

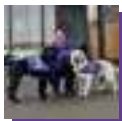


# Information and reference handbook for volunteering with dogs in Assistance Dog Training



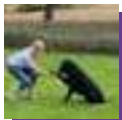
Amazing dogs. Transforming lives.

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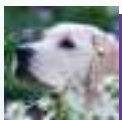
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*We are so grateful to our Fosterer volunteers whose dedication to our assistance dogs in training is incredible!*







Fosterer volunteers play a vital role in caring for, and helping to train our highly skilled assistance dogs.

Our dogs work extremely hard during their training, and therefore spending their 'downtime' relaxing in family homes is hugely beneficial. By helping us to maintain some of their basic manners and obedience, together we're giving every dog the best possible chance of being eligible to be matched with a disabled person. The mental and physical support that our dogs can bring can completely transform not only the disabled person's life, but also those around them.

The aim of this handbook is to support you in your role as a Fosterer volunteer and answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any other queries or concerns, please contact your Assistance Dog Trainer contact at the earliest opportunity.



#### Vision

*Every disabled person lives their life to the full.*

#### Mission

*We will change the lives of disabled people using expertly trained dogs to improve physical, emotional and social wellbeing.*



*The mental and physical support that our dogs can bring can completely transform not only the disabled person's life, but also those around them.*



## Fostering with Canine Partners

Dogs in Assistance Dog Training have a training period of approximately seventeen weeks; some dogs may be with us for longer or shorter periods of time, depending on each dog's individual progress.

During this time, where possible, we would like each dog's home life to be consistent. We understand that there might be times during this period that you have other commitments, and may wish to request that your dog is temporarily fostered elsewhere, which we will seek to organise. It is in yours and the dog's best interests to make your request to your Assistance Dog Trainer contact and/or Fosterer Coordinator with as much notice as possible to give us the best chance of making suitable alternative arrangements.

Before we can allocate a dog into your care, we ask you to attend an induction and dog handling sessions.



Foster Coordinator  
fostermidlands@caninepartners.org.uk

## Other fostering opportunities

We may also take the decision during a dog's training period to move them for training purposes; this is not a reflection on you or the home you provide, but may be to help us continue upskilling that dog in an alternative environment e.g. to a home that has cats.

If you feel you are struggling with the commitment of fostering full time, there are other fostering opportunities that might better suit your lifestyle. These include:

### Short term cover

You are able to look after one of our dogs for a shorter period of time, including weekdays and weekends and you are able to transport the dog to and from the centre for training when required.

### Weekends only

You are only able to foster at the weekends. Unfortunately, this option means we are unable to guarantee you regular fostering opportunities.

### Long-term fostering

You are able to foster a dog full time but are unable to commit to transporting a dog back and forth from the centre on a regular basis. Dogs that fall into this category may have been withdrawn and are awaiting being rehomed, dogs that require rehabilitation programmes, or dogs that have come back in from partnership for respite.



To find out more about other volunteering opportunities please visit [caninepartners.org.uk/volunteer](https://caninepartners.org.uk/volunteer)



# Collecting and dropping off



- Dogs in Assistance Dog Training would normally be dropped off at the relevant training centre and collected on scheduled days.
- On average, each of our dogs will be required to be at the centre for training **three days a week**. Depending on the dog's stage of training and the trainer's availability this could be more or less.
- Dropping off in the morning is between **7.30am - 9.30am** and all dogs are required to be collected **4.30pm - 6:00pm**. We can be flexible so please speak with your Assistance Dog Trainer if you are finding this difficult.
- Dogs may not need to be trained at the relevant training centre on consecutive days or for full days, but we will always endeavor to help accommodate your work schedules or other commitments you have. For example, you may work in an office Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday but work from home Thursday and Friday, if this was the case we can aim to have your dog in training on days you would be in the office.
- An Assistance Dog Trainer may liaise with you and collect, work and return your dog to your home, if appropriate and convenient.
- Dogs in training may not need to visit the training centre every week, however you will know this in advance.
- When your dog doesn't need to go to the training centre, we may ask you to work them on some specific tasks to continue giving mental stimulation, as well as involve you with any relevant training.
- Your dog may be able to be left for up to four hours during the day; this is dependent on each dog and will require building up from a shorter period of time in the first instance.
- Trainers will schedule one-to-one support time with you to help you develop your skills with care and training requirements, as well as giving you the opportunity to discuss any challenges that you or your dog might be experiencing.
- More information on car loading can be found on page 18.

# Equipment provided



As part of our support to you as a Fosterer volunteer, we provide the following:

- Bedding
- Bowl
- Food
- Whistle
- Lead
- Flexi lead
- Harness
- Appropriate toys
- Bone
- Enrichment Toys
- Poo bags
- Towels
- Fortiflora\*

\*this is a probiotic supplement, given to our dogs with their food during periods of change



Equipment you can expect to receive from us

All of the equipment provided remains with you for the duration of your dog's stay. Any bedding, towels and toys can be returned for washing/ replacement when needed. You can simply tell your trainer or a member of the Dog Welfare Team when you're close to needing more food, poo bags, or replacement toys.

You will be given a whistle when you foster your first dog; this is then yours to keep; if you lose it or need a replacement, please let the Dog Welfare Team or your trainer know.

If you would like more in-depth information or a reminder about the contents of your foster bag and when/what things are used for then please follow this link:

<https://youtu.be/BwvEATvwCVI>

Note

This video is for your information only. Please do not share the link.





## How our dogs enter Assistance Dog Training



Dogs in Assistance Dog Training range in age, but are usually between 14 months and two years old. So although they look adult in form they still have an adolescent mind. This means they require guidance, support, routine and consistency.

The trainer will have spoken to both the Puppy Training Coordinator and the Puppy Training volunteer prior to a dog's entry into Assistance Dog Training. The trainer is unlikely to have had the opportunity to spend much, if any, time with them before bringing them to your home. The trainer will pass on any relevant information to you regarding your dog, to help you understand what to expect in the first instance when they arrive, and will spend time with you, helping your dog to settle in.

