

# DOGS' LIFE™

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YOUR NEWSLETTER FOR HELP WITH YOUR DOG

## The Fearful Dog



By Dr. Nicholas H. Dodman –  
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**W**hy is it that some dogs are nervous Nells (or Neds) while others are self-assured and outgoing? Why, when, and where does their insecurity start and what can we do to help them? Like all stories, this one starts at the beginning — the earliest days of their lives. Oh sure, genetics plays a role (doesn't it always?) — and some breeds and breed lines are known for a tendency towards anxious behavior, even frank fearfulness, but an inane predisposition for the development of fears can be thought of more as the fertile soil on which fears grow.

**More harm (or good) can be done during this period**



The vast majority of fearful dogs acquire their fears as a result of under socialization and/or adverse experiences, particularly in the early formative

stage of their lives referred to as the “sensitive period.” In dogs, this period is between 3 and 14 weeks of age. More harm (or good) can be done during this period than is currently recognized by the people who could make a difference, breeders, veterinarians, and puppy owners.

### From the **EDITOR:**

Veterinarians spend 20% of their time on animal behavior issues.

(source: JAVMA Vol. 215, No. 11)

If a young pup spends the first two to three months with its mom and littermates in a warm and friendly environment and is allowed to explore and interact with its surroundings at a pace its own curiosity dictates, all is well. Premature dislocation of the pup from its canine family without replacing the comfort and security of maternal and sibling bonds is a primary reason for the development of fearfulness.

Think about what happens to puppy mill dogs. They are plucked from their mothers at a young age and shipped to pet stores where they wait for “Godot” to come. Lonely and confused, they have no one to turn to when lights go out. The horror. Well meaning shoppers purchase these damaged goods, often without enough forethought, and bring them home with best intentions.

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**A puppy should be given attention when it needs it**

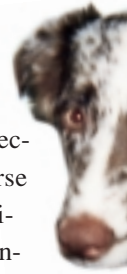
The advice they receive at this stage is often wrong. "You mustn't cater to all that crying at night," they are told by storeowners. "You'll only get more of the same if you do." "Keep them away from other dogs," says the veterinarian with his mind on health matters. "Crate him

when you leave," adds the trainer, "and bring him to puppy training classes at four months old so that we can begin socializing him to other pups and people."

They are all wrong.

A puppy should be given attention when it needs it; company when it's lonely; and an active socialization program right from the get-go. If you give this kind of attention in the formative

months of a pup's life it will grow up to be confident and self-assured and eventually able to handle the outside world on its own with its new-found independence. It's the same with children. The more attention you give at the beginning, the prouder and less worried you will be down the line.



**The more attention you give... the prouder and less worried you will be**

But good socialization and protection from adverse learning experiences at the beginning of a pup's life is

not all the puppy owner has to consider. There's also communication, education of the pup about the right way to behave, rewards for jobs well done, and limit setting (just like mama would have done). Without the latter, our now non-fearful pup can turn into a yuppie puppy, a spoiled child, and overconfident underachiever – but that's another story. 🐾



## Sit! Stay! Good Girl!

At the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) recent annual convention in Salt Lake City, Invisible Fence® pet containment sponsored a

dog training demonstration. Working with dogs from local shelters, Marc Street, professional dog trainer and owner of a companion animal training school, showed some simple techniques to improve dogs' behavior. Street says by spending a few minutes a day training your dog, we all can turn good dogs into great dogs. 🐾

## TUFTS Animal Expo 2000

**Don't miss the Tufts Animal Expo 2000, October 10-13 in Boston, MA.**

**Included in this four-day event is a special Animal Care Professional Tract on Behavior co-sponsored by Invisible Fence® Brand.**

**For more information, visit [www.tuftsanimalexpo.com](http://www.tuftsanimalexpo.com).**

## IF A DOG WERE YOUR TEACHER, you would learn stuff like...

When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.

🦷 Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride. 🦷

Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy. 🦷 Let others know when they've invaded your territory. 🦷 Take naps and stretch before rising. 🦷 Run, romp, and play daily. 🦷 Thrive on attention and let people touch you. 🦷 Avoid biting when a simple growl will do. 🦷 On warm days, lie on your back in the grass. 🦷 On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree. 🦷 When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body. 🦷 No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and put... run right back and make friends. 🦷 Delight in the simple joy of a long walk. 🦷 Eat with gusto and enthusiasm. 🦷 Stop when you have had enough. 🦷 Be loyal. 🦷 Never pretend to be something you're not. 🦷 If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it. 🦷 When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.

— Author Unknown

# Is Your Home Safe? Part I

By Wendy Christensen

Excerpted from the June 2000 issue of *Your Dog*

**A**h, a dog's life. Rolling in the lush green grass of the front yard; lapping puddles in the garden to cool off; sampling the houseplants and pretty flower arrangements; and discovering tasty tidbits in the garbage can.

