



# Chewing Puppies

For puppies, chewing is a normal behavior in which they can explore the world around them. Also, puppies are teething until they're about 6 months old, which isn't very comfortable for them. Chewing helps to make their sore gums feel better. While chewing is normal, it can cause problems for you if your puppy chews on objects you don't want destroyed. Your puppy will not outgrow this behavior as they mature. However, by shaping your puppy's behavior and teaching them which objects are acceptable to chew on, you can minimize the chewing problems that may occur past 6 months of age.

## **Discouraging Unacceptable Behavior**

It's inevitable that, at some point, your puppy will chew up something you value. This is part of raising a puppy, but you can prevent most problems by taking the following precautions:

- Puppy-proof your house. Put the trash somewhere out of reach, or buy containers with locking lids. Encourage your children to pick up their toys and don't leave socks, shoes, glasses, briefcases, cell phones, or remotes lying in your puppy's reach.
- If you actually catch your puppy chewing on something inappropriate, interrupt the behavior with a loud noise and give them an acceptable chew toy. Play with them and praise them when they take the toy in their mouth.
- Make unacceptable chew items unpleasant. There are sprays that make them unappealing to your puppy.
- Don't give your puppy objects that can cause confusion, such as old socks, old shoes, or old children's toys that resemble things that are off limits. Your puppy can't tell the difference.
- Closely supervise your puppy. Don't give them a chance to go off alone and get into trouble. Use baby gates, keep doors closed, and tether them close by.
- When you need to leave the house, confine your puppy to a small, safe area like the laundry room. You can also try crate training. Puppies under 5 months shouldn't be crated for longer than 4 hours at a time since they can't control their bladder and bowels that long.
- Make sure your puppy is getting enough physical activity. Puppies left alone in the yard don't play by themselves. Take your puppy on walks and/ or play fetch with them as much as possible.
- Your puppy will learn what is appropriate in the house when they are in the house so give your puppy plenty of people time.
- Try taking your puppy to an obedience class to teach them commands such as "leave it".

## **Encouraging Acceptable Behavior**

Provide your puppy with many appropriate toys, and rotate them to keep them interesting to your puppy. Leave out four to five toys for a few days and then replace them with new ones every few days. Experiment with different types of toys. When you first give your puppy a new toy, watch them to make sure they won't try to tear it up and eat it. Consider toys that can be stuffed with food. If your puppy is teething, try freezing a wet washcloth for them to chew on.

## **What Not to Do**

Never discipline your puppy after the fact. If you find a chewed item, it's too late to punish your puppy. Punishment will only make your puppy scared of you, which can lead to aggression.

## **Other Reasons for Destructive Behavior**

Although chewing is a normal behavior for puppies, some puppies will be destructive for the same reason as adult dogs. Separation, fear-related behaviors, and attention-getting behaviors are some examples.