### What it's like from your dog's perspective?

Entering Assistance Dog Training means the dog will have had a lot of big changes to adapt to such as:

- 🐾 Leaving the Puppy Training volunteer's home
- 🐾 Travelling to a new unknown place (The centre)
- 🐾 Meeting a new handler (The Trainer)
- 🐾 Travelling in a new vehicle
- 🐾 Meeting new people (Fosterers)
- 🐾 Meeting other resident pets
- 🐾 Being in a new home (Foster home)
- 🐾 New routines
- 🐾 New environments (Kennels)
- 🐾 Meeting dogs for the first time at the centre.

All of this means in the first evening they are likely to be in a heightened emotional state.












## First steps











## What to expect on the first evening?

It is normal for you to be excited at the prospect of having your first foster dog, but it can take a couple of evenings and even weeks for some dogs to settle into their new way of life. You may find your foster dog is:

-  **Unsettled** – they may pace around and follow you, not wanting to be left alone and seeking security by being around you.
-  **Stimulated by all the changes** – they may pick things up they shouldn't e.g. children's toys, shoes, remotes.
-  **Try out new things** – getting on the furniture, checking out the surfaces in your home.
-  **Bark at noises** – they are in a new place and a little on edge and jumpy so may react and bark at some noises in and around the home.
-  **Whine & bark at bed time** – this is a new place to them and they don't automatically know what is expected.

### What you can do to help

Try your best to relax and follow your trainer's guidance. Where possible we will be trying to set both you and your dog up for success:

-  **Provide your dog with security** by having a predictable routine, toileting and feeding at consistent times.
-  **Make their bed a comfortable and desirable place to be** by popping some treats on it throughout the evening.
-  **Give them a filled Kong** on their bed to help settle them and give them a positive experience.
-  **Have some short play sessions** to get to know your new foster dog.
-  **Normalise any noises** they may startle at – 'it's just the wind', 'it's just next door putting the bin out'.
-  **Make sure they have access to their own toys/ chew items** and direct them to those if they are picking up items they shouldn't.
-  **Provide a bedtime routine** – take them out to the toilet area last thing before bed, guide them to their bed and settle them before leaving. You could leave a radio on low for the first couple of evenings.
-  **Whining & barking at bedtime** – try to ignore any whining and barking or calmly cue them to 'settle down', they will get used to their new sleeping place in time.

**Always speak to your trainer for more specific guidance and advice about your foster dog. Please be honest about what you're experiencing; it won't shock us and we will do everything possible to help.**

A suitable sleeping area would have been identified at your home visit; if you or your dog's trainer find this is not working, we may look at other options such as allowing the dog to sleep closer to the bedroom e.g. on the landing or in the bedroom with you. If the dog is sleeping in your bedroom, they are not permitted to be on your bed or any furniture.





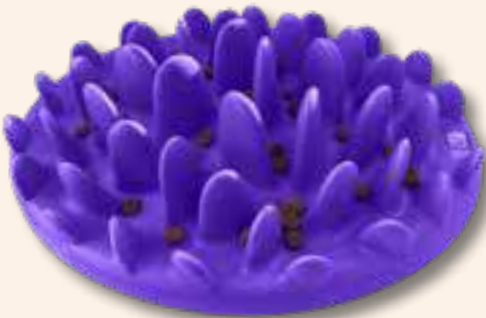
# Feeding

We want to avoid our dogs becoming overweight which can significantly affect their working life and health, so please weigh all meals using digital scales. It is important that our dogs get the designated amount of food at each meal, so that it can be monitored and adjusted effectively.

You may be advised to feed part rations on days when your dog is with their trainer; the remainder will be weighed out by the trainer and used for training.

You may be given a puzzle feeder or slow-feeder bowl in the first few weeks to slow your dog's eating habits while they may still be in a heightened emotional state.

Please ensure your dog has access to clean fresh water at all times and this is replenished daily.



## Feeding routine

The feeding routine is as follows:

- Guide your dog to an appropriate place, out of your way, but where they can see you prepare the food e.g. their bed.
- Cue your dog 'sit' (praise verbally for doing so 'Good boy/girl').
- Cue your dog to 'wait'; repeat this cue if necessary to help dog maintain position.
- Weigh out the food.
- Remind the dog to 'wait' whilst you put the bowl of food on the floor.
- Stand up and give release cue of 'OK'.



Here is a link to a video of the feeding routine:  
<https://youtu.be/PkrR4zL8VUs>



This video is for your information only. Please do not share the link.

If you are experiencing any problems with this routine, speak to your trainer.



To avoid bloat, please do not feed your dog within one hour before or one hour after exercise

Bloat or Gastric Dilation Volvulus is a condition that can occur when there is an abnormal amount of air or fluid in the stomach, which causes the stomach to dilate and possibly twist. This is extremely dangerous for dogs, and can be fatal.



“My role is to make a comfortable and relaxing environment for the dog where they are loved and cared for when they are not training. It has been lovely having a dog during the week well as weekends.

“They really become part of the family and seem to enjoy having a familiar place to relax after a hard day's work! All of our dogs have had different characters and never fail to make us smile and laugh.”

Gillian, Fosterer volunteer



# Toileting

Many of our service beneficiaries (known as partners) cannot pick up after their dogs if they toilet away from the home – leading to embarrassment and a potential fine – so we work hard to train our dogs into an achievable routine. Your trainer will advise about specifics for your dog, but in general each dog must be taken out to toilet in a designated area on lead, at set times each day. Please see below an example toileting record sheet that you will be given to fill in when your dog first arrives to foster with you.

It is important that you follow the toileting routine set out by your trainer. This routine may influence when or whether you can take your dog out for a walk. For example, some dogs will have a routine of doing two poos in the morning prior to a walk e.g. one poo before breakfast, one poo an hour after breakfast. Where possible this must be maintained to avoid inappropriate toileting.

A part of your garden will have been identified on your home visit that you can utilise for toileting. This can be a pebbled, bark or grass area.

To encourage a good routine, it is important to keep the area clean; please pick up after your dog promptly.

