

ADULT DOG FOSTER CARE GUIDELINES



FEEDING

- We recommend that adult dogs be fed twice daily.
- While in our humane center, dogs are fed at 9 a.m. and again at 3 p.m. In the home, you do not need to follow this feeding schedule, but you may notice that they will be anticipating meals around these times.
- The foster team will discuss each pet's individual diet with you and we will provide you with food.
- While in our care, animals are fed appropriate food for their age, size and health.
- Pets may be on a special diet which will be provided by the foster team.

CLEANING

- Most adult dogs won't need a bath during their foster period.
- If your foster dog becomes dirty, you are welcome to bathe him or her.
- Some dogs need to trust their handlers before jumping in the tub, so if the foster pet freezes, gives you a "whale eye", growls or displays other behavior that makes you uncomfortable, please stop what you are doing, and give the pet a break from the activity.
- You may spot clean your foster dog with a warm washcloth or contact the foster care team if the dog doesn't want a bath but requires more thorough washing.
- **Do not wash your foster dog in flea shampoo or administer any flea medication. If you observe fleas, please email the foster care team.**

EXERCISE

- We recommend walking adult dogs multiple times daily.
- While in our humane center, dogs are walked at 8 a.m., lunchtime and 4 p.m. In order to reduce stress, it is preferable to keep walking times as consistent as possible. We also recommend a walk prior to bedtime.
- Dogs must remain on leash at all times while on walks. Please use the harness in addition to the collar if one is provided. Your foster dog will need to return to the shelter wearing the harness.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings and your foster dog's reactions to situations outside.
- Be cautious of any specific dislikes of your foster pet (example: if your foster pet does not like other dogs, don't walk him or her near other dogs or cross the street to avoid coming into contact with another nearby dog).
- Your foster dog may go on field trips, but please do not take them to a dog park.

PLAY AND PET INTRODUCTIONS

- Foster dogs will need to meet resident dogs before going into foster care.
- We are not able to do introductions with your resident cat. Introductions should be made carefully and slowly.
- If your own animal has already met your foster pet, and you have permission to have them interact, then supervised play time is welcome.
- No unsupervised alone time is permitted between foster pets and owned animals.
- Attach leashes and allow the dogs to play while dragging their leashes during the transition period to be sure the animals are comfortable with each other's play style.

- Make sure the play area is set up in a way that you can easily separate the animals in case of a disagreement.
- Avoid using your hands to play with your foster pet—always use toys to promote positive play habits.

MEDICAL CARE

- Your foster pet may require medication or a specific treatment plan while in your care. It is essential that all medications are administered as directed and treatment instructions are followed.
- If you encounter any difficulty giving medication to your foster pet, please notify the foster team as soon as possible so we can provide guidance or alternative solutions.
- If your foster pet shows signs of illness while in your care, **do not** take them to your personal veterinarian. All medical care must be coordinated through the Richmond SPCA.
- During your foster pet's pick-up appointment, the foster team will review how to distinguish between general sickness and emergencies, as well as the appropriate steps to take in each situation.

HOUSING

- Foster dogs may be allowed the run of the house while you are home if that is agreeable to you.
- When unsupervised and overnight, we recommend that the foster dog stay in a size-appropriate crate, which we can provide.
- If the dog is unfamiliar with crating, a bathroom, spare room, laundry room, or climate-controlled garage may be used. This will limit the opportunity for valuable or breakable items to become damaged.
- Keep your foster pet in a room that can be sanitized and disinfected after the foster period is over, in case of illness or parasites.
- Clean and comfortable bedding should be kept where the dog is sleeping.
- Inappropriate housing includes: outside kennel runs, outdoor dog house, shed, non-climate controlled garage, a screened-in porch, and a non-child-proofed room.

SIGNS OF ILLNESS

- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sneezing
- Nasal or eye discharge
- Limping or favoring a limb
- Fever

This document provides recommended care guidelines for adult foster dogs. These guidelines are subject to modification based upon the specific animal you are fostering. If you have any questions concerning your foster animal, contact the foster care team at 804-521-1313 or fostercare@richmondspca.org. Thank you for your love of animals and for helping us save lives! You're a hero!