

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

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# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Placement Day!!!

The day is finally here – the day you start your two week trial with your new Weimaraner! This is very exciting, so we want to make sure we send you off with this packet because we know you'll be so anxious to start spending time with your furry friend, you won't want to listen to a word the volunteer is telling you.

Today you will sign an adoption contract and write a check made payable to the "Mile High Weimaraner Rescue" with 'rescue' in the memo field for the pre-determined adoption fee. You will be receiving a dog identification sheet with all pertinent information on the dog you are adopting, a rescue contact sheet and the vet records. In the next few weeks you will also receive an email with this information electronically along with a large document ("Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner"), a copy of the adoption contract you just signed, and a Mile High Weimaraner Club membership application.

- The "Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner" packet has been put together over years of doing placements and is to help you during the first two weeks of the trial, but also to use as a reference if you need behavior advice, basic health information, and some fun things over the course of your dog's life. Keep this in a handy place with your dog's other important information.
- The copy of the adoption contract is so that you know what you have signed and what the national rescue committee keeps on file.
- The Rescue Contact list is a list of important rescue phone numbers and email addresses so that you can contact anyone you'd like if you have a problem or question. At the bottom of this list will be feeding instructions for your dogs, commands, and any other information that will be pertinent for a successful trial with the dog.
- The Mile High Weimaraner Club membership application is for membership with the local Weimaraner club. The club is comprised of Weimaraner owners who compete in hunt tests, field trials, show, obedience, and agility.

After the two week trial is complete, a volunteer will contact you to see how things are going and to verify that the adoption is complete.

Once the trial is complete and you officially have a new dog to call your own, we will transfer the microchip into your name.

Finally, during your trial, you will receive an email invite to join our Colorado Weimaraner Families Yahoo! group. This is an email/message group where you can come in contact with other adopters and Weim owners in Colorado. You can post questions, read other people's posts, set up walks with Weims in your area, and use it for any Weim-related thing you can think of!

To join, please visit: <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/coweimrsq/join>

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Introduction

Weimaraners adopted from Weimaraner Rescue come to us from various backgrounds and personal histories. Regardless of each dog's history, all can be expected to go through an adjustment period with their new families. There are several behavior changes that are commonly seen when your dog arrives in his new home with you. Some typical signs of stress may include: panting, pacing, excessive thirst, drooling, loss of appetite, whining or any combination of those things. It is easy for us as humans to assume that the dog is going to be just as excited to "finally have a loving home" as we are to have him in our home. But the dog is likely thinking, "Hmm, who are these strange people? What are these strange smells? Whose house is this?" From their perspective, they have been taken from a familiar place with familiar people into a totally new environment. This can be very stressful and frightening to the dog. It will take time and patience to establish a trusting and loving bond with your new dog. There are several tips that may be helpful in making your dog feel welcome in his new home:

- Keep any items that were given to you with your dog (e.g., dog beds, toys, blankets, etc.). Having items the dog is familiar with will help a bit. If nothing came with your new dog, be sure to have some things ready for him (a dog bed, a crate, a leash and collar, or toys).
- Establish a routine (that you can stick to) with your dog - predictability will help your dog feel more comfortable. In the first few days with the new dog, the first priority should be showing the dog the rules in your house. It would be silly to think that the rules he had elsewhere would all apply to your home.
- Introduce the dog to where you want him to eliminate and how to get there. If it is a back door, try taking the dog out every hour or two and praise the dog handsomely when he does his business. If you don't have a yard, establish a walk routine. After meals and drinking are common times for elimination. Accidents will invariably happen. You don't know his signal and he might be too anxious or stressed to know his own body cues. A few days into having your new pet home, you should be able to know what to look for from him and he should be able to tell you. If your dog is quiet and doesn't whine or bark or scratch at the door, try hanging bells on the door. The dog will learn to nose or paw them to let you know he needs to go out.
- Avoid introducing him to new situations until a strong bond is formed. Taking him on a controlled walk is a good way to bond as well as to get to know him. For example, how will he react when he sees a rabbit or cat? What will he do when a kid zips by on a skateboard or bike? A jogger? How obedient is he on a leash? What happens when you pass by another dog? Another way of strengthening the bond is by taking obedience classes. Taking the dog with you to PetsMart is probably not the best thing for him the first couple of days. He may never have had a chance to do that in his last home. Going to an off-leash park is definitely not something you should do. Until you have complete control over your dog and know his moods, reactions, and body language, leave the off-leash parks to others. Walking on lead will be just as beneficial to both of you. We strongly recommend an obedience course with your dog and yourself. There is a lot to be said for good one-on-one time and enforcing your communication with each other. Even if your dog has had obedience training before, this will teach him how you speak to him and how he is to respond.
- Avoid making sudden changes to your dog's diet. If a brand was provided when you got the dog, continue to use that for a day or two. If the dog is having consistent movements and you want to change the diet, start slowly. Use  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of original and new for a few days, and then change to  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ . If all is well with that change, drop to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the original and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of new food. You should be able to change to the new food inside a week to ten days.
- Allow him time to explore his new home at his pace. Put him on a leash and take him through your house – only in the areas you allow the dog. After this 'tour', place his belongings in a place where you are most likely to spend most of your time (family room, den, or bedroom). It isn't recommended that you just let the dog tear through the house, but once they feel comfortable, the dog should begin to get curious and let his nose do the investigating.