## Toileting sheet

Date	Before breakfast	After breakfast	Mid morning	Lunch time	Early afternoon	Before dinner	After dinner	Before bed
Monday								
Tuesday								
Wednesday								
Thursday								
Friday								
Saturday								
Sunday								

Key:

 Urine

 Diarrhoea

 Faeces








 Nothing

 Poo on exercise

 Poo on a pavement walk

# How do I toilet the dogs?

This should be relaxed, but does require a specific routine in order for the dog to be successful in their future role:

-  Take your dog to the toilet area on lead.
-  Lengthen the lead.
-  Cue the dog **‘better go now’**.
-  Remain relaxed and repeat the command **‘better go now’** if dog seems otherwise distracted.
-  Keep toileting time to no longer than five minutes.
-  When your dog has toileted, praise them.
-  Shorten the lead and walk them back inside.

If they are showing no interest in toileting, return to the house, and try again about an hour later. A great way to reward your dog for toileting in the correct area is to grant them free time in the garden.



Here is a link to a video of a toileting routine:  
<https://youtu.be/CEw7Sp2Aheg>



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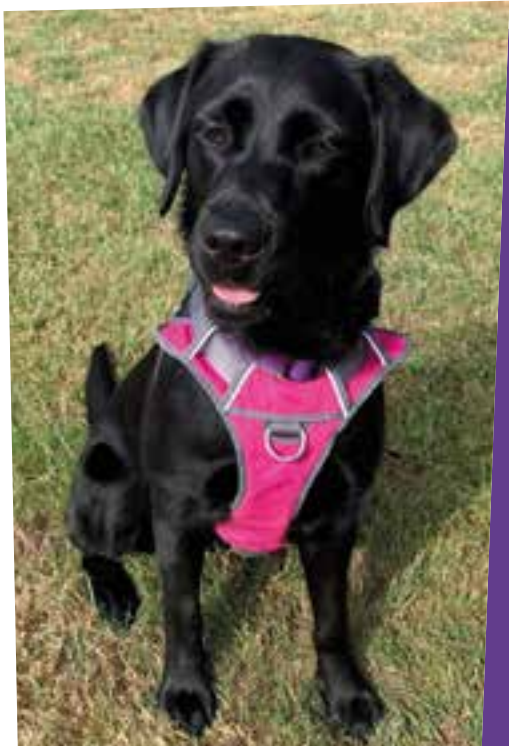


# Car loading

All dogs need, by law, to be secured safely whilst in transit. This is to protect both them and yourself. Our dogs travel either on the rear seat or in the boot of the car.

We will provide you with a car harness that is suited to your dog. Some dogs will prefer to be loaded into the vehicle before having the car harness put on; others will be OK to have the harness fitted before loading. Your trainer will guide you as to what will work best for your dog, show you how to fit the harness, and how to get your dog in and out of your car.

The car harness will need to be secured to a suitable tether point within the vehicle.



Here is a link to a video for how to fit a car harness:

<https://youtu.be/xPIME5-QfaY>

Note

This video is for your information only. Please do not share the link.

If you have a dog guard fitted within your boot, your dog may not need to wear a car harness or be tethered.

## Loading the dog into the car:

- Open your car door or boot.
- Ensure dog has room to access vehicle.
- Cue your dog to **'jump on'** - position your body facing into the car and gesture forward as they load, keeping the lead slack.
- Reward your dog inside the vehicle.
- Cue your dog to **'wait'** whilst you are securing their tether.
- Carefully shut the boot or door to ensure you do not trap your dog's tail or paws.

jump on

wait

## Unloading the dog from the car:

- Cue your dog **'wait'** whilst you open the boot or door - use a hand cue if necessary to reinforce the wait; hold your hand with your palm facing the dog.
- Cue a **'wait'** whilst you untether the lead.
- Give your dog space by stepping back but continuing to hold the lead.
- Check your surroundings to make sure it is appropriate to unload your dog.
- Using a treat to maintain your dog's focus, give the cue **'off'**, and lure the dog out of vehicle and towards you.
- Shut the boot or door once your dog is clear and focused on you.

off

If you or your dog are struggling with loading or unloading, talk to your trainer as soon as possible. Some dogs will require specific loading and unloading plans, which your trainer will talk through and demonstrate with you if needed.

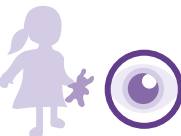
# Home behaviour

An important part of an assistance dog's life is the ability to switch off when not required to work. Around the home, dogs should be calm and settled when not engaged in a training session or play. Some dogs will need more guidance with this than others.



Please ensure your dog is wearing a collar at all times as this is required by law. If your dog's ID tag becomes damaged or lost, inform your trainer so it can be replaced as soon as possible.

## Children



We ask that only people over the age of 16 are allowed to handle or walk your dog. Never leave dogs and young children together unattended. There are lots of safe ways to involve children with care of your dog e.g. helping to weigh out your dog's food, stuffing a Kong, or making sure you have everything you need before going for a walk.

## Furniture



Our dogs must not be allowed on furniture; this includes sitting on your lap on the sofa, or on a footstool. Each dog we place will be specific to an individual and their lifestyle; a dog that chooses to be on the sofa where a wheelchair-user cannot be may struggle to bond and form a meaningful relationship. Inform your trainer if a dog is attempting to get on furniture; it may be that they would prefer a different kind of bed, which we can provide.

## Visitors



Our dogs must greet visitors appropriately, with all four paws on the ground. There are various techniques that can be utilised when dealing with visitors; your trainer will discuss and demonstrate the best approach for your dog. If you are visiting friends or family and wish to take your foster dog with you, please speak to your trainer who will give you specific advice.

## Barking



Dogs bark for many different reasons. If your dog is barking in your home, inform your trainer and try to note down what caused the dog to bark e.g. doorbell, car door, something passing the window, a bird in the garden. It is also worth noting down how easy it was to interrupt your dog from barking and how quickly it took them to relax after the event.

## Toys



Our dogs enjoy retrieving toys and will be doing so in their working life with their partner. Your foster dog will be provided with appropriate toys to play with and appropriate toys to chew; please supervise your foster dog around both. Do not allow them to chew on soft toys; swap these for a bone if the dog wants to chew. Throw away any small pieces of toys that break off. We advise you regularly swap around toys to keep them interesting, and to separate them into toys for chewing, toys for interactive retrieve games, toys for outdoor play and enrichment toys. Inform your trainer if your foster dog is bringing you other items that are not their own toys.



