



Dear friends,

Welcome to our August Newsletter from www.bestdoggietips.com. Our recipe this month is for healthy dog treats and biscuits. We also have an article from AVMA on how to avoid being bitten by a dog. We also continue our medical theme from last month with information about the Dog Genome Project, and an inspiring story about the new breed of Assistance Dogs. And in our Weird & Wonderful section this month we have the Crow who thinks he's a dog, and the dog who adopted 3 tiger cubs!

Contents

Recipe – Healthy Dog Treats & Biscuits	Page 2
Canine Genome Project	Page 4
20 Facts You May Not Know About Dogs	Page 5
Dog Bite Prevention	Page 6
Selecting a Dog	Page 9
Assistance Dogs	Page 12
Weird & Wonderful	Page 15

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Bark: this is a sound made by Dogs when excited. Dogs bark at milkmen, postmen, yourself, visitors to the house and other dogs; some of them bark at nothing. For some reason dogs tend not to bark at burglars, bailiffs and income tax collectors, at whom they wag their tails in the most friendly manner -Geoffrey Williams

Recipe - Healthy Dog Treats & Biscuits

Concerned about what's in prepared dog food – why not try these home baked healthy dog treats and biscuits.

There's nothing quite like home cooking – and this is true for your dog too! You'll have trouble shifting them out of the kitchen with these tempting recipes:

Healthy Dog Treats

Ingredients

1 cup wholewheat or wholegrain flour
¼ cup soy flour
3 tablespoons olive oil
1/3 cup stock (beef or chicken) or water
1 tsp yeast

To Make

Combine all of the dry ingredients and mix together well. Slowly add the stock or water until it forms a thick dough.

Roll out flat and place on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Bake at 350F (180C) until golden brown and crisp.

Break into pieces and use as a special treat for your pooch.

Healthy Dog Biscuits

Ingredients

As for Dog Treats PLUS
¼ cup cornmeal
¼ cup pumpkin seeds
1 egg
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon honey

To Make

Beat the egg and milk together, then add the oil.

Combine all of the dry ingredients and mix together well. Slowly add the liquid mixture until it forms a thick dough (add more milk if necessary). Knead for 5 minutes, then let the dough rest for an hour.

Roll out to ½" thickness and cut into shapes using cookie cutters. Place on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Bake at 350F (180C) for 30 minutes.

[Back to Contents List](#)

The Dog Genome Project

Canine Genomic Research At National Human Genome Research Institute

The Canine Genome Project was developed under the guidance of Elaine Ostrander, PH.D. as part of the international collaboration of scientists working to build a comprehensive genetic understanding of the canine genome. The primary goals of the canine genome project are to map and identify genetic markers linked to inherited diseases, and to use this information to improve the overall health of the canine population and to further the understanding of the many complex diseases that arise in the canine genome.

The Canine Genome Project began when Dr. Ostrander was at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and has moved with her to the National Institutes of Health. The Project has more than 10 researchers and technicians, collaborating with veterinarians, population geneticists, molecular biologists, statisticians and computer scientists to discover the underlying genetic structure and disease susceptibility in the canine genome.

There are many different types of genetics research. Genetics research can be about finding genes and informative genetic markers (mapping), learning how genes work and may contribute to disease, or about treating or curing genetic conditions. The Canine Genome Project is currently focused on mapping genetic markers and understanding the patterns of genetic information that exists between breeds, within breeds and in disease states.

More than 350 inherited diseases have been described across the recognized canine breeds. Often the high frequency of specific diseases within a breed reflects the small number of dogs used to found the breed and/or the subsequent inbreeding within the breed. The Canine Genome Project is working on projects to help reduce the incidence of these inherited diseases, and to understand disease patterns across the breeds.

The Canine Genome Project is accepting canine DNA samples in the form of cheek swabs or blood samples from specific breeds of purebred, registered dogs. Check the list of breeds to see if your breed is needed for our current genetic studies. If you are interested in having your pedigreed dog participate in our research studies, please send an email inquiry to: dog_genome@mail.nih.gov. Please provide your name, your dog's registered name, your dog's breed, any diagnosed diseases your dog has, age of your dog, and the best way to contact you.

