, see “The Best Dog-Walking Gear” (WDJ, June 2023)

✓ **Bowls for food and water.** While it's not fancy, stainless steel is the best way to go for dog bowls. It's easy to clean, durable, and will not leach chemicals into the dog's food or water. As discussed in “Safe Dog Food Bowls (and How to Keep Them That Way)” (www.whole-dog-journal.com), dog bowls should be cleaned regularly to avoid any buildup of harmful bacteria that can make the dog sick.

✓ **A selection of toys.** Toys can be a great source of mental stimulation—along with giving the dog things she is allowed to chew on and play with—but finding the right ones can be tricky. What works for one dog may not work for another, even if they are the same age and breed. I recommend picking up a few to start with and getting to know your new dog before introducing more. If you have a puppy, you will need to consider puppy-appropriate toys. If you end up with an aggressive chewer, be aware that she may be able to rip even sturdy toys into potentially harmful, swallowable bits in minutes. Be sure to take a toy away if your dog starts to pull it apart.

✓ **An appropriately sized dog crate.** While some people prefer not to crate train

Bringing home a new dog is an exciting time, and it can be made easier by being well prepared.



Credit: Kate O'Connor

While they may not be pretty to look at, stainless steel dog bowls are easy to clean and can stand up to a lot—including being carried around.

their dogs, I'm a firm believer in teaching both puppies and older dogs to happily hang out in a crate. When properly used, a crate provides the dog with a place where she can feel safe and can't get into any trouble while she's getting used to her new home.

Make sure you have a good understanding of how to crate train before attempting to crate your new dog; it's important that she learns to associate the crate with good things. For more on the types of crates that are available and how to get the right size for your dog see "What Is a Safe Dog Crate?" (www.whole-dog-journal.com).

✓ **Other items.** The following are less essential but still very helpful: dog beds, brushes, nail trimmers, training treats, a pooper-scooper and clean-up bags for handling dog waste, dog shampoo, baby gates to control access to the house, a dog car seat or seatbelt, and an enzyme cleaner for any messes.

DIET

What you feed your dog can have a lasting impact on her overall health and wellbeing. Do some research ahead of time and pick out a good, high-quality food. To get started, read "How to Choose a Dog Food: Factors to Consider" (WDJ, Feb. 2023) and check out Whole Dog Journal's assessment of the best dry dog foods (WDJ, Feb. 2024) and best canned dog foods (WDJ, Oct. 2023).

Don't start your dog on her new food immediately. If possible, find out what food she has been eating and get a bag of that as well. Dogs can struggle to transition to a new diet so it's important not to change foods too quickly—switching diets should take seven to 10 days. For a guide on how to safely change foods, see "How to Transition Dog Food" (www.whole-dog-journal.com).

Like humans, dogs can have



allergies or sensitivities to certain ingredients in their food. In addition to obvious gastrointestinal trouble such as vomiting, diarrhea, or constipation, signs that your dog may need a different kind of food can include being overweight or underweight, a dull coat, flatulence, itchiness, hot spots, paw licking, chronic ear infections, listlessness, and hyperactivity. If your dog is experiencing any of those symptoms, talk to your veterinarian to see if he or she thinks it might be food related—especially since many of those indicators can also be symptoms of other ailments.

HEALTH CARE

Speaking of veterinarians, it's important to choose a vet and schedule a checkup for the first week your dog will be with you. Even if the dog is exhibiting no outward indicators of health problems, the veterinarian will be able to do a more thorough check to help identify any hidden issues. Bring any medical records you have for the dog including proof of previous vaccinations. You may also be asked to bring a stool sample, which will be used to check for parasites.

Along with verifying the dog's health, the checkup will officially establish a relationship with the veterinary practice so you're not scrambling to find someone to see your dog if she gets sick or injured. In addition, a well-check is a good time to ask any questions you might have about your dog's health needs. Topics to cover with the vet may include:

✓ Vaccination recommendations for your region

✓ When you should spay or neuter your dog

✓ Health concerns to watch out for given the dog's age, breed, and the area where you are living

✓ Flea/tick and heartworm prevention medications

✓ Care plan/next recommended appointment

TRAINING

Training is not just about getting your dog to perform certain behaviors on cue. It is about understanding and developing a relationship with your dog so that you can live a good life together (see "Kidnapped From Planet Dog" on the WDJ website). No matter how old your new dog is or where she comes from, you will need a training plan. Especially if you are a first-time dog owner, it is highly recommended that you sign up for a basic obedience class as soon as possible with a good, fear-free dog trainer. There's no one better to help you learn to speak dog.

You will also need to consider how to go about training your dog not to relieve herself in the house. Even dogs who have previously been house-trained may have accidents in a new environment. Be prepared to deal with the mess—and the learning process—without getting mad at the dog. Housetraining a puppy is usually pretty straightforward, though it takes commitment and constant vigilance in the early stages. Older dogs who have never been housetrained can take more work, depending on why she is having trouble with it.

SOCIALIZATION

While similar to training, socialization is more about getting your new dog used to her environment and the other living beings in it. It is one of the most important things you can do for your dog. While socialization works differently for puppies who are in the process of learning about the world and older dogs who have already developed opinions on it, the basics remain the same:

✓ **Keep experiences positive (food is great for helping this along!).**

✓ **Do not force or lure your dog into a situation she doesn't want to be in.** Give her time and support to figure it out.

✓ **Be calm and positive.** Dogs can be very good at picking up on what humans are feeling. If you are nervous or uncomfortable, take a break until you are in a better place.

✓ **Start small.** A two-minute good experience is much more effective than 20 minutes of practice that ends with something not as great happening.

✓ **Don't be afraid to call it quits for the day.** Sometimes it's best to take a break, go do something fun, and try another day.

✓ **Get help.** If you aren't sure what to do or don't seem to be making progress, don't be afraid to go to a trainer, behaviorist, or veterinarian for help and advice.

For more on how to socialize a dog, see "How to Socialize a Puppy" (WDJ, March 2023).

There is one place where you need to be prepared to work on socialization right away. If you have children or other pets, have a plan for making introducing everyone a positive experience. Make sure any kids understand that they will need to go slowly and be gentle with the new dog, no matter how excited they may be. Supervise play closely and make sure the dog can get away from the children—and that they respect her decision to do so—if she feels the need for some quiet time. It is also helpful to engage children in the training process. (see "Dog Training for Kids and Other Beginners," WDJ, March 2024).