Please note, our dogs are not permitted to play with footballs or tennis balls unless on a rope.





Enrichment toys

A filled Kong or something to chew can help encourage your dog to settle and relax. If your dog always seems to be ‘looking for something to do’, they need help to learn to switch off, rather than given more play or walks.



Kong-filling

A Kong is an interactive treat toy that will occupy your dog for a while. Kongs are also useful if your dog is going to be left for a while, or to keep them occupied and entertained.

Your trainer or a member of the dog welfare team will advise on appropriate use of a Kong to ensure your dog’s weight is not adversely affected.

To fill a Kong:

- Soak their usual food in warm water for 10 minutes. Mash it up and spoon the mixture into the Kong.
- Place the Kong in the freezer for a couple of hours; this will make the Kong last for a longer period of time.

Your trainer or a member of the Dog Welfare Team will advise of other appropriate enrichment toys and games for use when your dog needs stimulating/occupying.

Play time

Here are some links to videos on different types of enrichment toys and how to use them.

Enrichment toys

<https://youtu.be/4Zs9qmqlcIE>

Towel Enrichment

[https://youtu.be/t9K9\\_vNxYNQ](https://youtu.be/t9K9_vNxYNQ)

Scent games

<https://youtu.be/B2hQihyDb8Q>

How to fill a Kong

<https://youtu.be/QhPxRxZODxo>

Note

These videos are for your information only. Please do not share the link.

Leaving your foster dog

Once your dog is settled, they can be left in a safe environment for up to four hours on their own.

This requires building up over time, with your foster dog initially being left for short periods and gradually extending the time you are away.

Ensure your dog has access to water and is not left with any toys or items that they may chew and choke on. Inform your trainer if you are going to be leaving your dog, and they will advise accordingly.

Your trainer will send you a foster report form to fill out to help keep us informed about all aspects of our dog’s behaviour.

Other resident pets

Settling your foster dog into a home with already established pets requires time and patience. It can take a while for both animals to feel completely relaxed. We will always support you with introducing our dogs to other animals.



Cats

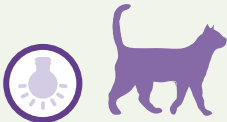
Some cats might find it disruptive having a new dog come into their home. Make sure the cat has plenty of places to retreat to that the dog cannot access. A baby gate can be used to help with this. You can block a room off or have it across the bottom of the stairs so that the cat has sole access to these areas.



Before you bring the dog home

Make sure the following are completely inaccessible to the dog:

- Cat’s food
- Cat’s litter tray



Tips to help your cat

- Make sure your cat always has somewhere they can go where the dog cannot get to. This may be somewhere up high, like a shelf; a separate room; outside via a cat flap.
- If your cat has a litter tray, consider putting it in a room the dog has no access to – this will help keep it private for your cat.
- Feed your cat separately from your foster dog and ensure that their food and water bowls are kept out of the dog’s reach. Utilise tables or shelves if necessary; cat food can be high in fat so it must be kept away from your foster dog. Your cat also won’t appreciate their food being stolen!
- Be patient; it can take a few weeks for your cat to feel settled around your foster dog. Make sure your cat always has exit routes from rooms so they can get away from your dog, and do not force them to spend time near your foster dog if they do not want to.



Tips to help your foster dog

- You may find it useful to keep your foster dog on a houseline so you can safely monitor and manage their initial interactions with your cat.
- Interrupt your foster dog if they are bothering your cat; use a light tone of voice or make a little noise and redirect them onto something that will distract them such as a toy instead.
- Use a variety of enrichment toys; this will not only tire them out, but it will help promote calmer behaviours at home, meaning they will be less likely to focus on your cat.
- Be mindful of having cat toys lying around. Your foster dog may want to play with them, but they are likely to be too small and could cause a choking risk.

Remember to always reinforce calm behaviours, and do not just wait for disturbances before responding. Let your cat set the pace with building a relationship with the dog.



# Multi-dog households

It's natural for your pet dog to find it disruptive having a new dog come into their home. You may notice that your pet dog's behaviour changes as a result of the new introduction, especially if your foster dog tries to interact with them excessively.

Equally your foster dog will likely be a bit more sensitive or over excited, as they have already experienced a lot of changes in a short time. Getting used to an established pet dog is another change we need to help support them through.

It's important that consideration and support is given to both the existing dog and your new foster dog. We want to make this transition as smooth as possible, creating an environment where all dogs can live harmoniously together.

There are many ways with which we can encourage positive interaction and help to reduce the likelihood of negative ones:

## Where are the dogs going to sleep?

It may be that you initially aim to sleep them in separate rooms, just until the dogs have spent more time together under your supervision, and you are confident that the dogs are comfortable in one another's company. If you do need to move your pet dog's bed please ensure you do this several weeks before you bring your foster dog home to give your pet dog time to adjust to this change.

## Where and how are you going to feed the dogs?

As mentioned previously, our dogs must practice their known feeding routine. Depending on your set-up, it is advisable to initially feed the dogs separately. If you are feeding your dogs in the same room, ensure you always supervise them while they eat their meals. This is to prevent any stealing or squabbling over food.

Dogs in Assistance Dog Training are typically good eaters. As such, if you have a fussy pet dog and are used to leaving food down all day for them, you will need to consider how this can be done without your foster dog eating your pet dog's food. You may find you need to look at restricting your foster dog's access to the area your pet dog's food is in.

## What will happen with your pet dog when you want to do some training or go out with your foster dog and vice versa?

When you start practising training at home with your foster dog, there should be as few distractions around as possible to make it successful. This ideally means removing your other pet dog from the room or area you are training in. Think about where you will settle your pet

dog/foster dog and make sure they are used to being shut in those areas for short periods. This will then ensure that when you come to practice some training with your foster dog or want to go out with them, your pet dog should be relaxed and comfortable being left and vice versa for your foster dog. Your foster dog and pet dog should be walked separately or on a one person to one dog basis to ensure you are able to keep up with behaviours and routines needed for their training.