Although the adjustment period can be sometimes frustrating, be assured that most dogs show an amazing amount of resilience and can easily become a wonderful addition to your home. As long as Weimaraners are loved, fed, and exercised, they will attach themselves to you very quickly.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Introducing Your New Dog to Your Home

By Chris Conklin – Michigan Weimaraner Rescue

**When you are bringing a new dog home how you interact with the dog in the first 24 to 48 hours is critical to the dogs' perception of its new family.**

1. Before bringing the dog inside your home, make sure all existing family dogs are crated or shut away and don't parade your new dog past them. Now is NOT the time to introduce the dogs – this IS the time to introduce your new dog to your home. Children should be calm and respectful of the dog and his space and not crowd the dog or become over excited.
2. Bring the dog into the home on leash. DO NOT let the dog run all over your house sniffing and possibly marking. This is your home and you want him to understand from the beginning that he will be required to respect it as yours.
3. Immediately take the dog to the designated "potty" area in your yard – and upon elimination, the dog should be rewarded with a treat and praised.
4. Following "potty" time, take the dog to the room his crate is in, and toss a treat into the crate to encourage the dog to enter the crate. Let the dog stay in his crate to adjust to the sounds and smells of your household. If he is throwing a temper tantrum, let him, and IGNORE IT!!!!!! The dog is testing you. If you let him out now, you will have continued struggles with the dog and may have to return it to the foster home or rescue coordinator.
5. The dog should be taken out frequently for potty and exercise times. Often times, your new dog may have already met his new doggie brother or sister at the foster home. This is not the same as meeting your current dogs; please give your new rescue dog time to adjust so that he is not forced to show unwanted behavior like growling in either dominance or submission.
6. Now is not the time to invite family and friends to meet your new dog or take him on a trip to the pet store or dog park. Give him a day or two minimum to adjust to his new home.
7. Take him out on lead; this dog has not bonded to you yet. Do not trust him off lead even in a fenced in area (use a long line or walk the dog in your yard). He needs to learn that the "come" command can be reinforced. Keep him on line for at least 2-4 weeks. Remember – the collar must fit securely! The definition of a secure collar is only 2 fingers should fit beneath the collar. Try the collar and leash out in your home FIRST, before venturing outside. If the collar comes off in the house, it will come off outside – and the dog will be loose, which we don't want. If you are in doubt of the security of a collar, please consider using a harness or slip lead for more control.
8. Accidents happen! Keeping your dog on lead in your home will enable you to watch the dog at all times – and if the dog is giving signals that he has to go "potty" you are better able to take him and reward him for eliminating in the appropriate place. (Signals include: circling, pacing, whining, going to the door). Never punish the dog for eliminating inappropriately – this does not work! Instead, positive rewarding of proper elimination behavior is the way to achieve success. Remember that even "house-trained" dogs will not know the rules of YOUR house. They must be taught your rules and understand they are to eliminate outside. Marking behavior, mostly in male dogs, can easily be corrected by keeping the dog on lead in your home. When the dog begins to mark, a quick "ahhh" or "no" in a deep, low tone will stop the marking behavior. Immediately take the dog outside to eliminate and reward with treats and praise. Consistency is the key to preventing accidents.
9. Tummy upsets are common in rescue dogs and are to be expected. Please understand that coming into your home, yet another new place, is stressful. Switching to a new routine, new treats, new food, new water, and a new home may cause your dog's tummy to become unsettled. Please refer to "Dealing with Diarrhea" for information on how to address with home remedies.