[Back to Contents List](#)

20 Facts You May Not Know About Dogs

1. All dogs, from the German Shepherd to the Poodle, are direct descendants of wolves. They can all breed together and produce fertile offspring. Technically they are of the same species.
2. The oldest reliable age recorded for a dog is 29 years, 5 months for a Queensland Blue Heeler called Bluey in Victoria, Australia. The average dog lives to around 15 years of age.
3. Dogs naturally have a wonderful sense of smell. They have many more sensory 'smelling' cells than a man's 5,000,000. A Dachshund has 125,000,000, a Fox Terrier 147,000,000 and an Alsation has 220,000,000.
4. Newfoundland's are great swimmers and divers because they have webbed feet. Bassets can't swim.
5. Alaskan malamutes ears face backwards when running. This was so they could hear the commands of their master while running with a sleigh.
6. There are two dogs that do not bark. They are the Basenji and the Australian Dingo (or native dog).
7. Dog's nose prints are as unique as a human's finger prints and can be used to accurately identify them.
8. Dogs have twice as many muscles for moving their ears as people.
9. Dogs' only sweat glands are between their paw pads.
10. Only dogs and humans have prostates.
11. Some dogs lick their paws and then rub their paws on their head to clean themselves, much like a cat.
12. Obesity is the #1 health problem among dogs.
13. Greyhounds are the fastest dogs on earth, with speeds of up to 45 miles per hour.
14. When a dog bays at the moon, it is following a basic urge to call the pack together.
15. Three dogs survived the sinking of the Titanic - a Newfoundland, a Pomeranian, and a Pekingese .
16. Dogs prefer to play keep-away rather than fetch.
17. Most dogs really don't like to play dress up.
18. Dogs don't understand pointing. They focus on the tip of your finger, not the item you are pointing at.
19. Female dog bites are twice as numerous as male dog bites.
20. The bible mentions dogs 14 times.

[Back to Contents List](#)

What You Should Know About Dog Bite Prevention

From the American Veterinary Medical Association

Any dog can bite

Even the cuddliest, fuzziest, sweetest pup can bite if provoked. Most people are bitten by their own dog or one they know. Unwisely, some owners actually promote aggression in their dogs or allow aggression to go unchecked.

From nips to bites to actual attacks, dog bites are a serious problem. Dog bite victims requiring medical attention in the United States number approximately 800,000 annually. Countless more bites go untreated. On average, about a dozen people die each year from dog bites. Fortunately, there are steps we can take to address this problem.

Who's being bitten?

Statistically, the number of recorded dog bites are significantly higher in children than adults. The elderly and home service providers such as mail carriers and meter readers are also high on the list of frequent dog bite victims. **CAUTION: Never leave a baby or child alone with a dog.**

What's a dog owner to do?

Carefully consider your pet selection. Puppies should not be obtained on impulse. Before and after selection, your veterinarian is the best source for information about behavior and suitability.

Make sure your pet is socialized as a young puppy so it feels at ease around people and other animals. Gradually expose your puppy to a variety of situations under controlled circumstances; continue that exposure on a regular basis as your dog gets older. Don't put your dog in a position where it feels threatened or teased.

Wait until your child is older. Because so many dog bites happen to younger children, it is suggested that parents wait until children are older than 4 years of age before getting a dog.

Train your dog. The basic commands "sit," "stay," "no," and "come" can be incorporated into fun activities which build a bond of obedience and trust between pets and people. Avoid highly excitable games like wrestling or tug-of-war. Use a leash in public to control your dog.

Keep your dog healthy. Have your dog vaccinated against rabies and preventable infectious diseases. Parasite control and other health care is important because how your dog feels directly affects how it behaves.

Neuter your pet. It's a fact: neutered dogs are three times less likely to bite.

Be a responsible pet owner. License your dog with the community as required. Obey leash laws. Dogs are social animals; spending time with your pet is important. Dogs that are frequently left alone have a greater chance of developing behavior problems.