## Ensure there are several toys that the dogs can have shared access to

Most dogs like playing with toys so, if your dog plays with toys, it's important that there are plenty of toys available. This will help reduce any guarding behaviours between the dogs, and ensure that each dog can interact and enjoy playing with toys. Dogs must be supervised during play to ensure they are behaving appropriately.

## What happens if you want to give the dogs a bone or chew?

When giving bones or chews in a multi-dog household, the dogs must be fully supervised for the duration of the time with the bone/chew. This is to avoid them stealing each other's bones/chews and reduce the risk of guarding behaviour between the dogs. If you are unable to fully supervise them, please put each dog in a separate room while they have them. Speak to your trainer about appropriate bones/chews to give.

## What happens if you want/need to leave the dogs at home alone?

Initially it's advisable to leave your dogs in separate rooms/areas of the house until they have spent more time together under your supervision and you are confident that the dogs are comfortable in one another's company. Your trainer will give you more instructions about the specifics of what to do when you do leave them.







# Exercise and health

## Exercising your dog

Dogs will need time to settle into a new foster home, and may not require walks initially. Your trainer will inform you when it is appropriate to start taking your foster dog for a walk, and the type of walk that is most appropriate.

### Practice recalls first

Recalls should be practised in the house and garden before going on a flexi lead walk. To recall your dog, say: 'dog's name, come here'. Use an exciting and encouraging tone. Once you have given the cue, continue to encourage them to return to you. e.g. 'that's it, come on then' etc. Always reward your dog on their return.

### Types of areas to use

Your trainer will liaise with and advise you of an appropriate area to exercise your dog. Where possible, we advise you to drive to the area; this means you don't have to worry about pavement walking which can be a more challenging skill to master in the early days (for dog and handler!).

When exercising our dogs, they must be your primary focus. Training and guidance will be provided to you with an input before venturing out for a walk for the first time.

### After a walk

Following a walk, it is good practice to check for grass seeds and ticks. If you notice a tick on your dog, do not try to remove it. Contact your dog's trainer or a member of the Dog Welfare Team for advice.

If your dog is wet/muddy you may need to towel-dry them. This should be done calmly and may benefit from two people to complete the task. Do not bath the dog, as this can affect the oil-balance of the coat, nor use hose or shower, as some dogs can be under confident with this. If you think your foster dog could do with a bath to be freshened up, speak with your trainer as we have the facilities at the centre to do this.

Here is a link to a video for how to towel dry your dog:

[https://youtu.be/u48gLrB\\_rJQ](https://youtu.be/u48gLrB_rJQ)

**Note** This video is for your information only. Please do not share the link.

### Here are some helpful tips:

- Pick quieter times to walk** your foster dog; this will help you by avoiding bumping into lots of distractions.
- Keep the walks between 20 – 40 minutes** long – or as directed by your trainer.
- In the summer avoid the hottest hours** of the day.
- Make sure your dog has completed their toileting routine** before taking them for a walk.
- Take treats with you for all walks**, and reward dog for behaviours such as checking-in with you, and coming back when called.
- Always walk them on the equipment we provide** for you.
- For your safety, never hold or grab the flexi lead cord** as this can cause you injury.

### Pavement walks

Please do not walk your foster dog on the street before instructed to do so. Typical walks done with a pet dog are not suitable for working and in-training assistance dogs. Pavement walks form a key part of our dog's 'work' and so must follow a specific training plan. You may be asked to give your foster dog structured street/pavement walks when your trainer deems they are ready. You will always be given specific one-to-one training prior to being asked to do this.



# Health

All dogs in assistance dog training are up-to-date with their annual vaccinations, and are wormed and flea-treated monthly. You may be given flea/worming tablets to give the dog on a specific date. More often than not, these will be to put in your dog’s meal.

While your dog is in training, the Dog Welfare Team will ensure each dog has a health check and groom at least weekly.

## Health checks

It is good practice for you to regularly health-check your dog, so you learn what is normal for them. See the video link below for guidance. If you notice anything out of the ordinary with your foster dog’s health e.g. ears look dirty, the dog is scratching more or nibbling/licking feet, inform your trainer or a member of the Dog Welfare Team.

Introduction to cooperative handling

[https://youtu.be/zxP4a\\_wO-FE](https://youtu.be/zxP4a_wO-FE)

Progression - Cooperative health check

[https://youtu.be/x\\_NcrdnaASA](https://youtu.be/x_NcrdnaASA)



This video is for your information only. Please do not share the link.

## Treatments

Please do not administer any treatments unless you have been given the medication by your trainer or a member of the Dog Welfare Team and shown for that specific dog how to administer it.

## Grooming

Each dog will be groomed when they are at the Training Centre. Some dogs will require more frequent grooming than others dependent on coat type. If we require you to groom your foster dog we will give you the equipment and input specific to that individual dog.

## Vomiting

If your dog has had two or more episodes of vomiting and appears unwell:

- ☛ Contact your trainer, a member of the Dog Welfare Team or the Canine Partners out of hours contact number; you will be advised accordingly.
- ☛ Ensure the dog does not come into contact with any other dogs.
- ☛ Ensure they have access to fresh water from which they can drink small amounts.

If you suspect the sickness is due to your dog having bloat or eating a poisonous or toxic substance, you should immediately book an emergency vet appointment and call the out of hours contact number.