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10. Your new dog should start obedience classes after he has been in your home for 3 to 4 weeks. Give him a hobby. If Weims don't have a job to do they get fixated on their owner in an unhealthy way, possibly causing separation anxiety and/or other unwanted behaviors.
11. Introduce current dogs one at a time in a non-overwhelming way; don't let the dogs rush up to one another or intimidate. **The dogs should not be alone together unsupervised in the house or yard until they know each other well.** Ideally, your new dog and the current, family dogs should go on walks together to establish a "pack."
12. If you have cats in your home, keep your new dog on leash until you feel safe he will not go after them. Do not "show" the cat to the dog or try to introduce them. Please read "Integrating Dogs and Cats."
13. Feeding should be done twice a day in the crate. Food should be left out for 15 minutes or so then taken away. Your dog should have access to water when not crated.
14. You have to use the crate as a ritual part of his day when you are at home sometimes as well. Otherwise, the crate is associated with separation. The crate should be in a portion of the household you actively live in. If you wouldn't go there to sit and read a book, he doesn't want to be there either.
15. Be very careful about your tone of voice when kenneling. "Aww come-ooonn, you gotta get in your kennel nowwww", won't work. Sounds like you feel guilty putting him in there. You should say "Kennel up!" in a firm commanding voice. **DO NOT talk to your dog once he is crated** – things such as "be a good boy" or "Mommy will be back soon" only create excitement and will make the dog feel anxious! Crate him at least 15 minutes before you leave. He should be left in the crate five to ten minutes after you get home – again DO NOT talk to the dog upon your arrival home! He should then be let out and ignored for two minutes. Don't let him out of the crate if he is barking. Ignore any behavior he exhibits in there as if he was invisible and you were deaf.
16. Be sure to get an imprinted tag with YOUR name and phone number, and maybe address on it. NEVER put the dog's name on the tag! All rescue dogs are microchipped, with the chip registered to the rescue. After successful completion of your 2-week adoption trial the microchip will be transferred to you as the primary contact, and rescue as the backup contact. Please consider leaving rescue as the backup contact, rather than someone else. If your dog were to get lost while you are out of town it would be MUCH better to have your dog spend the night with a rescue volunteer rather than in a shelter. It would also be better to have a rescue volunteer pick-up the dog from a vet's office and spare you the shelter impound fee. Rescue's phone number is connected to many volunteers who are here to help you and the dog.
17. Please maintain a leadership role with a routine and try not to give free love or cuddle the dog excessively the first 48 hours – read "Nothing In Life Is Free" to understand the importance of a leadership role. It is better for your new pet to enter the household feeling like he must make an effort to belong to you. This is much better than spoiling him with lavish attention and letting him think he can get away with anything, a behavior you will be trying to fix down the road. Most of all good luck, and have fun!

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## Top Ten Things NOT To Do With Your New Dog

In order for your new dog to feel more comfortable with you and his or her new surroundings, please refrain from the following activities within the first few days (2-4 days) that you have the new dog:

