

**Random Words of Wisdom from Our Dogs**  
*(or things they would tell you if you would listen)*  
*By: Charlotte Hassman, Director of Animal Care*

- We need direction and guidance. We didn't come into this world knowing what you want us to do. Show us what you want. Work with us. Don't expect us to know something you have never shown us. We need a leader.
- A crate is not a bad thing. A crate offers us a place of our own, protection, and can keep us out of trouble and safe when you aren't around. (Just don't use it for punishment.)
- If you have a serious (behavioral) problem with your dog, consult a professional. A trainer or behaviorist will be able to guide you to the proper way to modify those undesirable behaviors.
- If your dog has a (medical) problem, call your vet – don't consult "Dr. Google". Many symptoms can be indicative of many different conditions. Veterinarians go to school for a loooong time to learn this stuff. (Did you know it's harder to get into vet school than (human) medical school?)
- Watch our weight. Food does not equal love. Over feeding or treating and/or not enough exercise can cause weight gain. Just like our human friends, being overweight brings with it a host of medical concerns from heart disease to joint issues – and everything in between.
- Please don't leave us unsupervised with young children. No matter how "good" we are, if put into a situation where we get hurt, scared, or annoyed, we may do something out of character. Really, Little Johnny riding us like a horse isn't cute. Just because we have never bitten, doesn't mean we won't. That doesn't mean we are aggressive, it means we are reacting to the situation you put us in. Your child's safety, as well as ours, is your responsibility.
- Don't set us up to fail. If you know we get stressed when guests come over, put us away in a room where it will be quiet and we won't be overwhelmed. If you know we don't care for other dogs, don't take me where you know there will be other dogs.
- We need regular exercise. Key word: Regular. Please provide us with ample opportunities for an adequate amount of exercise. Not only is it good for our health, it can help keep us out of trouble, by channeling our energy in an appropriate manner.
- Keep your household chemicals out of our reach. Believe it or not, some of us find these things tempting. We have even been known to open cabinet doors to get to them. Put them somewhere we cannot reach, even if we really, really try.
- Don't let us pick up anything from the ground and eat or drink it. Again, it may be difficult for you to understand, but many discarded items on the ground really, really, really look tempting. Cigarette butts, chewed gum, other animals' droppings and such may seem harmless, but they can cause stomach upset or carry disease. Drinking from standing water (whether a creek or puddle) should be avoided. These, too, can carry disease. There could also be something in there that could be poisonous to us (like antifreeze) even if we think it tastes good.
- Take us to obedience classes. You may think you can work with us on your own (and maybe you can), but classes provide us with excellent opportunities to socialize – which can be just as important to our overall development as learning commands.
- Don't take us home if you aren't committed to providing us with everything we need. Not unlike your human children, we need direction and boundaries, consistency and stability, regular medical care, a safe home with people who will love us till the end of our time. Really think about the commitment you are making. Can you honor it? If not, volunteer at your local shelter. You can get your animal fix and help the animals. Win – win, if you ask us.

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