

## **POOP HAPPENS!!**

*House-training problems can be frustrating for pet owners, so much so that they will give up and just banish their pet to the outdoors for life. Dogs are social creatures and need to be with their family. Dogs who spend all of their time outdoors often begin acquiring other behavior problems (excessive barking, jumping up, digging, etc.) due to boredom because they aren't getting the love and attention they desire. If housetraining problems are what is keeping you from having your pet indoors with the family, then hopefully this article can give you some suggestions on where your problems with housetraining may lie. Whether you have a new puppy or an older dog that you are having housetraining problems with, ask yourself these questions: Am I taking the dog out enough? Do I know every time he goes? Does he have too much freedom in the house? Am I watching him carefully when he is free in the house? Is there any physical reason (intestinal parasites, urinary tract infection, etc.)? Am I trying to move things along faster than this dog is able to learn - therefore skipping steps so the entire picture is unclear to my dog? Am I consistently praising for appropriate behavior so he gets the idea? Those of us at Wag-N-Train are great believers in crate training and if you are having housetraining problems a crate is a MUST! If you missed our March 2003 training tips newsletter all about "Crate-Training" email us and we'll be happy to send you the information again. Here are some frequently asked questions regarding housetraining problems. Although these say "puppy" the information applies to older dogs as well. "What about paper-training?" The old method of paper training can still be effective, however it adds unnecessary time and mess to the whole picture. Owners will have MUCH more cleanup and mess and smell with papers and they will STILL have to use the papers to transition puppy to the outside. "My puppy goes outside, then comes in and poops on the floor...!" You, as the owner/trainer, are at fault here. You are missing the two BIG keys in successful potty training: 1. You MUST accompany your puppy outside WITH a leash on to supervise elimination and 2. Freedom in the house is only earned by appropriate elimination outside. No pees or poos - NO FREEDOM, and puppy goes back in his crate. Next, the owner checks again in a time frame of 20 minutes to an hour and takes puppy outside on the LEASH for another opportunity to eliminate appropriately*

and earn freedom."I stand at the door and watch while my puppy goes potty outside. When he is finished and comes back in, he gets a treat. Why do I have to go out with my puppy?" Your puppy is getting his treat for coming back into the house, NOT for appropriate elimination. Praise MUST happen DURING elimination to make the connection in puppy's mind. Some dogs will run outside and run back in without eliminating because they know they'll get a treat. This can also encourage frequent demands to go out - just so they can get a treat when they come in!"I leave my puppy outside to play for an hour or more, then I bring him in and he eliminates. Why couldn't he just do it while he was outside?" Well, he probably DID eliminate when he first went out, but he didn't have to go later, and he certainly doesn't have the human capacity to think "Well, my owner is probably going to take me inside soon, so I'd better get my business done while I'm outside!" YOU need to remind a puppy who has been outside for a while to "Go Potty!". "When will I know if my dog is housebroken?" Appropriate elimination FIRST happens primarily because we, as owners, control it. We are working, when we potty train, to establish a HABIT, and that will usually take two to three months, depending on how consistent and persistent you are as the owner/trainer. Here are some indications your dog/puppy understands the program: 1. "Accidents" in the house and/or crate have decreased during the training period to none or almost none. 2. When you use your commands for elimination, your puppy responds by eliminating. 3. Your puppy starts to "ask" to go outside by barking, running to the door, staring at you, or in some other way. 4. The freedom you give your puppy is mostly "accident" free."My puppy wakes me up at 3AM EVERY NIGHT! I take him out, he pees and then wants to play. I play with him for a while and put him back in his crate where he cries for some time before he settles down. How do I break him of this?" Nighttime needs should diminish quickly as the puppy gets older. At first, you may need to get up 2-3 times nightly for a 7-week-old pup. That frequency should quickly reduce to once a night for a 9-week-old pup. When a puppy cries in the night, you DO have to check on him - it's the only way he has to tell you there is a problem. YOU will soon learn which cries are "fussing" and which indicate a real need. Remember when I said you are working to establish a HABIT when potty training? Well, if you get up during the night to take puppy out and then play with him, you are establishing a nighttime play routine habit! Any nighttime trips outside should be all "business only": outside then back in the crate -