1. **Off-Leash Parks** – This is never a good idea until you know how the dog responds to your commands and other people/dogs/situations. It will take time to get to know your new dog and get your dog to listen and respond to you.
2. **Time Off-Leash Outside** – Your new dog may not know your voice or respond to the “come” command. Until you are absolutely certain your dog will respond to your commands, in ANY situation, do not allow the dog to be out of your control or off-leash.
3. **Alone in the Backyard** – Dogs need to feel secure with their new owner and home. Simply leaving the dog unattended in the backyard may make the dog feel abandoned, neglected or he/she may get bored and become destructive. Some dogs feel the need to wander in search of something to do or merely chase the squirrel/cat/bird out of the yard. The dog needs to be familiar with his/her surroundings and this takes time. Walk your dog through the neighborhood to familiarize it with the area.
4. **Roam the House** – Initially, dogs need to be taught where things are in the new home. This means that you need to show the dog where food, water, crate and bathroom areas are and reinforce these areas with words and treats. A dog left to roam the house, whether you are there or not, is never a good idea. The dog is not familiar enough with this new territory and new rules. The dog should be crated when you are not present in the house.
5. **Grooming** – Although you think your new dog needs some grooming, most dogs are not comfortable enough with you to allow this. So, during the first few days, refrain from baths, nail trims and ear cleaning. Just wait until you think the dog trusts you enough. Simple brushing should be approached with caution and positive reinforcement (treats).
6. **PetsMart** – Along the same lines as the off-leash parks, pet supply stores that allow other dogs are never a good idea until you know how the dog responds to your commands and other people/dogs/situations. It will take time to get to know your new dog and get your dog to listen and respond to you.
7. **Free-feeding** – Sometimes rescue dogs have been deprived of food. Do not fall into the temptation to free-feed them. Weimaraners are very susceptible to a condition called bloat or Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus (GDV). This is where the stomach twists on itself and without prompt diagnosis and surgery, the dog will die a very painful death. The best action is to feed your new dog twice or three times a day small portions (1-2 cups per serving, depending on the age/activity level of the dog).
8. **Introducing New Food** – If you know the brand of dog food your new dog was fed, continue to use that food exclusively for at least a few days. The stress of a new home is enough to upset a dog's stomach, so keep them on what they know. If after a few days, stools are solid and the dog appears to be in good health, slowly introduce the new food. We recommend  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the new with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the old for a couple of days. Then half and half, and finally  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the old and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the new. If all is still well, you can cut over to the new food completely.
9. **Crating** – Even if you know for sure your new dog is crate trained, do not start by putting the dog in the crate for the full eight hours you are at work. If you can put the dog in the crate for five minutes while you get the mail that is a perfect start. Then for 30 minutes while you run to the store, and so on. Make sure that the dog will not harm themselves or can escape from the crate before leaving for an entire day.
10. **Rule Breaking** – As wonderful as it is to have a new dog that was in need or didn't have the best life, you will not want to start your relationship by breaking the rules you plan to live by in your home. A Weimaraner will take its first experiences and count them as the rules. If you say, just tonight we'll let our new baby sleep on the bed it will be very difficult to ever have your bed back to being just for humans. If you start out with how you expect the dog to act in your home, it will be a much smoother and more understanding transition for the dog. Within the first two weeks you have a new Weimaraner in your home they will push all of the rules. It is their nature to see how far they can push and it is bred into them to learn from that experience (that's one of the reasons you wanted a Weimaraner, isn't it???)

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## Behavioral Issues and What to do About Them

- 1) **Separation Anxiety** – a crate is your best defense against separation anxiety. Rescue has crates that you can borrow or you can purchase one. We recommend the standard plastic airline crates. A large or extra large is usually large enough. If you have never purchased online at PetsMart, you can make your first purchase and receive 20% off. Many times, if the purchase is over \$100, they provide free shipping. Be sure to check the store website before purchasing to make sure that is the case. Albertson's sells crates at a very reasonable price. Wal-Mart sells crates at reasonable prices as well. And, check the Internet – most online stores offer free shipping on crates.
- 2) **Soiling in the house** – until a routine has been established, take this as a very real possibility that you just need to get your schedules and routines worked out. If you are a multi-dog household and you have adopted a male, you may be faced with territory marking. This can be countered with a squirt bottle and watching your male closely. Saying 'No' in an authoritative voice and squirting the dog in the face will get their attention and cause them to stop. Nature's Miracle is a good product to use to eliminate pet odors, such as urine. If soiling continues, contact a rescue committee member to ask for further advice to determine what the problem is and how to correct it. A crate is a good solution for this as well.
- 3) **Barking** – there are two types of barking commonly seen. The first is associated with separation. The second is associated with boredom. In either case, contact a rescue committee member for suggestions about curbing this behavior.
- 4) **Chewing** – dogs chew, that is why there are more doggie chew toys than you can imagine when you visit the pet supply store. Most dogs loose their desire to chew around 4-5 years of age. Some dogs never loose the urge to chew. Provide your dog with plenty of toys so that they can expend their energy on something acceptable. If your dog is chewing on something he shouldn't be chewing on, squirt him and/or tell him 'No' and immediately give him something he can chew on. The key is diverting their attention.
- 5) **Mouthing** - Many Weims, especially young ones, take your hand or arm gently in their mouth when excited. It is never permissible for your dog to put his teeth on you for any reason. A firm "NO! NO BITE!" followed by a scowling face and a collar correct should do the trick. As soon as he settles down, praise and pet him quietly. Repeat as needed; it takes awhile to break his habit.
- 6) **Jumping Up** - Three methods that can all be used separately or in combination, depending on the situation:
  - Abolishment:** Or stopping the behavior, does **not** train the *correct* behavior, but prevents undesired behavior. In the case of jumping, leash the dog, then step on the leash right where it hits the ground, which will prevent the dog from jumping up. Or remove her from the situation entirely.
  - Extinction:** Or ignoring the behavior, also does not teach a *correct* behavior, but if the dog is not rewarded with attention, they will stop **any** behavior. Ignoring includes ALL eye contact or sounds. This is the best owner used method, but does take the longest for results. This means completely ignoring her till she disassociates and goes off to something new.
  - Alternative behavior:** This is teaching the dog an alternative behavior that rewards their motivation. In the case of jumping, that would be the sit position. The dog only gets attention when they are sitting.