## Diarrhoea

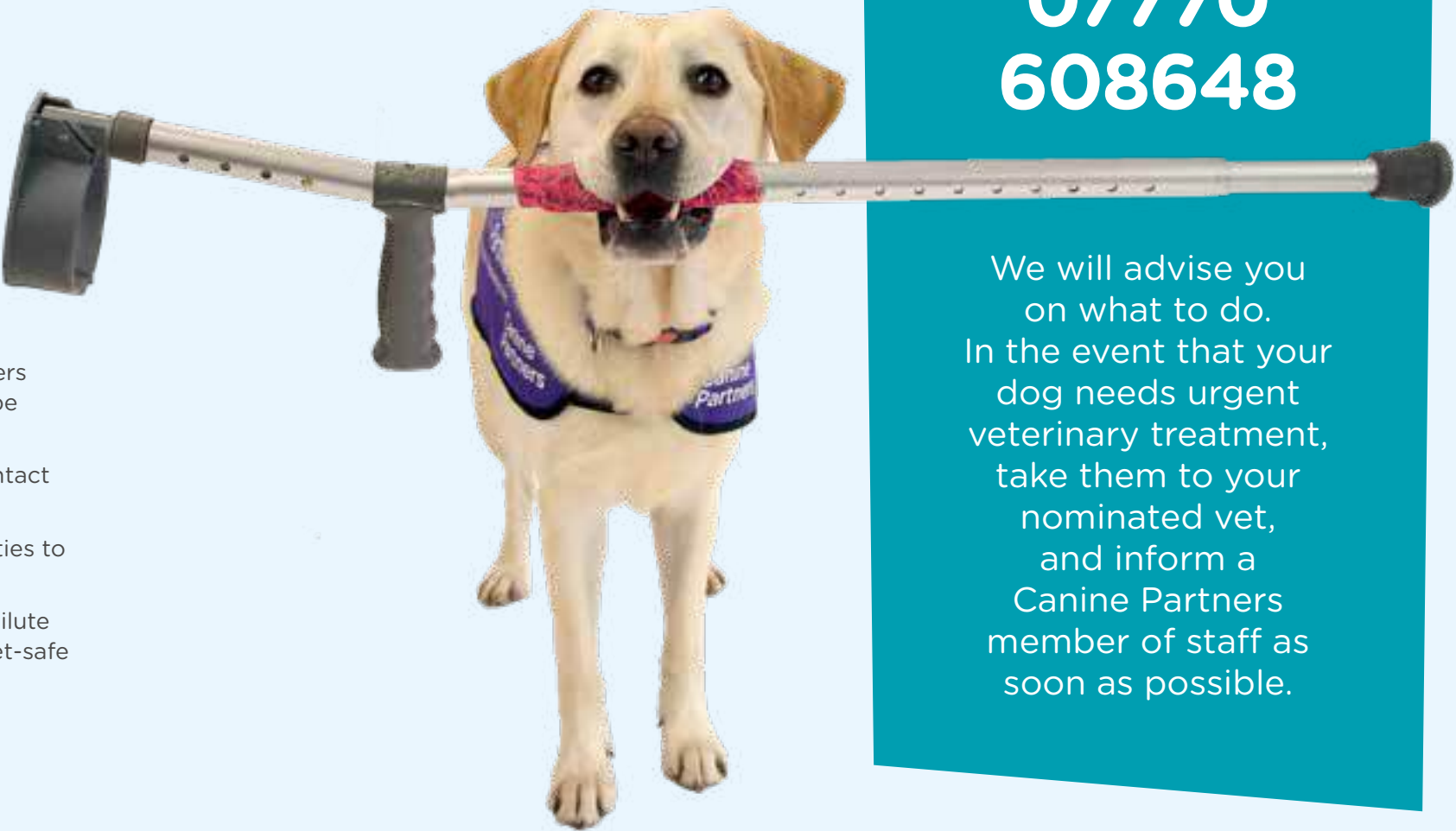
If your dog has diarrhoea:

- ☛ Contact your trainer, a member of the Dog Welfare Team or the Canine Partners out of hours contact number; you will be advised accordingly.
- ☛ Ensure the dog does not come into contact with any other dogs.
- ☛ Give the dog plenty of extra opportunities to go to the toilet area.
- ☛ Clean the toilet area after use using a dilute mixture of hot water and fairy liquid/pet-safe disinfectant.
- ☛ Ensure they have access to fresh water.

## Lameness

If your dog is lame:

- ☛ Check for any obvious reasons for lameness e.g. cut pads, split nails or foreign bodies.
- ☛ Avoid walking, exercising and playing with the dog.
- ☛ Contact your trainer, a member of the Dog Welfare Team or the Canine Partners out of hours contact number; you will be advised accordingly.



If you are concerned about your foster dog’s health, and cannot get in touch with any of your usual Canine Partners contacts, please call our out of hours contact number:

07770  
608648

We will advise you on what to do. In the event that your dog needs urgent veterinary treatment, take them to your nominated vet, and inform a Canine Partners member of staff as soon as possible.



# X Poisons

There are certain substances that can be poisonous/toxic to dogs. Some can cause dogs to be unwell and can even be fatal.

## Household poisons



Battery acid  
Antifreeze\*  
Tobacco  
Medications for humans  
Paint  
Cleansers and detergents  
Bleach  
Motor oils, petrol and diesel  
Rat poison  
Nail polish  
Slug and snail pellets\*\*  
Weed killers  
insecticides

\*this can be very attractive to animals due to its sweet smell

\*\*this includes slugs and snails that have eaten the pellets

## Poisonous foods



Grapes  
Chocolate  
Macadamia nuts  
Pips\*\*\*  
Raisins  
Avocados  
Onions  
Alcohol  
Garlic

\*\*\* choking hazard

If your foster dog ingests any of the above products, even a small amount, contact your trainer, a member of the Dog Welfare Team or the Canine Partners out of hours contact number and we will help you through the next steps.

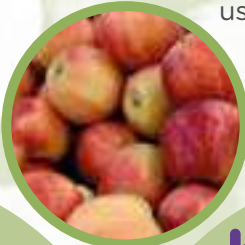
# ✓ Dog safe foods

Dogs must not be fed from the table, plate or work surface. Feel free to add any appropriate left overs or vegetable ends to reward-allowance if deemed appropriate by your trainer, but they should not be given freely in the kitchen.

Supervise children with food at all times; dogs quickly learn who is most likely to drop food. Teach the dog to settle on their bed, perhaps with a filled Kong, when children are eating and clean up dropped food straight away.

Keep treats small; the size of a piece of their regular food will suffice. Our dogs know they've been rewarded by the smallest piece of food, so no need to give them much more than a taste of something - they will most likely swallow it whole anyway and just gain the pounds!

Please continue to weigh all meals using digital scales. It is important that our dogs get the designated amount of food at each meal, so it can be monitored and adjusted effectively. You may be advised to feed part rations on days when the dog is with their trainer, the remainder being weighed out by the trainer and used during training.



apples  
cauliflower  
watermelon  
green beans  
strawberries  
courgette  
blueberries  
pumpkin  
sweet potato  
spinach  
brussels sprouts  
peas  
bananas  
cucumber  
celery  
broccoli  
cranberries  
pineapple  
pears  
carrots



Please check with your trainer or a member of the Dog Welfare Team if your foster dog is on a restricted diet before giving them any foods from this list.