When it comes to introducing your new dog to other pets, the rules are similar. Give both pets a safe space to be away from each other, create positive associations and

experiences, and don't rush. For a detailed look at pet introductions, see "How to Introduce a Cat to a Dog" (WDJ, April 2024).

EXERCISE

As a first-time dog owner, it is essential to understand that dogs need daily exercise. For most, a quick walk or meandering around a fenced in yard just isn't enough. Age, breed, and individual preference all play a part in how much exercise a dog needs with some working breeds (and crossbreeds) needing in excess of two hours of exercise a day. Before you get a dog, be sure you have the time and physical ability—or can hire someone—to exercise her.

Along with the fitness-related health benefits, good exercise helps promote good behavior in dogs. An under-exercised dog tends to get bored and frustrated. This often leads her to try to find ways to entertain herself such as chewing on or shredding things, barking at anything interesting passing by the window, and pestering her humans non-stop.

GROOMING

While specific grooming needs are dependent on the dog's coat type, even short-haired dogs must be groomed. Many grooming tasks can be performed at home with a little research (and practice), but you may want to visit a professional groomer for some of them. To keep a dog healthy, grooming tasks will include:

■ **Brushing.** Brushing is good for any coat type but dogs with thick or long hair will need regular—sometimes daily—attention to keep clean and free of mats. Matted hair can pull painfully on the skin and lead to skin problems if left unaddressed.

■ **Toenail trims.** On average, dogs require nail trims on a monthly basis. If a dog's toenails get too long, they can cause difficulty walking or even curl around and grow painfully into the dog's paw pads.

■ **Dental care.** Just like with humans, it is recommended that dogs get their teeth brushed daily to help prevent tooth loss and disease. For more information on canine dental care, along with how to choose the right toothbrushes and toothpaste for your dog, see "How Often Should You Brush Your Dog's Teeth?" (www.whole-dog-journal.com).

■ **Haircuts.** Some dogs do better with regular haircuts while others should never be shaved. Consult with a professional groomer to determine what is best for your dog.

■ **Baths.** How often you will need to bathe your dog is going to depend a lot on her coat and environment. If you have a soft-coated dog who spends a lot of time digging in the muddy backyard, she's going to need more baths than a wire-coated dog who mostly walks on sidewalks.

A DOG IN THE HOUSE

Finally, there are a lot of things around the typical household that can cause problems for our dogs. Kids' toys and small knick-knacks can be choking hazards. Certain plants, cleaning products, and common household chemicals can be poisonous. You'll need to do some research and conduct a thorough sweep of the house and yard before bringing your new dog home. If a dog can put something in her mouth, assume she will. When I'm puppy-proofing a space, I often sit on the floor to see what catches my eye from dog eye-level.

For a more in-depth discussion of how to turn your home into a safe, healthy environment for your dog see "A Healthy House for Your Dog (and You, Too!)" (www.whole-dog-journal.com). 🐾

Kate O'Connor is WDJ's Executive Editor. She grew up in a family that bred and showed Airedales and has worked as a groomer, trainer, kennel manager, and vet hospital care attendant. For fun, Kate and her dogs participate in rally and agility.



5 Best Dog-Friendly Vacations

If you're looking for dog-friendly weekend getaways, here are some unforgettable places to visit.

Ready for a vacation but don't want to leave your dog behind? Dog-friendly vacations take a little more planning, but many destinations boast lodging that allows dogs, outdoor dining options, and activities that you and your dog can enjoy together. I know my dogs love seeing me pack up their food and toys!

So, if you're looking for the best dog-friendly vacations or some weekend getaway spots where dogs are welcome, here are some great destinations!

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

This incredible park in Maine is not only one of the best dog-friendly vacations, but can be done on a budget!

Camping is the way to go to enjoy this stunning chunk of Maine's coastline. Hotels fill up fast for the peak summer season and can get quite pricey. Camping, on the other hand, will only set you back about \$30 a night (\$60 if you will have several tents grouping together in a large campsite).

My personal favorite is Seawall Campground because you are within walking distance of the ocean—there's nothing like being lulled to sleep by the waves! Our two

dogs enjoyed lounging by the campfire and then taking a moonlit stroll out to the beach.

During the day, drive to your chosen hiking and exploring spots. Here are some of the sights and activities my dogs enjoyed:

■ **Gorham Mountain.** A fun hike even if you aren't a serious hiker with amazing ocean views. The trail is mostly on large rocks and would be too much for a puppy. Don't forget water for your dogs!

■ **Schoodic Point.** A bit of a drive from the main part of the park, but well worth it for the big flat rocks, open ocean, and a chance to spot some whales or dolphins.

■ **Ship Harbor.** Easy flat walking paths and a great spot to wade and play in the water.

■ **Otter Cove.** Another great place to play in the water. It also has some of the best cell service on the island—perfect for uploading photos of your dog on vacation.

When on the coast, you *must* eat at a fish or lobster shack. Nothing beats fresh seafood! Most of these spots have picnic tables where your dog can join you.

Dogs are allowed to run off-leash at the Agate Beach State Recreation Area. However, if your dog's recall is not ready for this sort of fun, you can visit the nearby Agate Beach Neighborhood and Dog Park, which features a large fenced dog park, covered picnic shelter, picnic tables, BBQ grill, play structure, and restrooms.

Credit: Kate Basedow



BRUCE PENINSULA NATIONAL PARK

This gem is another great option for a dog camping trip. Bruce Peninsula National Park is in Canada, so any human travelers from the U.S. will need a passport and canine travelers will need a rabies certificate (check before you travel for any additional requirements). Camping in the park offers the usual options plus yurts that can be reserved year-round.

Georgian Bay on the eastern side of the peninsula has crystal clear water. The body of Lake Huron on the western side tends to be warmer for swimming.

Spots in the park and rest of the peninsula to check out with your dog include:

■ **Singing Sands.** An incredible sandy beach with extensive shallows perfect for wading and playing! There is also a boardwalk trail with educational signs about the animals and plants that call this area home.