So, put them all together for training: the dog gets leashed when you come home or someone new comes in, very first thing. Next, step on the leash and totally ignore her till she settles and sits. Then, tell her sit/stay and approach to pet her; if she breaks and jumps, turn away. At this point, you can go back to ignoring her or you can command another sit/stay. You can use food to hasten the learning curve and improve her motivation for the task. If she stays seated, she gets the treat or the attention she craves. If she is jumping and you don't have the leash handy, put your knee up to block her. DON'T thrust her, but you have every right to keep her off of you. Or grab her collar and hold her down. Never "allow" her to jump on anyone until you curb the behavior; for instance if 'somebody doesn't mind', or 'that's how they always give her cuddles'. Follow a "four on the floor rule" and never pet her if she has her back feet on the floor with the front feet standing in your lap or on furniture. If you are going to casually pet or cuddle her when she is not excited, ask her to sit first each time to further instill this positive behavior.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Six Rules For Raising Obedient, Happy Weimaraners and for Developing Skilled, Loving People Who Are Owned By Them

By Chris Conklin – Michigan Weimaraner Rescue

### 1. Sleeping

*Things to remember:* Dogs are pack animals and sleep best if they hear breathing. Sleep training should begin in a crate, in the owner's room. Only well trained dogs should be allowed on their owner's bed.

### 2. Eating

*Things to Remember:* Twice a day scheduled feeding is best (three times daily for puppies). Regular feedings make the dog feel comfortable and secure. Interruptions and distractions while your dog is eating make him/her more comfortable with these "real life" conditions. For dominant or nervous dogs, training sessions can be incorporated into the feeding routine.

### 3. Resting/Hanging Out

*Things to Remember:* Dogs are creatures of habit and seek comfortable resting spots. Dogs need to know that the house is your territory. They should stand when you enter a room and move before you sit down. If your dog is always in your way, train them to go to his/her place, such as a bed or crate.

### 4. Exercise and Play

*Things to Remember:* Dogs thrive on games that challenge them both mentally and physically. Games with rules are best for their development. Dogs learn through repetition. Dogs need to respect all family members as persons in authority. Do not use confrontational games such as tug-of-war, which gives dogs the opportunity to growl and challenge their owner.

### 5. Attention Seeking/Jumping & Mouthing

*Things to Remember:* Jumping and mouthing are normal puppy behaviors. Teaching a more appropriate behavior (sitting, standing) shows the dog that the way to get attention is to perform the **desired** behavior instead of the undesirable behavior. Negative attention (which still provides attention), is the **least** effective means of dealing with these behaviors.

### 6. Hunting Behavior/Territory

*Things to Remember:* Your dog must learn that all territory belongs to you. The dog should stop and wait while you look around before leaving or entering. Don't let him/her rush past you or charge doors; teaching a sit and stay will help eliminate this behavior. If your dog is overexcited at a new territory, stand on his/her leash and ignore him until he/she calms down. Or, redirect his/her attention with food or a toy.

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## Training/Behavior Resources

There are several web sites and books that can offer advice and information about your new dog. If you still have your Weimaraner Adoption Application Packet, re-read the section on the 'second-hand dog'. This article will help to remind you of why you wanted a 'used' dog and how to ease his transition into your home.

### **Books We Recommend** ( see [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) & [www.dogwise.com](http://www.dogwise.com) to order)

- "I'll Be Home Soon – How to Prevent and Treat Separation Anxiety" by Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D. (37 pages)
- "How to be the Leader of the Pack... and Have Your Dog Love You for it!" by Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D. (15 pages)
- "Feisty Fido Help for the Leash-Aggressive Dog" by Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D. and Karen B. London, Ph.D. (59 pages)
- "Urban Dog – The Ultimate Street Smarts Training Manual" by Cis Frankel (237 Pages)
- "How to Speak Dog" by Stanley Coren (274 pages)

### **Behaviorist**

- Tenderfoot Training #303-444-7780 [www.tenderfoottraining.com](http://www.tenderfoottraining.com) Completing a session with Doug and Elizabeth Simpson of Tenderfoot Training can substitute for your required 8-week obedience class.

