

Puppy Teething



Teething may arguably be the most difficult part of owning a puppy. The overwhelming desire to chew, chomp and mouth can sometimes almost consume a puppy's mind. But there are solutions and ways to help!

Biting vs. mouthing:

Biting and mouthing are not the same. When a dog bites, it is usually done with fear or aggression. Snarling, growling and stiff posture accompany a bite.

Puppies who jump playfully, snapping at hands, feet, hair, etc. or chomping down with their sharp little teeth are "mouthing." Even though this is NOT aggressive "biting," and is really quite normal, your puppy needs to learn that it is **NEVER acceptable to have a part of a human's body in their mouth.**

Managing a Puppy's Mouthing

Make sure that your puppy has lots of things that ARE okay to chew on, chomp into, shake, pull, etc. Replace your hand, hair or clothing with a fun toy whenever possible. Distract your puppy by doing some training or another activity. Teach children to redirect the puppy's mouth to a soft toy. If children run away, scream, laugh, or wave their hands around, a puppy will think it's a fun game and will want to keep it going. When your puppy needs some down time or is ready for a nap, provide a nice bully stick, bone or stuffed Kong toy in a confined area or crate.

Teaching bite inhibition (mouth manners):

When your puppy mouths with high pressure, give a high-pitched squeal or yelp (or say ouch"). The puppy should stop in surprise. Now praise the puppy and continue to play. If the mouthing doesn't stop, discontinue the play and ignore or confine the puppy briefly until calm. Next, eliminate the pressure of your puppy's mouthing by gradually decreasing the amount of pressure you will allow. Set a limit for how hard your puppy may mouth during a session. Anything harder gets a yelp. Gradually set your limit for softer and softer pressure. Move your limits slowly enough for your puppy to be successful most of the time.