



# PARKSIDE

## CLIENT INFORMATION HANDOUT

### **FOOD AGGRESSION**

Here are a few simple methods to help deal with food aggression. Try whichever one you wish and if that doesn't show an improvement then go on to try another method.

### **IMPORTANT RULE TO ALWAYS REMEMBER:**

- The family should eat first. If you wish you can prepare the dog's meal and leave it sitting (out of reach until the family has finished).
- As far as possible keep the dog's feeding time consistent.
- Use a feeding command e.g. "eat" – "take it".
- One person only should start any of these procedures. When an improvement is noticed, usually in about a week, then another family member can begin the procedure. Continue this way until all family members can deal with the dog.
- If any person begins to fear the dog they should stop immediately and another person take over.
- Always reassure the dog and praise good behaviour. Take care not to praise the dog when it is growling.
- If the aggression is apprehensive DO NOT correct the dog for growling as this will aggravate the situation.
- Vary the length and number of times that the dog is stopped from eating. Start with a few short times and build it up.
- DO NOT remove the food permanently from the dog. He should always be allowed to lick the dish clean and know that this is merely to control his eating and not to deny him.
- Once you are confident with the dog then these procedures should be used only occasionally to reinforce. However if the aggression reappears then start from scratch again.

### **HAND FEEDING:**

Keep the food bowl in your possession and make the dog sit. Feed him a handful of food using the feed command. Don't worry if the dog stands while eating but make him sit again before he gets the next handful. Let the dog eat the last handful from the dish, but keep holding the dish and let him lick the bowl clean.

Progress gradually from here to keeping your hand in the dish while he is eating, keep hold of the dish and occasionally make him stop and sit. Eventually you will be able to leave the dish and use 'SIT'/LEAVE IT' to stop him eating and lift the dish.

You may initially have to keep the dog on the lead to enforce the 'SIT' commands.

### **OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE: (there are two methods)**

- Split the dog's feed into two dishes. Offer the dog the second dish in place of the first while he is eating. Remember to make him sit and praise him for desirable behaviour. Alternate the dishes and allow him to lick both bowls clean.
- Give the feed in one bowl but encourage the dog to sit and leave the food to receive a titbit. Repeat this several times during each meal but remember to include the titbits in the dog's daily food allowance.

With these two methods repeat them frequently at the start and gradually reduce the number as the dog improves. Here you are trying to get across to the dog that although you are taking the food away (temporarily) he is getting something in return – A REWARD.

### **LITTLE & OFTEN:**

Give a dog a small amount of food in a dish, have him sit and wait for the feed command before he eats it. Take the bowl off him, again get him to sit first, before it is licked clean and place another small amount of food in the bowl. Keep repeating until fed the usual ration (take care not to overfeed). Remember to keep him under control at all times. This method reinforces the fact that you are the provider and it is up to you how much your dog eats and when.

**BE A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER – FEED YOUR DOG A  
HEALTHY & BALANCED DIET.**

*PARKSIDE – a lifetime of caring*

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