According to Amy D. Shojai, author of *The Purina Encyclopedia of Dog Care*, "Dog's use their mouths in lieu of hands, and so they pick up, mouth, chew and end up exposing themselves to all manner of potential toxins in and around the home."



## The Garage

We certainly don't want to see any evidence of automobile fluid spills – especially antifreeze. "Antifreeze is a very, very fast poison," warns Dr. Charles DeVinne of the Animal Care Clinic in Peterborough, New Hampshire. "To save an animal, you practically have to actually see him consuming the antifreeze and rush him instantly to the veterinarian to begin emergency treatment."

Lock away garden fertilizers, pesticides, rodenticides, pool chemicals and auto supplies like oil, antifreeze, and gasoline in adequately ventilated storage areas behind a door with a secure latch. Check containers for deterioration, as some products eat through plastic over time.

## The Great Outdoors

Whether they're running loose or on a leash, dogs can pick up all sorts of harmful substances on their paws. Your dog will inevitably lick his paws and eat these substances if they're not immediately removed. Use petroleum jelly or mineral oil (never kerosene or turpentine!) to remove sticky substances, then wash with mild soap and water.



Keep all animals (and children too) off and away from newly fertilized lawns for at least 24 hours, longer if possible. The lawn should be completely dry before anyone, of any species, goes near it.

The compost heap can be irresistible for a curious canine, but molds, fungus, salmonella and even nastier stuff awaits him. Keep it well maintained, securely fenced and turn it regularly.

## Next Steps

What if your careful precautions fail, and your dog gets into something he shouldn't? Call your vet immediately – or drive the dog to the veterinary emergency clinic. Bring the suspected toxin with you so the veterinarian will be able to identify the source of the problem and determine the appropriate treatment.

If you can't reach your vet or a clinic quickly, call the National Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435.

*Look for tips on keeping your dog safe indoors in the next issue of Dog's Life.*

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## Invisible Fence BRAND TIPS

The Invisible Fence® Computer Collar® is water-resistant **not** waterproof. In particularly humid climates or when the dog has access to creeks, pools, streams etc., water may get trapped in the Power Cap® battery compartment. The Power Cap contains a small o-ring that helps minimize water intrusion, but if you think the battery compartment is getting wet, take the Power Cap out. When the Power Cap and its compartment are dry, place the Power Cap back in the Computer Collar. Remember, put the Computer Collar back on the dog before he goes outside.

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Does your dog understand his boundaries?

For the Invisible Fence® Solution contact  
**1-800-578-DOGS** or  
[www.invisiblefence.com](http://www.invisiblefence.com)

## Most Common Outdoor DOG Poisons

*Special thanks to  
Dr. Steven Hanson,  
Senior Vice President of the  
National Animal Poison  
Control Center  
for his contributions  
to this piece.*

### ▼ Insecticides

- Lawn, Rose, and Agricultural pesticides can be harmful in their concentrated form
- Exposure to liquids or bags of granulated materials can be extremely dangerous, affecting the nervous system, often displayed in seizures

### ▼ Antifreeze

- Antifreeze that contains ethylene glycol has a sweet taste and is deadly in small quantities
- There are some products that contain propylene glycol and are more pet-friendly

### ▼ Gas/Kerosene

- Gas and Kerosene containers offer 'fun' challenges to open
- Once opened, however, ingestion could lead to nervous disorders

### ▼ Windshield washer fluid

- This contains methanol – again a deadly poison that can cause sever depression
- Color and taste do not deter dogs

### ▼ Paint

- Paint can be messy to clean off a dog, cans can be opened or tipped over, but generally paint is not very toxic
- Paint stripper, on the other hand, is very toxic and can harm a dog quickly

### ▼ Snail & Slug bait

- Pets must be kept away from locations where this is spread and stored
- Can cause seizures in pets almost instantly

### ▼ De-icing Salts

- Salts can harm dog's paws, can be caustic to the pads of the feet
- Certain de-icing compounds can be harmful if eaten

### ▼ Plants

- Dogs generally won't eat outdoor plants, however the Japanese Yew and Oleander can be toxic
- Cycad or Sago Palm nuts if eaten by dogs will cause liver failure

### ▼ Over-the-counter pet pest control

- Follow directions exactly for OTC flea and tick control
- 'Spot' treatments should be used only on the size dog noted on the package (don't use same treatment on a St. Bernard and a tea-cup Poodle) also, don't mix dog & cat spot controls

In case of an emergency get to your vet, the local animal hospital or call **1-888-4 ANI-HELP (888-426-4435)**.

For more information visit:  
[www.napcc.aspc.org](http://www.napcc.aspc.org)

