

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START FOSTERING

### 1. UNKNOWN BEHAVIORS IN SHELTER DOGS:

As you likely know already, we rescue dogs primarily from the shelter; as a result, we do NOT know if they are housetrained, dog or cat friendly, or good with children; this is where our FOSTERS come in! We rely on YOU to help us with this "fact-finding" mission to tell us the good, the bad, and the ugly and in return, we offer our experience and support to help fosters feel empowered to address any situation that comes up with their foster dogs. If we know anything about a dog's personality or health prior to you fostering, rest assured we will tell you as much information as we possibly can.

We also have several easy to read handouts regarding a variety of topics that fosters will find helpful from housetraining tips, to suggestions on how to introduce your dog to your new foster dog, etc. we have all of the resources and training support needed, all you have to do is ask! If you are fostering with a roommate, partner, or family member, please share this information with others as consistency is key!

**2. COMMON MEDICAL SITUATIONS:** If your new foster dog was just rescued from the shelter, she may develop kennel cough within the first 10 days. Do NOT be alarmed if you see a runny nose, or if you start to hear a hacking or honking sound in their throat/chest; simply EMAIL us ([foster@dogswithoutborders.org](mailto:foster@dogswithoutborders.org)) as soon as you observe this, and you will receive a response within 12-24hrs at the very most to arrange for you to come pick up some antibiotics. Kennel cough IS contagious to other dogs, so please separate your dog from the foster as soon as you think there might be symptoms your dog may not catch it (note: we will provide any foster with antibiotics for their dog if the kennel cough is transferred).

Another common thing dogs experience after leaving the shelter is having worms in their feces while certainly not pleasant, an easy one-pill fix and you're back in action!

The other common occurrence we see with shelter dogs are fleas. Fleas are also another unpleasant situation. Dogs are pre-treated at time of rescue, but we also provide flea treatment at no cost to our fosters if needed; simply EMAIL us and we will schedule a location for you to either pickup the flea medication or you can come to any of our weekend adoption fairs for a treatment.

All of these things are available to help our fosters & our dogs have as stress-free of an experience as possible!

**3. BATHING & GROOMING:** Dogs are frequently just spayed/neutered before going to foster; please do NOT bathe your foster for at least 7 days. Why? Because the sutures or glue that has closed the surgical site could become loose which means they will have to be taken to an emergency vet for restitching as well as being put at risk for serious infections. So, please just

ask first beforehand, and note we will provide shampoos upon request! (NOTE: Grooming is for medical situations only, due to expense; as a charitable organization, we simply cannot accommodate all of our dogs except the most serious cases).

**4. FOSTER DOG BEHAVIORS:** Please bear in mind that if your foster dog has just left the shelter, as we mentioned above, we don't know much about them. We observe them at the shelter and ask the shelter staff for feedback, but oftentimes we don't see our new dogs' personalities until they are settled into a foster home. If your foster dog was already in several other foster homes before she came to your home, please note that dogs are different from home to home even a house trained dog may have accidents, separation anxiety and nervousness the first week.

It is also normal for a dog not to eat for 2-3 days, so no need to panic! It is not always easy to foster, but it is rewarding and the more you do it, the better you get at preparing your new foster dog to be set up for a successful experience!

#### **5. IF YOU HAVE OTHER DOGS OR PETS IN THE HOME, PLEASE READ!**

Our main priority is making sure you have the tools and are prepared to start things off on the right foot; it's all about a safe introduction, then keeping firm boundaries. While we have attached a few handouts in this regard, please note these key tips to adhere to initially (ie. at least the first week, as this allows everyone a chance to settle in & get safely acquainted with each other and the routine of the home):

- **No shared food or toys;** feed separately at either different times or areas of the home, and only allow your foster to have a toy when they are separated or in their crate
- **Do not leave your foster dog alone unsupervised with your pets OR OUTDOORS** (even if you have a fenced yard!); we provide crates and/or baby gates for fosters to use in order to keep safe boundaries as well as encourage quicker housetraining
- **Do not allow your foster sit on your lap, furniture, or sleep in bed with you;** by showering your new foster dog with praise and not making them earn their privileges not only creates an entitled little monster sometimes, but frequently this leads to jealousy from your other pets which leads all too often into a fight for possession and territory In short, set your foster dog up for success and minimize your own stress by being prepared & instituting firm boundaries straight from the gate.

These suggestions may sound a bit strict, but they are advised by professional trainers with nearly perfect success rate.

**6. ADOPTION FAIR:** You will be contacted by email each week to invite your foster dog to our adoption fairs, though if your dog is newly rescued, he/she cannot attend for the first 10 days out of the shelter.

We ask that your dog attends at least one adoption fair per weekend but you are welcome to bring to both. No need to hang around at the fairs, just drop off and pick up, our dogs show better when their foster parents aren't there anyway.

We will also contact you when they need vet checkups, suture removals, etc. no need to worry, we run a very tight ship, so let us do the worrying for you!

**7. HOW TO CONTACT DOGS WITHOUT BORDERS:** we are available on my phone for emergencies only(for e.g., your foster dog is bleeding from an open wound, or he stole the car and took off to Tijuana; an example of what is NOT considered an emergency: fleas, sneezing, or needing a haircut). Due to the large amount of dogs and fosters we are responsible for on any given day (between 50-70), it is simply easier and more efficient for fosters to EMAIL our foster department at **foster@dogswithoutborders.org** so that we can schedule a specific time to call you.

The more efficient we are, the more dogs we can rescue & new fosters we can recruit!!

**Emergency Contact Number: 323-712-3860.**

**Please note:** We are out of the office Saturdays and Sundays and are usually at an adoption event. You are always welcome to replenish food and supplies at our fairs or at our main office in Encino, just email us and let us know your needs and when you would like to come.

For more recommended reading about how fostering works, visit our FAQ page at <http://dogswithoutborders.org/foster-a-dog/foster-faq/>

**The MOST Important Thing for Fosters to Remember:** Our dogs have all come to our rescue after having suffered some sort of trauma, neglect, abuse or emotional abandonment, so we ask all of our fosters to have **PATIENCE**.

The first 48 hours may not be an indication of the dog's temperament and personality.

These dogs may never been loved, nor lived with a family indoors, or they may have been abandoned by their owners on the street, or dropped off one day at the shelter. We can all only imagine what they have had to endure, but we do know that a majority of our dogs are suffering from shelter shock, the canine equivalent of PTSD.

So when you are looking at your foster and wondering why she is shaking, why she won't budge when you are trying to take her for a walk, or why she isn't jumping onto your lap to lick your face, just remember what she needs more than a walk in the park is your love and patience.

While the going may get rough initially, just remember YOU are the only person this dog has right now in the whole world who cares about her, and while she may be smelly, scared, or has

an accident on your favorite area rug, all she has is you. Show her strong leadership and patience and she will blossom.

Thank you for joining our family of fosters! Fostering saves lives every day.

Regular inquiries - [foster@dogswithoutborders.org](mailto:foster@dogswithoutborders.org) -

**Emergency Contact Number: 323-712-3860 ← Lost dog, life threatening emergencies, etc!**