■ **Georgian Bay Trail.** An easy walk from the campground through the woods and past small lakes that leads to Indian Head Cove and the Grotto. Both of these are beautiful photo spots. Watch out for the biting flies though!

■ **Little Cove Provincial Park.** A beautiful cove with a rock and pebble beach perfect for paddle boarding and swimming. Reserve parking ahead of time and keep your dog on leash at all times to protect wildlife. Little Cove is also one of the spots on the Bruce Trail, which runs from Tobermory all the way to Niagara.

Tobermory Brewing Company and Grill welcomes dogs on their outdoor patio. Looking for a tasty sandwich to bring on a hike? We stopped at the Foodland on Route 6 every day of our visit.

THE FINGER LAKES AND ITHACA, NEW YORK

I'm a little biased because I lived in this area for four years, but it is a wonderful place to visit with dogs!

Here are some great spots to check out with your dog:

■ **Taughannock Falls State Park.** A nice walking trail and an amazing waterfall! You can also enjoy a typical park with picnic tables, playgrounds, and lots of open grass across the road—not to mention Cayuga Lake.

■ **Buttermilk Falls State Park.** These trails are a bit more effort, but well worth it to view the stunning waterfalls.

■ **Ithaca Falls Natural Area.** Easy access to a beautiful waterfall. In college, my dog and I loved to sit and read by the waterfall during the summer.

■ **Long Point State Park.** Another great spot to play in the water plus plenty of picnic tables to enjoy a leisurely afternoon. The docks are also a popular fishing spot.

■ **South Hill Cider.** A beautiful cidery near Buttermilk Falls that offers cider tastings, cheese boards, smoked meat sandwiches (plus falafel for vegetarians), and music nights throughout the summer. Dogs are welcome in the outdoor areas.

My favorite place to stay when visiting Ithaca is the Best Western University Inn. Be sure to grab breakfast at Collegetown Bagels right next door in East Hill Plaza! They offer the same menu as the original CTB down next to Cornell University's campus but with the convenience of an actual parking lot.

On the topic of Cornell, the campus is dog friendly and a beautiful place to walk. The iconic Arts Quad is a must-see spot, and then you can make your way over to the Cornell Botanic Gardens to enjoy mature trees, flower gardens, sculptures, and a lily pond.

If you're a wine lover, the Seneca Lake Wine Trail and Cayuga Lake Wine Trail don't disappoint. Many of the wineries welcome dogs with a special shoutout to Boundary Breaks

which even has a fenced area for dogs to run!

On the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail, Americana Vineyards and Swedish Hill Winery both have a special place in my heart. Be sure to say hello to the resident farm animals at Swedish Hill, though it may be best to keep your dog out of reach.

AGATE BEACH, OREGON

This spot would make a perfect dog-friendly weekend getaway or you could make it one stop on a longer tour of the northwest.

Start your trip by booking one of the dog-friendly suites at the **Agate Beach Motel in Newport**. This lovely little motel is right on the ocean and offers cozy accommodations and a sun deck with each suite.

Then take your dog to the **Agate Beach State Recreation Area** and you are all set for a relaxing weekend. This huge sandy beach offers plenty of space for dogs to play on and off leash. It is easy to spend hours strolling on the sand, investigating tide pools, and listening to the birds and waves.

Another neat spot is the **Devil's Punchbowl State Natural Area**. This unique landmark was probably created when the top of a system of underwater caves collapsed resulting in a large "bowl" that fills and empties with the tides.

Restaurants with dog-friendly patios in nearby Newport include **The Taphouse at Nye Creek, Rogue Bayfront Public House, Nana's Irish Pub**, and **South Beach Fish Market**.

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

While I haven't been there myself (yet), Flagstaff has a fantastic reputation as being a dog-friendly destination.

■ Places to stay:

- **La Quinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham Flagstaff.** Located right off I-40, this hotel is modern and offers free breakfast (for human guests, though you could bring some eggs back to the room for your dog).

READER SERVICE

Visit our website at:

whole-dog-journal.com

To order back article archives go to:

whole-dog-journal.com

To change your mailing or e-mail address, renew your subscription, check payment status, or ask questions about your account, visit us at:

whole-dog-journal.com

or **call (800) 829-9165.**

To change your address by mail, attach your present mailing label to this form (or a copy of this form), enter your new address below, and mail it to:

**The Whole Dog Journal,
P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755**

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip code _____

E-mail _____

YOUR RENEWAL IS JUST A CLICK AWAY!
whole-dog-journal.com

To order or renew a subscription, enter your name and address above and check the subscription term you prefer:

2 years (24 issues) – \$54

1 year (12 issues) – \$29

IN CANADA,

1 year – \$39 CDN

2 years – \$72 CDN

ALL OTHER COUNTRIES,

1 year – \$47 US

2 years – \$94 US

Check enclosed

AmEx

MasterCard

Visa

Card number _____

Expiration _____

Signature _____



Credit: Jeff Goulden, Getty Images

It's a five-mile hike to the top of Humphreys Peak in the Kachina Peaks Wilderness near Flagstaff (one way!), but the view from the highest point in Arizona is magnificent.

- **High Country Motor Lodge.** This hotel has designated dog-friendly rooms and allows dogs to stay in the room unattended as long as they are in crates and well behaved (no barking or howling!). There is also a dog park nearby.

- **And many more!** If you have some reward member points for a particular hotel chain, see if they have a Flagstaff location and if it honors the dog-friendly attitude of the city.

■ Things to do:

- **Bright Side Bookshop.** An independent community bookstore where well-behaved, leashed dogs are welcome.

- **Riordan Mansion State Historic Park.** Dogs can't go inside the mansion but can stroll the grounds.

- **The Arboretum at Flagstaff.** A stunning 200-acre conservation area with walking trails to enjoy the nature and plant life of northern Arizona. The current dog admission fee is \$2, which I think is kind of adorable and well worth it to encourage the venue to continue to allow dogs.

- **Arizona Nordic Village.** A great place to hike in the summer and ski or snowshoe in the winter.

- **Historic downtown Flagstaff.** Stroll down Leroux St. where many of the shops and restaurants have dog-friendly patios or allow well-behaved canine shoppers.