# Spring



Easter can pose an additional risk to our canine companions, with the abundance of chocolate and other traditional foods. These can be tempting for our dogs but harmful; please keep in mind the following:



-  **Remember that chocolate is toxic for dogs.** Keep an eye on young children if they are eating chocolate to ensure your foster dog doesn't steal any.
-  **Ensure you have prepared enrichment for your dog** if you have plans such as a family lunch. Filled frozen Kongs or Licki mats will help settle your foster dog.

-  **Create a safe, cosy space for your dog** to retreat to if they want to, and ensure they are not disturbed there.
-  **Even a dog with the best self-control can be tempted to scavenge** if things like Easter eggs or other treats are left within reach, so be mindful where food is put.



-  **Never give your dog cooked bones to chew,** and dispose of them carefully. Cooked bones can cause an obstruction or perforation in the gut.
-  **If you are planning an Easter lunch, carefully dispose of food wrappings such as foil,** string or sticks to prevent your dog from ingesting them.



## Be aware

If you are suspicious that your dog may have eaten any of the toxic foods, contact your trainer or a member of the Dog Welfare Team immediately.



# Summer

Beautiful summer weather can be enjoyable, but heat waves are not ideal for our canine friends. Dogs cannot regulate their body temperature as effectively as humans can and of course they are wearing a fur coat all of the time, so it is important that you take some precautions on hot days in order to keep your foster dog safe and cool.



## Precautions and tips for keeping cool

- Exercise your dog early in the morning and/or late at night**, keeping a close eye on the weather forecast and hourly temperatures.
- Avoid intense exercise** like running, playing with other dogs and chasing toys.
- Ensure you always have fresh water** for your dog, in travel bottles/bowls if you are out.
- Exercise your dog in shady, grassed areas ideally.** If it is too hot for you to place the back of your hand on the pavement for 5 seconds, it's too hot for your dog's feet!
- Practise obedience or other games at home.** Mental stimulation is as enriching and tiring as physical exercise.
- Play hide and seek games** with your dog's favourite toy, and utilise enrichment and food toys when it is too hot to go out.
- Try a paddling pool in the garden**, but don't force your dog to use it if they aren't keen.
- Freeze carrots, filled Kongs, or natural yoghurt-coated Licki mats** for a cool and enriching treat for your dog.



- Avoid travelling in the hot weather and never leave your dog in a car** for any period of time, even if the windows are open.



## Be aware

Watch out for left over picnic or BBQ rubbish in local parks or on beaches that your foster dog may try to ingest. If you attend or host any BBQs, ensure guests do not feed your foster dog, as this could lead to scavenging issues, weight gain and tummy upsets.

# Autumn

The arrival of autumn brings a new set of challenges to dog owners, especially when the clocks go back. Due to the darker mornings and evenings and worsening weather, your dog may not get the same level of exercise and access to the outdoors that they had during the summer. This can result in behavioural changes and issues due to lack of physical and mental stimulation, so it's important to provide them with things to do.

## Keeping them busy

- Play scent games in the house or garden** by hiding treats or toys. Make it very easy to start with and gradually build up the level of difficulty.
- Feed some or all of your dog's meal in a Kong** or a treat dispensing enrichment toy.
- Remember you can swap your dog's puzzle/enrichment toys** for different ones to keep it varied and interesting.

## Halloween

Halloween can be overwhelming for pets, especially with 'trick or treaters' in scary costumes; parties, and sweet treats. Keep chocolate and sweets away from your dog, and if you anticipate having 'trick or treaters', consider setting up a cosy den with a filled Kong, for when the doorbell goes. This will prevent them getting overexcited or frightened at the door and will stop any potential escaping too.



## Fireworks

Never take your dog out for a walk during a firework display or attend a firework display with your dog. This could have devastating effects on even the most confident and robust dogs.

- Take your dog out before the fireworks begin**, and also avoid taking your dog out to toilet during noisy periods.
- Keep your dog on lead** if there is a risk of fireworks going off.
- Ensure your garden is fully secure** so that your dog can't escape if they have a fright at an unexpected firework.
- Don't leave your dog at home alone** if there are fireworks going off outside.
- If appropriate, feed your dog at least an hour before any fireworks begin.** A full stomach reduces anxiety, and can make them sleepy.
- Close curtains to block out firework flashes.**
- Play music, or TV to mask outside sounds.**
- Keep calm and relaxed.** This will help your dog feel calmer too.

**Be guided by your dog; if they seek reassurance from you, give them a gentle cuddle. Some dogs just prefer their own space and would rather be left alone. Respond to your dog accordingly.**

## Be aware





- Slug pellets; these are poisonous.**
- Anti-freeze and screen-wash** are also extremely toxic, so keep them away from your dog, and be vigilant around your area.
- Grit from roads/pavements** should be rinsed off paws, as it can be harmful if ingested.
- Do not leave any poison for rodents** down in garages or sheds where your dog could access as these can be fatal if eaten.



# Winter




The winter months can be challenging for us all, especially with the potential of adverse weather conditions such as snow and ice. Due to the colder weather or icy/snowy conditions, your dog may not get the same level of exercise and access to the outdoors that they had during the summer.

## Cold weather tips

-  **Consider walking your dog in the middle of the day**, when the temperatures are likely to be at their highest.
-  **Keep outings shorter** and be aware of the weather forecasts for your area.
-  **Keep your personal safety in mind** when dog walking in the cold weather, avoiding icy areas where possible.
-  **Watch out for snow or ice balls forming** on your dog's coat, especially if they have longer hair. Do not be tempted to pull these off – once you are home, use a towel and gently massage the coat to melt these away.

Give your dog a brush off once they are dry. Don't forget to check and dry between their toes.

## Keeping your dog busy

-  **Play scent games in the house or garden** by hiding treats or toys. Make it very easy to start with and gradually build up the level of difficulty.
-  **Feed some or all of your dog's meal in a Kong** or a treat dispensing enrichment toy.
-  **Remember you can swap your dog's puzzle/enrichment toys** for different ones to keep it varied and interesting.

