

LITTER MATE SYNDROME

1. What is litter mate syndrome?

Litter mate syndrome is a whole host of behaviors that can ensue when puppies near the same age, not just out of the same litter, are raised together past 12 weeks of age. The behaviors seen can be all or some of the following:

- Separation Anxiety
- Other Dog Aggression
- Bullying
- Unwillingness to bond and listen to owner(s)
- Intense Fighting
- Nervousness/Anxiety
- Neophobia (fear of new people, dogs, and other stimuli)

2. Why it is near impossible to cure litter mate syndrome:

- It is a natural instinct
- Puppies must be kept separate for the majority of the day
- Puppies must spend time with other dogs separately
- Puppies must meet many new dogs and people regularly
- Puppies must be trained 100% separately
- Puppies must be kept in separate containments
- Puppies must bond separately

3. How to combat litter mate syndrome:

- i. Keep puppies separate most of the day. The two+ puppies need to learn how to be separate from one another. Combat separation anxiety first and foremost.
- ii. Potty train separately. Puppies need to go outside on their own without feeling as though they need to go with their young pack member alongside them. One puppy could be further behind on training and thus hindering the other puppy.
- iii. Pups should never be kept in the same kennels, containments, rooms, or beds.
- iv. Puppies need to spend individual time with their owners for the majority of the day to bond closely to them. The interruption of the other sibling is very distracting, and they will never be able to

properly bond to their owners because they are always focusing on one another.

- v. Walk puppies separately to keep other dogs safe from possibly being attacked by your two pack members. Know that your puppies will see each other as their own individual pack among other dogs making other dogs a threat to them.
 - vi. Never board your dogs together thinking it will be better for them. This can cause them to team up against their care takers and other dogs in the facility, always make team members aware that they are not to be in the same area for extended periods of time.
 - vii. Introduce your puppies to different well rounded older dogs regularly to socialize them to other dogs and to help teach them manners.
 - viii. Separately introduce each pup to strangers regularly so they do not fear new people, this is especially important for wolfdogs who have a natural aversion to strangers.
 - ix. Bring puppies together for play time to release some stress once every few days so they get used to not expecting to see one another daily.
4. Know that this is one of the hardest things to combat in canines and you still may not be able to 100% be successful with your efforts to prevent LMS. Seek out a trainer and follow their instructions.