

## CREATURE COMFORTS

# Praise, patience help in house training pup

## ASK THE VETS



DRS. MICHAEL AND TRACY JAFFE

Dear Doctors, Do you have any tips that will make house training our new puppy easier? We take him outdoors to go to the bathroom several times a day, but he still has accidents in the house.

Congratulations on your new addition! House training a new puppy involves a lot of work and patience. Keep in mind that it takes a while for your puppy to adjust to his new family and surroundings.

A puppy generally doesn't have enough bowel or bladder control to be completely house trained until he's at least 4 months old. If he goes to the bathroom in the house, it's not his fault. He can't "hold it in" or he doesn't understand that he is only supposed to go to the bathroom outdoors.

Dogs are creatures of habit, so try to keep a consistent feeding and walking schedule. Make certain everyone in the house understands and abides by the schedule.

Take your puppy outdoors first thing in the morning, within 30 minutes of eating or drinking, after playing, and before retiring for the evening.

If your puppy is 6 to 12 weeks old, take him outdoors every two hours during the day and every four hours throughout the night. If he's 12 to 18 weeks old, he will need to go out every three or four hours during the day and once at night.

Give him food and water about

three times per day. If you provide free choice food or water you may have more difficulty with house training, because he will need to void after he eats or drinks.

Each puppy is different and yours may require a different feeding or walking schedule.

## Outdoors, indoors

When you take him outdoors, tell him to "Go potty" and let him sniff around for up to 10 minutes. When he finally goes, say "Good doggie" enthusiastically and give him a pat on the back. Dogs like praise.

It's best to select the same section of the yard for your "walk" so he can mark his territory and come back to his favorite spot each time.

Bring him indoors immediately after he relieves himself so he understands that when he goes outdoors it's time for business. If you stay outside and play he may not associate walking outdoors with going to the bathroom.

If he doesn't go to the bathroom within 10 minutes of going outside, bring him indoors and supervise him. Take him outdoors again when he looks as though he is restless and has to go to the bathroom.

If your puppy has an accident in the house, don't reprimand him unless you catch him "in the act."

If you find him going to the bathroom indoors, don't let him complete the act. Pick him up, firmly say "No!" and carry him outdoors to finish. Don't scold him harshly, spank him or rub his nose in the accident site. This is cruel and ineffective.

If you don't witness the accident, don't attempt to reprimand him, because he won't understand. Clean the soiled area as soon as possible.

If your puppy isn't yet housebroken and you are unable to

walk your puppy during the day, we suggest you place him (and his washable toys) in a small room or dog crate.

Dogs generally prefer not to go to the bathroom where they have to sleep. Confinement may discourage him from going to the bathroom indoors. Walk your dog outdoors before you place him in his restricted quarters so he has an opportunity to go to the bathroom.

Don't give him much food or water just prior to confinement, because this increases the likelihood that he will need to go to the bathroom. He'll be uncomfortable and distressed if he can't go outdoors to relieve himself. If he soils in his crate while you are gone, you will have a mess awaiting you. We call this "doggie finger painting."

The confinement room should have a floor that can be easily cleaned — not light-colored carpet. You can place newspapers to protect the floor in case he has an accident. Your puppy will feel less isolated if the door to the room remains open and a baby gate blocks the door frame.

A special litter box and litter are marketed for dogs. This is similar to the concept of having your cat use a litter box.

A doggie litter box may work well if you don't plan to let your pet go to the bathroom outdoors. It may confuse your puppy if you let him soil in the box or on newspapers indoors but expect him to go to the bathroom outdoors when you walk him.

Adjust your work schedule to come home at lunch to walk your puppy. If you can't arrange this, hire a neighbor or pet sitter to walk your puppy mid-day.

Send questions to be addressed in this column by mail in care of Mary Klemic, At Home Editor, Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers, 808 E. Maple, Birmingham, AL 35202 or e-mail askthevets@juno.com

## ADOPT-A-PET



**Gabby:** Gabby, a 9-month-old collie/spaniel mix, was brought to the Michigan Humane Society as a stray, found wandering around in the cold. Gabby will make an excellent family pet or a loyal companion. Gabby is looking forward to learning new tricks and spending time playing with a new owner. Visit the Michigan Humane Society's Westland shelter, 37255 Marquette. Call (734) 721-7300 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

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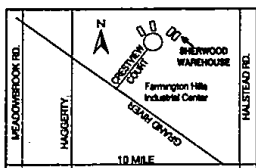
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