Be alert. Know your dog. Be alert to signs of illness. Also watch for signs your dog is uncomfortable or feeling aggressive.

How can my family and I avoid being bitten?

Be cautious around strange dogs and treat your own pet with respect. Because children are the most frequent victims of dog bites, parents and caregivers should:

- **NEVER** leave a baby or small child alone with a dog.
- Be on the look out for potentially dangerous situations.
- Start teaching young children – including toddlers – to be careful around pets.

Children must be taught **NOT** to approach strange dogs. Teach children to ask permission from a dog's owner before petting the dog.

Other tips that may prevent or stop a dog attack

Don't run past a dog: Dogs naturally love to chase and catch things. Don't give them a reason to be come excited or aggressive.

Never disturb a dog that's caring for puppies, sleeping or eating.

If a dog approaches to sniff you, stay still.

In most cases, the dog will go away when it determines you are not a threat.

If you are threatened by a dog, remain calm.

Don't scream. If you say anything, speak calmly and firmly. Avoid eye contact. Try to stay still until the dog leaves, or back away slowly until the dog is out of sight. Don't turn and run.

If you fall or are knocked to the ground, curl into a ball with your hands over your head and neck. Protect your face.

What should I do if my dog bites someone?

Even if the bite can be explained (perhaps someone stepped on the dog's tail), it's important to take responsibility for your dog's actions by taking these steps:

- **Restrain the dog immediately.** Separate it from the scene of the attack. Confine it.
- **Check on the victim's condition.** Wash wounds with soap and water. Professional medical advice should be sought to evaluate the risk of rabies or other infections. Call 911 if paramedic response is required.
- **Provide important information** including your name, address and information about your dog's most recent rabies vaccination. If your dog does not have a current rabies vaccination, it may be necessary to quarantine it or even euthanize it for rabies testing. The person bitten may need to undergo rabies treatment.
- **Comply with local ordinances regarding the reporting of dog bites.**
- **Consult your veterinarian** for advice about dog behavior that will help prevent similar problems in the future.

IF YOU are bitten

- **If your own dog bit you**, confine it immediately and call your veterinarian to check your dog's vaccination records.
- **If someone else's dog bit you**, first seek medical treatment for the wound. Next, contact authorities and tell them everything you can about the dog: the owner's name, if you know it; the color and size of the dog; where you encountered the dog; and, if and where you've seen it before. These details may help animal-control officers locate the dog. In addition, consider asking your physician if post-exposure rabies treatment may be necessary.

Dogs are wonderful companions. By acting responsibly, owners not only reduce the number of dog bites, but also enhance the relationship they have with their dog.

To learn more about the joys and responsibilities of pet ownership, contact your veterinarian or local veterinary association.

To learn more about dog bite prevention, visit:

www.avma.org/press/publichealth/dogbite/mediakit.asp

[Back to Contents List](#)

Selecting a Dog

Pets are an important part of the American household. Your pet owning experience will be most enjoyable if you carefully consider which pet best suits your family, home, and lifestyle. The primary reason dogs are given up to animal shelters is unfulfilled expectations, so make an informed decision. Take time, involve your family, and give careful consideration to the following questions:

What's special about dogs?

The saying that “dogs are a man’s (or woman’s) best friend” has a lot of truth to it. Dogs have been faithful companions for tens of thousands of years. They are friendly, affectionate, and entertaining. They are also capable of doing extraordinary jobs—and seem to enjoy doing them.

What choices do you have?

Dogs have been selectively bred for generations to highlight specific physical and behavioral traits. The amazing diversity of dogs includes varied sizes, haircoat lengths, colors, temperaments, and activity levels. A dog’s size may affect its lifespan: the lifespan of a large-breed dog tends to be shorter than that of a smaller dog.

What are the special needs of dogs?

Some dogs may be at greater risk for certain medical conditions, while others may require more training, exercise and patience to help them to become good companions. Ask your veterinarian about health conditions and behaviours that may be common in the breed you are considering.

As its owner, you will ultimately be responsible for your dog’s food, shelter, companionship, exercise, and physical and mental health for the rest of its life. While families should involve their children in caring for a pet, youngsters need the help of an adult who is willing, able, and available to supervise the daily care of a pet.