■ Places to eat:

- **Mother Road Brewing Company.** Sliders and other tasty tidbits from a food truck, plus of course the beer!

- **Satchmo's.** Barbecue and Cajun food.

- **Josephine's Modern American Bistro.** A diverse menu and brunch on the weekends.

SHOUTOUT TO LOVE'S TRUCK STOPS

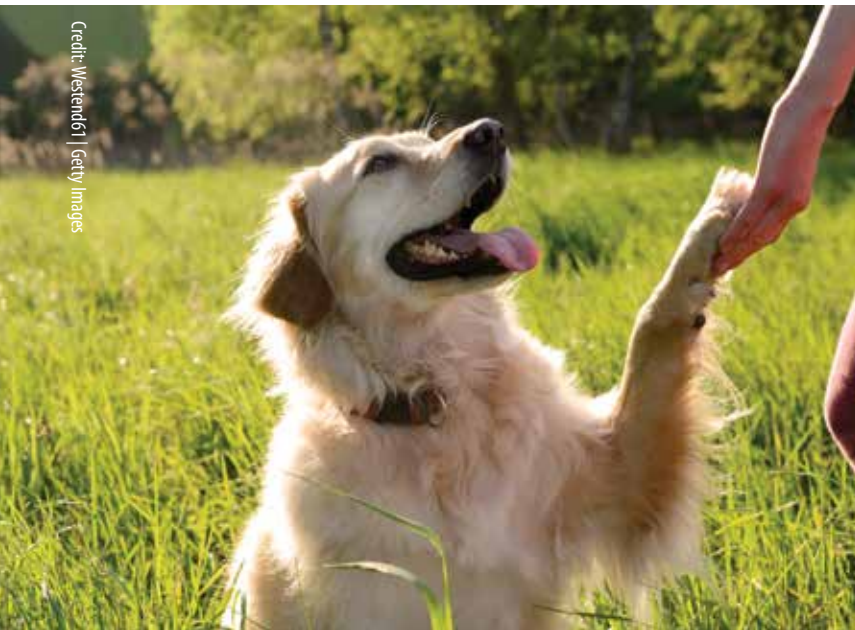
If you're on a cross-country road trip with your dog, keep an eye out for Love's truck stops. Many of these have dog parks so your pup can have a chance to run and take care of business off leash. In my experience, these fenced areas have been clean and secure, perfect if you are traveling with young dogs who need to let off some steam. 🐾

Kate Basedow, LVT, grew up training and showing dogs and is active in a variety of dog sports. She is a licensed veterinary technician and has written professionally about dogs for most of her life.



Easy (and Fun!) Tricks to Teach Your Dog

If you haven't tried to teach your dog tricks before—or are looking for a fun way to spend some time with your best friend—here are a few things to try.



Credit: Westend61 | Getty Images

Many behaviors that are considered “tricks”—like offering a paw to shake—have practical uses as well. “Shake” can make nail trims and paw checks much easier.

When it comes to tricks to teach your dog, the list of possibilities is endless. The tricks included in this article assume you've done some basic training already, but as long as your dog has a sit and a down, you'll be good to go. The fun part is that these are just the beginning. Once you learn how to teach your dog, the sky's the limit.

Before diving in, it is important to note that you should never force your dog into performing a behavior. In the long run, it prevents the dog from learning and can create an aversion to the behavior you're trying to teach. If you find yourself getting frustrated, take a break and try something different.

While there are many training methods available—each with their advantages and disadvantages—I use a combination of luring and shaping (see sidebar) to teach tricks. In my experience, training is most effective when everyone involved is engaged and having a good time!

PAW/SHAKE

“Shake” is a classic for a reason. In addition to being a fun trick, it's also useful for getting your dog accustomed to having his feet touched—a huge help for drama-free nail trims and vet visits. Like humans, most dogs have a side they prefer. When teaching this trick, I start with the side the dog offers first. To begin:

- 1 Cue your dog to sit in front of you. Put a treat in your palm and close your hand into a fist around it.

- 2 Hold your fist in front of the dog within easy paw reach. Somewhere between floor level and about six inches off the ground works well for most dogs, though you may have to try different heights to see what your dog responds to best.

- 3 Wait for your dog to move his paw. As soon as he does—even a little bit—mark it and reward him. It's a good idea to reward him with your opposite hand (not the one you're hiding the treat in). This will make it easier for him to understand that the reward comes when he touches your hand with his paw, not his nose.

- 4 Reset your dog and repeat the process. Once he starts to lift his paw more consistently, you can begin waiting for him to move it closer to your hand before rewarding him. Note: Many dogs jump straight to pawing at the hand with the treat. That's great for teaching this trick. Mark and reward the behavior.

- 5 Once he is reliably touching your hand with his paw, you can begin raising your hand higher. When he is consistently touching your raised hand, begin offering him your palm instead of your closed hand. If he has

TRAINING TERMS AND TECHNIQUES

Shared understanding is an important part of learning for dogs and humans alike! Here are definitions for some of the common training terms used in this article—and in the wide, wonderful world of dog training:

LURE, LURING: The luring technique uses something a dog wants—usually a toy or treat—to guide the dog to perform the desired behavior. For example, if you want to teach a dog to sit, you can hold a treat in your hand, put it in front of his nose, and raise your hand above his head. Most dogs will sit back to follow the treat with their noses. By following the lure, the dog has moved into a sitting position—just like you wanted.

Luring is often the fastest way to get a dog to perform a behavior and can be useful for training “trick” behaviors a dog might not naturally do on his own. However, handlers must be careful to “fade” the use of lures (see below). You neither want to make the dog reliant on the lure in order to perform nor get him so focused on the lure that he acts without thinking or understanding what’s being asked.

MARK, MARKER: A marker is a signal made by a handler to draw a dog’s attention to a his behavior. Markers can be used to let the dog know he had done an unwanted behavior (such as a “beep” on an electronic collar that warns a dog he’s about to get shocked) or to let him know that whatever he’s doing won’t earn a reward (this is called a “no-reward marker”), but in force-free training, markers are usually “reward markers,” used to provide immediate feedback for the dog, to let him know he’s done something that will result in a reward—often a food treat, which will be delivered promptly.

