



Cardinal Animal Hospital

www.cardinalanimalhosp.com

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PUPPY MOUTHING, NIPPING & BITING

Bite Inhibition

1. No hard bites or pressure.
 - a. When the puppy is calm, place your hand in its mouth and praise it when it mouths softly.
 - b. Give an immediate, loud “ouch!” whenever the puppy applies too much pressure, and stop playing with it. Once the puppy ceases, you can give it an alternative form of play or attention (e.g., chew toy, exercise session, training session) or a settle exercise (see our settle exercise handout), and reward the desirable behavior.
2. Mild attempts at deterring the puppy and physically discouraging the puppy can actually serve to increase the intensity of the play biting.
3. Gentle mouthing as a form of play is OK, but the puppy should not initiate it, and the family must be able to stop it on command. Any hard biting or over exuberant play must be discouraged.
4. Avoid tug of war if the pet becomes too excited, aggressive, or out of control. Tug of war games should only be allowed when you have initiated them and when you can quickly stop the game on command with an ouch, give, or drop command.
5. If the puppy is constantly demanding attention through mouthing and biting or is over exuberant in its play, then it is likely not receiving sufficient stimulation. You should consider additional or longer periods of play, training, exercise, and outlets for chewing to pre-empt the puppies unacceptable play biting.
6. If the puppy cannot be quickly calmed and settled, then confining it away from the target (e.g., children, visitors) until it settles may be necessary. When the puppy is calm, it can then be released, and encouraged to play in an appropriate manner.
7. For those problems that cannot be quickly and effectively controlled with bite inhibition techniques, a leash and head halter can be left attached when the puppy is with the family. Mouthing or biting can be immediately stopped with a pull on the leash, with tension released as soon as the puppy settles. The leash and head halter can also be used to teach the off command by first giving the command and if the puppy does not immediately cease, pulling the hand back and **guiding the** dog into the proper response with a pull on the leash.
8. In some homes, all forms of hard mouthing and play biting may be unacceptable for some puppies. This may be the case when there are elderly or young children in the home.

We hope this information will be helpful. Our professionals here will continue striving to provide outstanding care for you and your pet. Thank you for your business and please contact us if you have any further questions or concerns. Cardinal Animal Hospital