Does a dog fit into your lifestyle?

Feeding, grooming, exercise, play and elimination are daily needs that must be considered in caring for a healthy, happy dog. Think about the following factors when deciding if you should get a dog and in determining what breed would be the most appropriate for you and your family:

- Do you live in the city, suburbs, or country?
- Do you rent or do you own your home?
- Do you live in an apartment or single-family home? Do you live at ground level or on the 21st floor?
- How long is your work day? Do you frequently have obligations after work?
- Who will care for your dog(s) in your absence?
- Do you have other pets?
- Are there any restrictions on number or types of pets where you live?
- What future changes might occur in your living situation that would affect your ability to keep your dog in years to come?

- Are you prepared to meet the grooming needs of a dog — whether at home or at a professional grooming facility?
- What are you looking for in a dog (e.g., jogging or hiking companion, cuddly lap dog, or high energy companion)?

Should you look for a puppy or an adult dog? What size of dog should you get?

Puppies require additional time for housetraining, socialization, and obedience training, as well as more frequent feeding, exercise, and supervision. Consider the possibility of an adult dog; older pets are often already housetrained, know some basic commands, and usually adapt very well to their new home.

Larger dogs require more space than smaller ones, and they may be harder to maintain in an apartment or condominium. Whatever the size of your dog, it must be provided with access to the outdoors multiple times a day for elimination and exercise.

Can you afford a dog?

The purchase price for a dog can vary tremendously by breed and source, and is only the initial expense for a dog. Dogs need high quality food, proper housing, mental stimulation (e.g., toys, play time), and regular visits to a veterinarian for preventive care. Other costs may include emergency medical treatment, grooming, boarding, licensing, identification, sterilization (spaying or neutering), training, and accessories. Pet health insurance is available and can help defray unexpected expenses resulting from illness or injury.

Where do you find a dog?

Purebred dogs can be obtained from reputable breeders. Both mixed-breed and purebred dogs can be obtained from animal shelters and rescue organizations. In many communities, there are rescue groups dedicated to finding good homes for specific dog breeds and their mixes.

What should you look for in a healthy dog?

A healthy dog has clear, bright eyes; a clean, shiny coat; and does not appear thin, overly fat, or show signs of illness, such as nasal discharge or diarrhoea. When choosing a dog, pick one that is active, friendly, inquisitive, and not afraid of you. The dog should accept gentle handling and not exhibit signs of aggression. The temperament of a puppy's parents may be an indication of its future behavior.

What must you do to prepare for your dog?

Before bringing your new dog home, prepare an appropriate place for it to eat and sleep and have ready the necessary accessories such as a collar and leash, ID tag, food, and water bowls. Be sure to pet-proof your home to prevent injury to your dog or damage to your possessions. For example, make sure that electrical wires and cords are out of the reach of curious mouths. Ask your veterinarian about other ways to make your home safe for your pet.

Schedule a veterinary examination to assess the health of your new companion as soon as possible to ensure it receives the appropriate vaccinations and any needed health care. If you have medical information from your dog's original owner, including its vaccination and worming history, be sure to

take this information with you on your first visit to your veterinarian. Not only is your veterinarian best qualified to evaluate the health of your new companion, but he/she can advise you about proper immunization, parasite control, nutrition, sterilization, socialization, training, grooming and other care that may be necessary to protect the health of your new pet.

If you choose a puppy, be prepared for several weeks to months of housetraining and some initial medical expenses for wellness exams, vaccinations and neutering. If you plan your puppy's arrival when there is sufficient time to socialize and housetrain it, your puppy will learn faster and more likely grow into the adult dog you've always wanted. If your community offers puppy classes, they are a great way to socialize your new companion and help it learn some basic commands. Frequent, positive contact with people and other dogs early in the puppy's life enhances its future interactions with your family, other people, and their dogs.