Markers are usually auditory (such as a clicking noise made by a clicker, a whistle, or a verbal sound, such as the word, “Yes!”) or visual, such as a thumbs-up gesture or the flash of a small flashlight. The signal will become motivational for the dog only if it’s reliably and quickly followed by the delivery of a meaningful reward.

To create your dog’s positive association with the marker, you’ll “charge” it by doing several short practice sessions where you use the marker and immediately offer a tasty reward. Click the clicker (or say, “Yes!” or use a thumbs up), give a treat, and repeat a dozen times or so. Your dog will quickly look at you happily and expectantly when you mark; it means a reward is on the way.

Next, start using the marker the moment your dog performs the behavior you are trying to elicit. For example, click (or say, “Yes!”) the moment he sits, and immediately give him a treat. Soon enough, he will be trying to figure out ways to earn those marks and treats.



REWARD: Rewards don’t just mean food! Anything your dog likes and is willing to work for can be effective—yummy treats, a quick game of tug or chance to chase his ball, petting (only if he likes petting), or an opportunity to go outside (only if he enjoys going outside).



Keep in mind that rewards depend on the individual; what’s reinforcing for one dog (say, cuddles from a beloved human friend) may be highly aversive to another (such as a fearful or touch-avoidant dog).

CUE: A signal (including audible signals such as a spoken word or whistle or a visual signal such as a hand gesture or the handler’s change of position) that lets the dog know that there is an opportunity for him to earn a reward if he performs the cued behavior.

FADE, FADING: Fading is the process of removing a lure used to get a dog to perform a behavior. Food and other lures should be faded as soon as your dog is reliably performing the lured behavior.

When teaching a new behavior to your dog, you might use a lure to get the initial behavior—say, a spin. Holding a treat in your hand, you position it right in front of his lips and move your hand in a circle that leads him through the spin. As he completes the spin, mark and treat. As soon as he’s reliably following the lure, introduce your new cue (perhaps, saying the word “Spin!”). Use the cue, wait a second or two, and then use the lure. As soon as your dog responds reliably to the lure plus the cue, use the cue and then pause for a second or two, to see if your dog does the behavior without the lure. Use the lure less and less as your dog shows she understands the new cue, until you no longer need the lure at all; it’s been properly “faded.”

RESET: Go back to the starting position for the exercise.

SHAPING: Shaping is a training technique that reinforces incremental steps toward a desired behavior. Each behavior is broken down into much smaller parts that eventually chain together to reach the end goal. When the dog is successful at the first step, you add the next.

For example, if you want your dog to touch a target with his nose, you begin by rewarding any movement toward the target. Once the dog is moving toward the target regularly, you reward the dog only when he gets within a foot of it, then only when he touches it, then only when he touches it with his nose.

While it takes patience and precision on the part of the handler, shaping is a great way to teach complex behaviors. It also requires the dog to make decisions and find solutions to challenges (figuring out what you’re asking him to do) on his own, engaging his brain in ways that often lead to a strong understanding of what he’s being asked to do.

trouble, don't worry! Just back up a step and let him get some more practice before trying to up the difficulty once more.

6 When he is once again putting a paw in your hand regularly, add a verbal cue. I use "paw" for the left paw and "shake" for the right.

SPIN/TWIST

For this trick, the end goal is to have your dog stand in front of you and spin in a circle. It is one of the easiest tricks to train and, as a bonus, it looks pretty cute. Here's how to teach it:

1 Stand in front of your dog with a treat or toy in your hand. You'll start by showing him the item, which is being used as a lure.

2 When he moves toward the lure, move your hand away in a slow circle in front of you.

3 As your dog follows the lure and completes the circle, mark and reward him (see sidebar, "Training Terms and Techniques"). If he is having trouble making a full circle, you can start by marking and re-

warding at the halfway point. When he's consistently doing half-turns, refrain from marking until he does a three-quarter turns; when he is consistently succeeding at three-quarter turns, hold out for full circles; this is how you "shape" the spin.

4 Repeat until he is reliably circling and then add the verbal cue you want. I use "spin" to ask for a circle to the left and "twist" for a circle to the right.

BACK UP

Backing up on cue is another trick behavior that has many practical uses—such as asking your dog to move away from a door or getting him to give you some space when he is underfoot. To teach it:

1 Stand in front of your dog with a treat in hand. Hold the treat over his nose and take a small step toward him—this will put the treat over his head instead.

2 When he steps backward to follow the treat, mark and reward the behavior. It doesn't have to be a big step on his part. Any backward movement is good to start. You may have to stand still and wait a bit for him to figure it out.

3 Grab another treat and repeat the process. Once he is able to take one step back reliably, you can add a second step before marking and rewarding.

4 Gradually increase the number of steps before the reward.

5 When your dog can reliably do three or four steps back, add a verbal cue. I use "back."

6 Once he responds consistently to the verbal cue, fade the physical prompt of stepping toward him.

If your dog has a good recall, you can add some complexity to the trick by sending him away from you with "back" and then calling him to you.

FIGURE EIGHTS

Figure eights won't work for a Great Dane without some adjustments, but for any dog short enough to walk through your legs, this is a cute trick. In addition to looking impressive, it is useful for developing flexibility (in dog and handler!). I work on figure eights inside or in a fenced yard since adding a leash to the mix can create a trip hazard. To begin:

1 Ask your dog to sit in front of you. Take a step to the side so your feet are a little farther than shoulder-width apart. There should be enough space between your legs for the dog to fit through easily. Make sure you are comfortable and well-balanced.

2 Hold a treat in your right hand. Hold the treat behind you low enough that your dog can see the food; mid-thigh level usually works for medium and large dogs.

3 When your dog moves toward the treat, pull it slowly back and to the right. The goal is to lure him through your legs toward your right side. As soon as he walks through, mark and reward him. If he's uncertain about it, you can try throwing the treat or a toy behind you to add some momentum.

A note here: If your dog is reluctant to walk through your legs, absolutely do NOT straddle him or grab his collar and "help" him. While it may not seem like a big deal from the human perspective, asking a dog to walk underneath you is asking for a lot of trust on his part. If your dog isn't having fun, find another trick to teach first before returning to this one.

4 Reset and repeat the steps above until your dog is comfortably walking through your legs.



Credit: Nancy Kerns

When initially luring a spin, hold the lure at the height that best motivates your dog to turn without jumping up toward the treat.