*PERIOD! Temporarily removing access to water by 7 or 8 p.m. will also help. Special problems...Dogs or puppies purchased from a pet shop or other place where they were always kept in a small cage. These dogs never had a choice and HAD to eliminate where they lived. Owners must devote extra time to take such dogs outside more frequently in order to get elimination outside rather than in the crate. Elaborate praise when they "go" is essential so they learn that life is better all around when they eliminate outside. Elimination in the crate should be ignored and just cleaned up at first - with no correction or harsh words. Later, as the dog starts to understand "going outside" a little better, the same corrections used when your dog has an accident on the floor (see "Accidents" above) can be used for crate soiling. Training these dogs takes a lot of patience and time.*

*About small breeds and "Sneaking" Some people say that small breeds can be difficult, if not impossible to potty train. This is NOT because they are stupid - actually they are rather smart; smart enough to sneak to out of the way places to make their deposits instead of asking to go outside. This just requires MORE vigilance on the owner's part, and LESS freedom for the dog. If necessary, the owner needs to attach the other end of the leash the dog is dragging to their belt loop to keep closer track of the sneak!*

*Submissive Urination*"When I come home from work and let my dog out of her crate, she urinates all over when I'm greeting her. I yell at her and she pees more! Why does she DO that?" What your dog is doing is called submissive urination. It is NOT a housebreaking problem. She is telling you that she recognizes that you are the leader. When you yell at her, she pees more to say "Yes, I KNOW that you are alpha!" Usually submissive urination resolved by 2 years of age, but Bailey, my Golden Retriever, sometimes still does it at 9 years. Things you can do to deter submissive urination:

- 1. DO NOT bend over the top of the dog, especially when greeting. That is a dominant position.*
- 2. For some reason, sweet, happy talk makes dogs urinate - so happy greetings with a lot of conversation should be avoided.*
- 3. DO NOT pet your dog to greet her - the best thing to do when greeting a submissive urination is to fold your arms across your chest, turn and ignore, but encourage your dog to go outside right away. Praise when she urinates outside, and then you should be able to greet.*
- 4. When visitors come over, have them greet your dog (on leash) outside on the porch or grass to avoid messes in the house.*
- 5. DO NOT yell at your dog for being "bad" - this isn't being "bad" at all! It is actually dog language affirming your leadership.*

*Spitefulness? "When I leave the house, my dog*

frequently leaves me "presents" of stool and/or urine. I know he hates me to leave, and I'm sure he's doing it out of spite." Dogs by nature are not spiteful animals. That is too much of a human emotion and too much reasoning: "If she leaves, then I'm going to poop on the floor because I know she HATES that! That'll teach her to leave me here alone!" Usually, if there is an "accident" when the owner is gone these are usually the real reasons. I forgot to do my business outside (this is where my own dogs fit in!) I'm really not reliably potty trained and I don't completely understand the concept. I waited by the door to go outside but I couldn't get out and I just couldn't wait any longer! You left me all alone in this house! This is a BIG job, and we usually watch over the house together as a pack. This is too stressful for me. I'm so stressed I have to poop! I have too much freedom - and too soon - without supervision. If you come home to "accidents", you need to consider these steps:

Backtrack on potty training - no matter what your dog's age. (We just had a brain glitch and need a refresher course) 2. Reduce the space of freedom - either with a crate, baby gates or a room. 3. Back to outside supervised potty breaks - with leash on so praise can be used at the right time. 4. Make sure there is no physical cause for the problem (intestinal parasites, urinary tract infection, etc.) Accidents Happen!! All is not lost if your dog eliminates in the house! If you catch him in the act, make an abrupt noise--clap hands, say "ah-ah-ah!!" then "Let's go OUTSIDE! Outside!" "Go Potty. GOOD DOG go potty!" Use a lot of cheerful praise if he finishes outside. Remember, you MUST catch your dog IN THE ACT of inappropriate elimination to facilitate an effective lesson which is why leaving a leash on your dog while he's in the house can be so effective. The old fashion rhetoric of rubbing his nose in "it" and spankings with a rolled up newspaper after you find the mess (even if by just a few moments) will only confuse your dog and will teach him nothing of use. The most important things to remember: TIMING...catching your dog/puppy in the act in order to correct and teach...PRAISE for appropriate elimination... and CONSISTENCY is the key! Proper behavior must be praised EVERY TIME you give a command and it is followed.