Any dog can become bored and potentially destructive if left alone all day without an outlet for its exercise, exploratory, and social needs. Therefore, set aside time each day for activities that are fun for you and your dog such as walking, playing, petting, grooming, etc. Remember that dogs are highly social creatures, and isolating a dog to the backyard with no interaction is one of the worst things you can do.

WHEN YOU ACQUIRE A PET

You accept responsibility for the health and welfare of another living thing. You are also responsible for your pet's impact on your family, friends, and community. A pet will be part of your life for many years. Invest the time and effort necessary to make your years together happy ones. When you choose a pet, you are promising to care for it for its entire life. Choose wisely, keep your promise, and enjoy one of life's most rewarding experiences!

For more information, visit:

www.avma.org and www.akc.org

[Back to Contents List](#)

Assistance Dogs

GRAND RAPIDS - Eight-year-old Cieran Boyle is about to get his first friend, a sturdy pointer assistance dog named Denver.

But Denver won't be helping him cross streets, open doors or turn the lights off, as do many service dogs. He'll be detecting subtle changes in Cieran's body odor that predict he is about to have a seizure.

Denver's training is an example of how today's service dogs are being prepared in new ways to assist people.

Some organizations train dogs to help children who have autism. The dog can be tethered to a child, preventing the child from wandering or getting into harm's way.

Other organizations train seizure response dogs, who get help when someone has had a seizure.

Some dogs, including some hounds and pointers, have very heightened "scent ability," said Liz North, a master instructor at Pawsabilities Unleashed.

"When a child seizes, it stresses the body," said North, a former U.S. Air Force K-9 unit trainer.

North said the onset of a seizure increases a child's adrenaline output and changes the smell of the child's sweat. So she asked the Boyles to save the clothes Cieran was wearing last time he had a seizure, and she used those to train Denver.

Because of a severe form of epilepsy caused by a disorder called Dravet syndrome, Cieran's development stopped at about 18 months. He doesn't talk, is tube-fed, and the right side of his body is impaired.

He can't play games with his brother Teagin, 6, or other children his age. And he spends much of his time in a Cieran-proofed basement room that is a combination bedroom, playroom and family room.

Although Cieran can't say he is lonely, his mother, Jessica Boyle, thinks he must be, and she hopes Denver will be a companion for her son.

"For six years, I've been looking for a service dog for Cieran," she said. "I've literally called every organization that had service dogs for children."

She found that most assistance dog organizations won't train a dog to serve anyone younger than 14. And most dogs trained to help people who have seizure disorders respond only after the seizure has started.

Boyle and her husband, Noel, a Grand Valley State University instructor, want to be alerted before Cieran has a seizure.

In Internet chat rooms for families dealing with Dravet syndrome, the Northeast Grand Rapids couple learned some seizure alert dogs such as Denver are being trained in the nonprofit Pawsabilities Unleashed pet therapy center in Kentucky.

The Boyles have paid the \$3,000 dog-training fee and went to Kentucky this month to be trained as Denver's handlers.

A common sight

Assistance dogs are commonplace in West Michigan, where many families have raised puppies to be trained by Moline-based Paws With a Cause. Area residents also are used to seeing dogs assist people who are blind, hearing impaired or have physical challenges.

Grand Rapids resident Josee Slack, 73, who is severely hearing impaired, has a Paws With a Cause dog, a Lab-golden retriever mix dog named Opie. The dog tells her when the phone or doorbell rings, when the smoke alarm goes off and when someone is in her house.

Laura York, of Lowell, got Ladd, her third service dog, from a national organization called Canine Companions. The 36-year-old speech therapist has cerebral palsy and uses a power chair. She needs Ladd, a black Labrador retriever, to open doors for her, turn lights on and off, and pick up things she drops. Ladd also will bark to alert someone if York falls.

Kelly McNeela, 37, of Belmont, has multiple sclerosis and uses a power chair. She had to wait two years to get Nori, a yellow Lab-golden retriever, from Paws With A Cause. That's because she and her husband, Brian, and daughter Rylee, 9, have a family dog they didn't want to part with, and service dogs can't be placed in a home with a family dog younger than 10 years old.

Now while the 13-year-old family dog sleeps, Nori helps McNeela.