Figure eights don't have to be done around your legs. Objects such as cones, trees, or chairs can also be used.

5 Once he's walking through your legs easily, have him sit in front of you again. This time, hold a treat in each hand.

6 When he walks through your legs, continue to move your right hand in a circle around your leg until it is in front of your knee. When your dog follows, mark and reward.

7 Now, hold your *left* hand behind you and let him see the treat. Lure him through your legs and to your left side. Mark and reward. Practice those steps, perhaps alternating the direction of his movement (right, left) until you get a smooth flow.

8 Once your dog clearly understands the process, you can add a verbal cue, "weave" in my case, and begin to fade out the lure.

For very large dogs or handlers facing mobility challenges, two cones—or any similar objects—can be used in place of your legs. Just position yourself where you can lure the dog around both obstacles and follow the steps listed above.



Credit: alexei_jim | Getty Images

CRAWL

I usually sit on the floor in front of my dog to teach crawl. Standing and using a target stick also works well. To start:

1 Cue your dog to lay down. Hold a treat a few inches in front of his nose and drag it slowly away along the floor. Slow is key here since you don't want him to hop up and walk toward it.

2 If he makes *any* movement toward the treat without standing

up—such as moving just one or two paws toward the treat, or crawling forward just an inch—mark and reward.

3 Once he's reliably crawling forward a few inches, you can start gradually extending the distance and adding the verbal cue "crawl."

4 Fade the lure once he is consistently responding to the cue.

Once I've gotten "crawl" established as a cue, I expand the game by setting up obstacles for my dogs to crawl under—most often I sit on the couch, prop my feet on a stool and ask the dog to crawl under my raised legs.

I use the same steps for training a dog to go under an obstacle as I do for a no-obstacle crawl. Again, *don't force* a dog who is reluctant or hasn't figured it out yet; while it might be tempting to give a gentle push to the shoulder if they won't stay down, it's far better to let him figure it out himself. Not only will he learn the behavior better, you'll also avoid creating an unpleasant experience that could sour him on it. 🐾

Kate O'Connor is WDJ's Executive Editor. She grew up in a family that bred and showed Airedales and has worked as a groomer, trainer, kennel manager, and vet hospital care attendant. Kate and her dogs participate in rally and agility.

DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN!

Some of the best tricks my dogs have learned over the years started as pure silliness. Among other things, my 2-year-old Airedale, Carmen, has learned a few dance moves. While there are plenty of behaviors we worked on with a plan and specific goals in mind, these evolved organically when she showed an interest in what I was doing and, since it made me laugh, I decided to reinforce it.

The dance moves began when Carmen was about 5 months old. My sister was dancing around the apartment and the puppy was fascinated. She started tracking my sister's arm movements, which resulted in a floppy-eared head bob. Not only was it absolutely adorable, I loved how closely the puppy was watching and responding. I grabbed treats and we had an impromptu dance party where we rewarded her for following along. With time and repetition, it evolved into several specific hand signals and behaviors—including the head bob, stepping in time, and a forward step-back-step combo.

The moral of this silly story is, "Don't be afraid to play with your dog!" Try new things and reward behaviors you want to keep. Fun and excitement are powerful training tools for humans and dogs alike.



A Guide to Medications to Treat Allergies in Dogs

Learn more about what medications you can give your dog to relieve his allergy symptoms.

There are a number of medications that can provide relief for dogs experiencing symptoms related to allergies.

There are several manifestations of allergies in dogs, including atopic and flea allergy dermatitis, allergic rhinitis and bronchitis, hives, and insect bite hypersensitivity. Symptoms may include pruritus (itchiness), sneezing, coughing, clear nasal discharge, or raised welts on the skin.

Pruritus due to hives and insect bite hypersensitivity are caused by the release

of histamine and other inflammatory mediators. Over-the-counter antihistamines are typically effective at relieving this form of itchiness. More severe cases may require the addition of a glucocorticoid to reduce inflammation.

Allergic rhinitis and bronchitis may be responsive to the antihistamine cetirizine (commonly known as Zyrtec). Coughing due to allergic bronchitis may require an antihistamine and glucocorticoid combination, such as trimeprazine and prednisolone (Temaril-P).

Itchy skin associated with atopic and flea allergy dermatitis is not always responsive to antihistamines. Medications that target specific itch receptors in the skin may provide dogs with more complete relief from their pruritus than antihistamines. See the article “Allergies in Dogs” (WDJ website) for more information on other treatments that may help your dog.

The following is an information guide to many of the common medications that are used to treat allergy symptoms in dogs. 🐾



Credit: Navtop | Getty Images

— WDJ's Guide to Medications for Canine Allergy Symptoms —

Cetirizine

COMMON TRADE NAMES: Zyrtec.

DRUG CLASS: Antihistamine (non-drowsy).

INDICATED FOR: Hives, insect bite hypersensitivity, allergic rhinitis and bronchitis. Not shown to be effective for atopic dermatitis.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: None.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Vomiting, hypersalivation.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Available over-the-counter as tablets, chewable tablets, oral solution, and gel capsules. Avoid using oral disintegrating tablets as this formulation may contain xylitol, which is a known toxin in dogs. Avoid using combination products that contain pseudoephedrine.

Clemastine

COMMON TRADE NAME: Dayhist.

DRUG CLASS: Antihistamine.

INDICATED FOR: Hives, insect bite hypersensitivity, atopic dermatitis.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Use with caution in dogs with glaucoma or heart disease and in male dogs with an enlarged prostate.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Lethargy, hyperexcitability, dry mouth.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Available over-the-counter as tablets and oral solution.

Chlorpheniramine

COMMON TRADE NAME: Chlor-trimeton.

DRUG CLASS: Antihistamine.

INDICATED FOR: Hives, insect bite hypersensitivity, atopic dermatitis.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Should be used with caution in dogs who have glaucoma, high blood pressure (hypertension), or heart disease.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Lethargy, diarrhea, vomiting, constipation, loss of appetite, dry mouth.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Available over-the-counter as tablets. Avoid using extended-release tablets as this formulation may contain sodium benzoate, a known toxin in dogs. Avoid using any of the available syrups as these formulations may contain other ingredients, including decongestants, acetaminophen (Tylenol), or antitussives, as these other ingredients may be toxic to dogs.