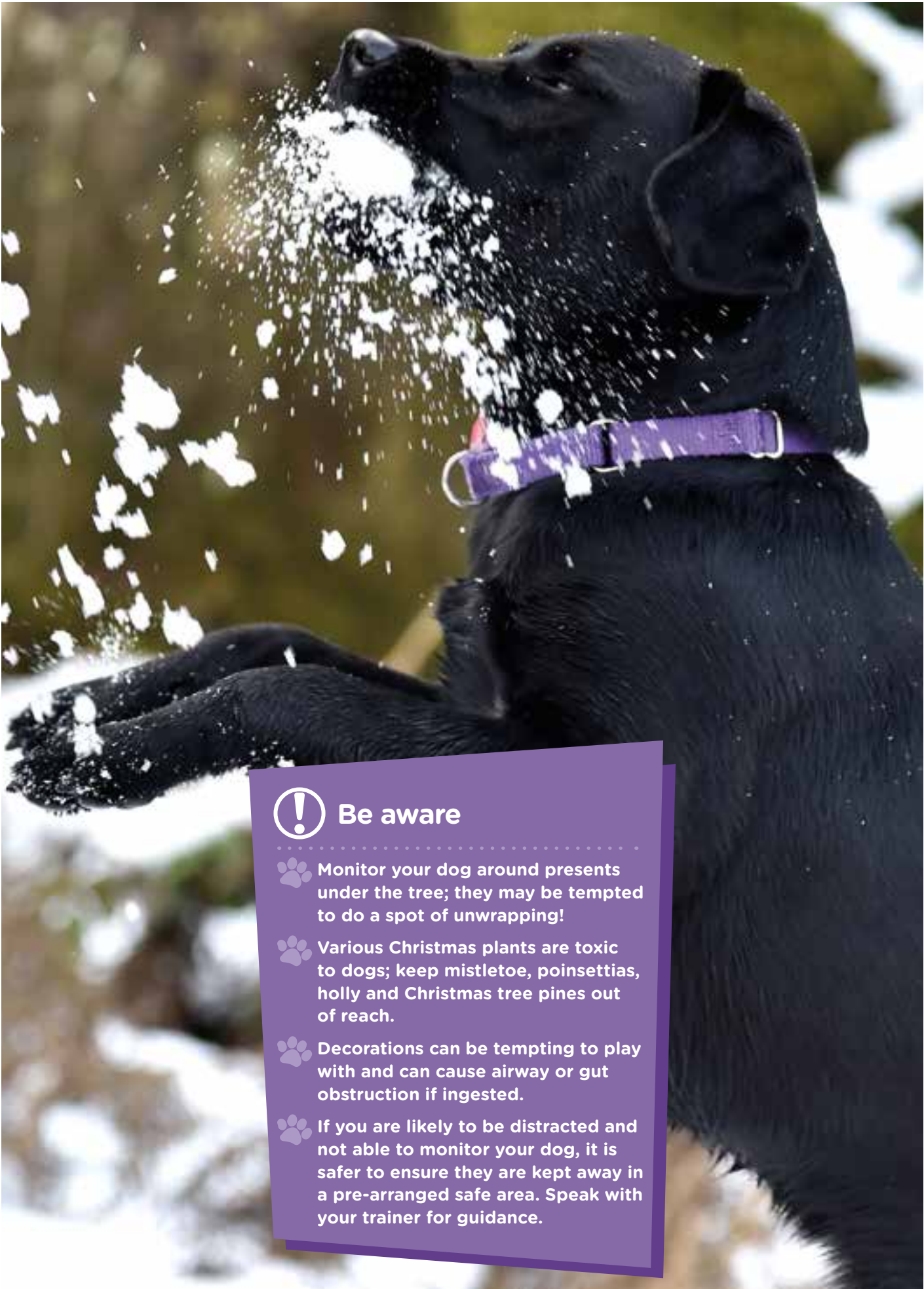
## Christmas

Christmas can be a fun time for the entire family, but it can pose additional risk to our canine companions. Christmas often means changes in routine and lots of visitors. Things like decorations and presents are novel and can elicit different reactions from different dogs. Be empathetic to your dog, and remember that they may find the festivities overwhelming. Plan ahead and ensure your dog has adequate enrichment, toilet breaks and rest times.

Perhaps one of the best things about Christmas is the food! This can be a real temptation for our dogs, so it is important to keep in mind the following:

-  **Avoid chocolate tree decorations**, as these may be tempting but also harmful for a dog.
-  **Never give your dog cooked bones** to chew, and dispose of them carefully. Cooked bones can cause an obstruction or perforation in the gut.
-  **Carefully dispose of food wrappings** such as foil, string or sticks to prevent your dog from ingesting them, as they can easily cause obstructions or perforation of the gut.
-  **Do not feed your dog additional treats** just because it is Christmas! This can cause weight gain, and potentially diarrhoea.
-  **Ensure family members are aware not to feed** your dog, or to allow them access to areas from where they might be tempted to scavenge.
-  **Even a dog with the best self-control can be tempted to scavenge** around Christmas time with all the decadent food around, so be careful around areas where there will be food.

If you suspect your dog may have eaten any of the toxic foods listed above, contact your trainer, a member of the Dog Welfare Team or the Canine Partners out of hours contact number; you will be advised accordingly.



## Be aware

-  **Monitor your dog around presents under the tree; they may be tempted to do a spot of unwrapping!**
-  **Various Christmas plants are toxic to dogs; keep mistletoe, poinsettias, holly and Christmas tree pines out of reach.**
-  **Decorations can be tempting to play with and can cause airway or gut obstruction if ingested.**
-  **If you are likely to be distracted and not able to monitor your dog, it is safer to ensure they are kept away in a pre-arranged safe area. Speak with your trainer for guidance.**



# Contact Information

In an emergency, contact

**Out of hours number (mobile) - 07770 608 648**

During office hours (8.30am – 5.00pm Mon – Fri),  
please call the training centre for Assistance Dog Trainers or  
a member of the Dog Welfare Team on **01530 225 951**



[caninepartners.org.uk](http://caninepartners.org.uk)

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