"She's a really good dog with a great temperament. I get a lot more exercise with her," said McNeela, who can go outside with Nori tethered to her chair. "And if I say 'Help,' she pulls a cord to an alarm and security system that summons help," she said.

'Scent-ability'

"Scent-ability" can be nurtured and groomed, says Joan Skluzacek, of Minnesota, founder of the Idea League, a Web site for Dravet syndrome families such as the Boyles. Her family's 4-year-old Vizsla hound alerts her when her son, Nicholas, 15, is going to have a seizure.

"Ruby sleeps with him and wakes us up at night if he's going to have a seizure. We don't want him to fall and hurt himself," Skluzacek said.

If Denver can do that, it will be a big help to the Boyles, who have been through years of "roller coaster" medical emergencies, Jessica Boyle said.

Their son's seizures, which began when he was 6 months old, were so severe and life-threatening he has had half of his brain surgically removed.

"That has stopped the big, bad seizures that put him in intensive care," Cieran's mother said, but he still has small seizures and needs to be monitored.

That means her husband sleeps with Cieran.

"I am hoping Denver will sleep with Cieran so my husband can come back to my bed," she said.

While most service dog training organizations are nonprofit, it costs a lot to train a dog.

The Boyles had to raise the \$3,000 fee for Denver themselves. But Andrew Gommesson, 29, a Howard City man with cerebral palsy, paid nothing for his female golden retriever/Lab mix, Lindy.

"Canine Companions said they put \$10,000 into training the dog," Gommesson said. "But for me, it only cost about \$100 for the training materials. The rest was absorbed by donations."

Service dogs attract people wherever they go, their owners say.

"Everyone seems to know someone who has raised a Paws With a Cause puppy," McNeela said, adding they often chat with her about their experience.

Gommesson said his dog makes people more likely to approach and talk to him, especially young women.

"When girls ask me, 'Can I have your dog?' I always say, 'It's a package deal. You have to take me, too,'" he said. "One of these days, someone will take me up on it."

[Back to Contents List](#)

The Weird & The Wonderful

Crow 'that thinks it is a dog' attacks postman

A bird has started behaving like a dog after being taken in by a family of animal lovers.



Jack steals dog treats from the bowls of his canine companions... Photo: APEX



... and even helps retrieve the mail that is pushed through the letterbox Photo: APEX

Jack the crow eats dog treats, jumps up on his owner's lap and has even started attacking the postman.

He was taken in by the Notaro-Livingstones after they found him outside his nest and unable to fend for himself while out fishing.

Small and vulnerable, he could not even lift his own head and needed close care.

But ten weeks later he is showing no sign of wanting to leave his new home, and has started adopting the habits of the five dogs in the household.

"Whenever we get in the car, he jumps in too because he wants to come with us," said 12-year-old Cheryl Notaro-Livingstone, from Huntsworth, Somerset.

"And when mum comes back, he jumps on her lap like an excitable puppy.

"He is stubborn but really thinks he is part of the family."

Jack is free to come and go as he pleases and often disappears for a day, but returns home to hop around the worktops and drink from the kitchen sink.

He also steals dog treats from the bowls of his canine companions.

Joe Notaro-Livingstone, 11, who discovered Jack, said: "I brought him home and we looked after him now he thinks he's a dog and he tries to protect us - he even jumps on the postman's head."

Dog adopts tiger cubs

Three tiger cubs at a Kansas zoo are getting some maternal care from an unlikely source - Isabella the golden retriever.

The tiger cubs were born on Sunday at Safari Zoological Park but their mother soon stopped caring for them. Isabella had just weaned her own puppies and was able to step in.



Zoo owner Tom Harvey says, "The timing couldn't have been any better."

He says it's unusual for dogs to care for tiger cubs, but it does happen. Isabella licks, cleans and feeds the cubs just like her own puppies.

Adopted ... Isabella the dog has taken three tiger cubs into her care.
Photo: AP

Safari Zoological Park specialises in endangered species. It has leopards, lions, baboons, ring-tailed lemurs, bears and other animals.

[Back to Contents List](#)