Diphenhydramine

COMMON TRADE NAME: Benadryl.

DRUG CLASS: Antihistamine.

INDICATED FOR: Hives, insect bite hypersensitivity, atopic dermatitis. May prevent motion sickness or vomiting. Sometimes used as a sedative.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Should be used with caution in dogs who

have glaucoma, high blood pressure (hypertension), heart disease, or seizures.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Lethargy, constipation, dry mouth. Some dogs may experience paradoxical excitability rather than sleepiness.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Available over-the-counter as tablets, capsules, chewable tablets, gelcaps, liquid, elixir, and syrup. Also available as an injection for veterinary use only. Some liquid, elixir, and syrup formulations contain alcohol, which is toxic to dogs. Avoid using any formulation that contains other ingredients, including decongestants, acetaminophen (Tylenol), or antitussives, as these other ingredients may be toxic to dogs.

Fexofenadine

COMMON TRADE NAME: Allegra.

DRUG CLASS: Antihistamine.

INDICATED FOR: Although this is an antihistamine, there is limited research to support its use in dogs.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Should be used with caution in dogs with the MDR-1 mutation. Other contraindications are not known due to limited research on the use of this medication in dogs.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Lethargy, diarrhea, vomiting.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Available over-the-counter as tablets, gelcaps, and suspension. Avoid using oral suspension as this contains xylitol, a toxin in dogs. Avoid using formulations that contain other ingredients, including decongestants.

USING GLUCOCORTICOIDS TO TREAT ATOPIC DERMATITIS

There was a time when glucocorticoids were the primary form of treatment in relieving pruritus (itchiness) associated with atopic dermatitis. Glucocorticoids are effective for this purpose but come at a price.

Glucocorticoids may increase your dog's thirst and hunger. When dogs drink more water, they naturally have to urinate more often. This can lead to urinary accidents in the house. They may pant and act lethargic.

Long-term chronic use of glucocorticoids can cause thinning of the skin and haircoat. Dogs may develop comedones (black heads) on their skin, particularly on the underside of their belly. Wounds may take longer to heal. Muscle wasting may occur because of catabolic changes to their metabolism. Dogs may become obese due to increased appetite and caloric intake. There is an increased risk of developing bacterial or fungal infections, adult-onset demodectic mange, and diabetes mellitus.

Today, there are many alternative and equally effective

medications that relieve the pruritus associated with atopic dermatitis. These medications are generally safer than glucocorticoids when used long-term. However, there may still be instances when glucocorticoids are an appropriate choice to manage pruritus.

The following principles should be followed when using a glucocorticoid to treat your dog's pruritus:

- ✓ Any underlying disease that is contributing to your dog's pruritus should be identified and treated. Using a glucocorticoid without completing a diagnostic workup first can mask an underlying disease and make your dog's overall condition worse.
- ✓ The least potent glucocorticoid should be used at the lowest effective dose for the shortest amount of time necessary to control your dog's symptoms.
- ✓ Your dog should be rechecked by your veterinarian at regular intervals while taking a glucocorticoid.

— WDJ's Guide to Medications for Canine Allergy Symptoms —

Hydroxyzine

COMMON TRADE NAME: Atarax, Vistaril.

DRUG CLASS: Antihistamine.

INDICATED FOR: Hives, insect bite hypersensitivity, atopic dermatitis. Sometimes used as a sedative.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Should be used with caution in dogs who have glaucoma, high blood pressure (hypertension), heart disease, or seizures.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Lethargy, constipation, dry mouth, tremors, seizures. Some dogs may experience paradoxical excitability rather than sleepiness.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Tablets, capsules, and syrup. All formulations require a prescription. Also available as an injection for veterinary use only.

Trimeprazine/Prednisolone

COMMON TRADE NAME: Temaril-P.

DRUG CLASS: Antihistamine and corticosteroid.

INDICATED FOR: Atopic dermatitis, coughing.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Should not be used in dogs with systemic fungal infections. Should be used with caution in dogs who have high blood pressure (hypertension), heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease, stomach ulcers, corneal ulcers, hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease), diabetes mellitus, or congestive heart failure. Should be used with caution in puppies.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Lethargy, low blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmias, and development of hyperadrenocorticism with long-term use.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Tablets by prescription only.

Oclacitinib

COMMON TRADE NAME: Apoquel.

DRUG CLASS: JAK inhibitor.

INDICATED FOR: Atopic dermatitis, flea allergy dermatitis. May also be helpful at managing some auto-immune disorders (such as pemphigus or cutaneous lupus). May help relieve pruritus associated with sarcoptic mange.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Should not be used in dogs less than 12 months old. Should not be used in pregnant or nursing dogs or in dogs intended for breeding. Should be used cautiously or not at all in dogs who currently have cancer or a serious infection of any kind.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of appetite can be seen in some dogs—these side effects

typically resolve quickly on their own. May increase susceptibility to infections. Dogs with a history of urinary tract infections (UTIs) may experience an increased occurrence of UTIs.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Tablets and chewable tablets by prescription only.

Lokivetmab

COMMON TRADE NAME: Cytopoint.

DRUG CLASS: Monoclonal antibody.

INDICATED FOR: Atopic dermatitis, flea allergy dermatitis.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: No known contraindications.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, pain at the injection site, loss of appetite, or lameness can be seen in some dogs—these side effects typically resolve quickly on their own.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Injection for veterinary use only.

Cyclosporine

COMMON TRADE NAMES: Atopica, Cyclavance, Neoral, Gengraf.

DRUG CLASS: Immunosuppressive.

INDICATED FOR: Atopic dermatitis. Also used off-label for the treatment of some immune-mediated diseases.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Should not be used in puppies less than 6 months old. Should not be used in dogs with malignant cancer or that have a history of malignant cancer. Should be used with caution in dogs with diabetes mellitus or kidney disease.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of appetite can be seen in some dogs—these side effects typically resolve quickly on their own. May increase susceptibility to infections. Other side effects that have been seen in dogs include gingival hyperplasia (increased growth of the gums), development of diabetes mellitus, excessive fur growth or shedding, and small benign skin growths. Liver damage and blood clots are rare side effects. Dogs with a history of urinary tract infections (UTIs) may experience an increased occurrence of UTIs.

VETERINARY FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE BY PRESCRIPTION: Capsules (Atopica) and oral solution (Cyclavance).

HUMAN FORMULATIONS THAT CAN BE USED IN DOGS BY PRESCRIPTION: Capsules (Neoral, Gengraf) and oral solution (Neoral).

HUMAN FORMULATION THAT SHOULD NOT BE USED IN DOGS: Sandimmune (capsules and oral solution). This formulation is not bioequivalent to the other formulations available and should not be used in dogs.

— WDJ's Guide to Medications for Canine Allergy Symptoms —

Prednisone/Prednisolone, Methylprednisolone, and Dexamethasone

COMMON TRADE NAME: Prednisone/prednisolone has no common trade name and is available as a generic drug. Methylprednisolone may be known as Medrol, Depo-Medrol, or Solu-Medrol. Dexamethasone may be known as Azium or Dexasone.

DRUG CLASS: Glucocorticoid.

INDICATED FOR: Inflammatory conditions including atopic dermatitis, flea allergy dermatitis, hives, insect bite hypersensitivity, and allergic rhinitis and bronchitis. Also used for many other conditions, including hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's disease), immune-mediated diseases (such as immune-mediated hemolytic anemia), and cancer (such as lymphoma).

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Should not be used in dogs with systemic fungal infections, viral infections, hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease), corneal ulcers, or gastrointestinal ulcers. Should be used with caution in dogs with congestive heart failure, high blood pressure (hypertension), liver disease, or kidney disease.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS: Increased thirst, hunger, and urination. May also cause panting and lethargy. See sidebar for potential long-term side effects.

FORMULATIONS AVAILABLE: Prednisone and prednisolone are available as tablets and oral syrups/solutions. Many oral

syrups/solutions contain alcohol and should be avoided in dogs. Methylprednisolone is available as tablets and as an injection for veterinary use only. Dexamethasone is available as tablets, oral solution, and as an injection for veterinary use only. All formulations require a prescription.



Dogs who suffer from severe allergies today are fortunate to have so many medications—besides steroids—to stop their relentless itching.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PREDNISONE AND PREDNISOLONE

Many drugs are metabolized in the body and converted to both active and inactive forms.

Prednisone is converted by the liver into the active metabolite *prednisolone*. Humans and healthy dogs are readily able to make this conversion, so most pharmacists treat prednisone and prednisolone as bioequivalent drugs.

However, those pharmacists may be unaware that there is a difference between prednisone and prednisolone in veterinary patients. Dogs who have liver dis-

ease may not be able to readily make this conversion—these dogs may be prescribed prednisolone instead of prednisone. (Incidentally, healthy cats and horses are not efficient at this conversion and also should be prescribed prednisolone instead of prednisone.)

If your veterinarian has specifically prescribed prednisolone for your dog, it may be up to you to ensure that your pharmacist has filled the correct medication.



Your complete guide to natural dog care and training

Whole Dog Journal™

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Welcoming Your Puppy from Planet Dog: How to Go Beyond Training and Raise Your Best Friend

In this fun-to-read, engaging puppy guide, WDJ contributor Kathy Callahan, CPDT-KA, teaches owners how to get great results by working with – rather than against – their puppy's innate tendencies. Available from booksellers everywhere.



The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats,

by WDJ contributor CJ Poutinen. Practical advice for attaining and

maintaining your dog's good health—and even your own! Available from Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Kathy Callahan, CPDT-KA, FDM
PupStart Dog Training, puppypicks.com
Kathy loves to help people and their dogs live more happily together, and her upcoming book *Welcoming Your Puppy from Planet Dog* is now available for pre-order. Her podcast, Pick of the Litter, spotlights the best training ideas out there. Kathy offers in-person consults in Alexandria, VA, and Zoom consults everywhere else.

ONLINE LEARNING COURSES

Whole Dog Journal offers the following informative and educational courses:

Dog Care and Grooming at Home

In this online course, WDJ's experts walk you through important care and grooming tips that can help you keep your dog in top shape. From bathing and brushing your dog's coat to eye, ear, teeth and paw care, you'll learn expert tips and techniques for making this an effective and enjoyable experience.

Walking Your Dog

Walking your dog is more than just taking him out to "do his business." It's his opportunity to experience a bigger, more exciting world. It's up to you to show him how to experience it politely. You can stop the pulling and start the walking with *Walking Your Dog*.

How to Treat Common Canine Allergies

Learn to identify the three most common allergies as well as pick up common-sense strategies to take action against the conditions.

Social Anxiety and Your Dog

Is your dog a nervous wreck when he encounters other dogs? Is he alarmingly skittish in front of people? Are you worried about his scaredy-cat behavior — or, worse, his aggressive-when-anxious behavior? Our new Social Anxiety and Your Dog online course has solutions!

For details on these courses and more, see www.wholedogonlinelearning.com/



What's ahead...

- ▶ **The Best Bones for Dogs**
Some people feed raw bones to their dogs; others are horrified by this practice. Is it safe? Is it healthy?
- ▶ **Reintroducing Dogs After a Fight**
Despite our best efforts, sometimes fights happen. Understanding how to safely reintegrate dogs who have fought—and when to seek professional help—can make all the difference in the long-term outcome.
- ▶ **Reasons to Brush**
Periodontal disease can lead to tooth loss and affect your dog's heart, liver, and kidney health.
- ▶ **Removing Urine Smells**
Products that can help remove even set-in pet stains and odors.
- ▶ **The Importance of Mental Stimulation**
Boredom is an experience dogs and humans share. As with us, a positive, mentally stimulating environment can play a big role in a dog's quality of life.
- ▶ **Car Safety For Dogs**
From car seats and seat belts to hammocks and dividers, there are plenty of options available for creating a safe space for your dog when traveling by car.

YOUR RENEWAL IS JUST A CLICK AWAY!
Whole-Dog-Journal.com

Visit our website at:
Whole-Dog-Journal.com

To change your mailing or e-mail address, renew your subscription, check payment status, or ask questions about your account, visit us at: **Whole-Dog-Journal.com/cs** or call (800) 829-9165.