### **Training**

- Lisa Sickles - <http://www.wagwag.net/>
- Guy And A Leash, Troy - <http://www.guyandaleash.com/>
- Blue Springs 'n Katydid - <http://www.bskddogtraining.com/>

### **Websites**

- Weimaraner Club of America: <http://www.weimclubamerica.org>
- Mile High Weimaraner Rescue: <http://www.mhwc.org/rescue>
- Denver Dumb Friends League: <http://www.ddfl.org> - lots of great training tips and behavior articles

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Separation Anxiety

By Chris Conklin – Michigan Weimaraner Rescue

Separation anxiety is a common problem with Weimaraners that can have many precluding factors, including but not limited to: genetics, litter rearing, dominance, submission and boredom or stress. The causes of separation anxiety are not nearly as important as is the need to overcome the behavioral manifestations of the condition. Below is an ever-growing inventory of suggestions on dealing with these behaviors.

The safest confinement methods must be used to prevent the dog from seriously injuring itself or doing severe property damage, often in the thousands of dollars. The crate should become a ritual part of the pet's day, consistently use the crate at scheduled times and often when you are home. If the crate is not an integral part of the dog's day, the crate will soon become associated with separation. A strong crate of the correct size is an important factor in helping anxiety prone dogs. Invest in a quality crate with sturdy welds; sometimes even a high quality plastic or wire crate may need further fortification depending on the dog, and there are various methods for reinforcing both types.

Many pets prefer the plastic kennels to the wire, as they afford a greater sense of security. In selecting a kennel, the height should measure taller than the dog can arch his back, and make certain you feel no give when you try to shake the door; the dog will frantically attempt escape through any areas it can feel movement.

Position the crate in either the activity center of the home, the owner's bedroom, or even have one in each area. The dog should not feel isolated; if you wouldn't go there to sit and read a book, your Weim doesn't want to be there either.

Treats used in training should only be given outside the kennel; all other feeding, including regular daily meals and especially all extra treats are given within the crate. When kenneling the dog, use a specific command in a quiet, firm, authoritative voice; if you say "Aww, come on, you gotta get into your bed now..." the dog will become reluctant and refuse to go in his crate, as you sound as if you don't really want him in there at all. If the dog won't enter the crate willingly, physically put him into the crate without any delay or coaxing.

When you prepare to leave home, complete at least three ritual behaviors before he enters the crate: the dog goes outside, comes in, does a short down stay, gets a treat for the correct behavior, and is then kenneled at least 15 minutes before you go.

He should be left in the crate for five to ten minutes after you return home, and after you've had time to observe three ritual behaviors: take off your shoes, listen to messages, and pour a glass of wine, for example. Ignore all unwanted behaviors he exhibits in his crate just as if he was invisible and you were deaf.

Then, if the dog is not barking, he is allowed out of his cage; if you are beginning training, a treat can be given to quiet him. After he is out of the crate, he should then be ignored for two full minutes; if he refuses to be ignored and doesn't remain composed, put the dog on a leash and stand on it where it hits the ground to limit his actions. Invest in a chain leash should the dog try to chew on it to get your attention.

Never clean the kennel of his saliva or waste in his presence, as you will seem submissive. For bedding, use cheap blankets cut into quarters; if the dog destroys the blanket, little is lost. The dog should always have a blanket in his crate, even if he destroys it every day. The only exception is if the dog actually will ingest the blanket.

Try to wear the dog out physically and mentally before he is to be left alone; a 15-minute walk or out to go potty is not nearly enough. At least 20 minutes of real exercising or running, along with a 10-minute obedience drill works wonders on the dog's attitude before you leave.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

Weimaraners are very intelligent dogs and need outlets for their capabilities. Enroll him in some type of classes, or give him a hobby such as: obedience, agility, hunting or therapy dog work. If Weims don't have mental stimulation, they get overly fixated on their owners, often in such an unhealthy way as to create separation anxiety. Many of these dogs can benefit from doggie day care.

When the dog is to be left alone in his kennel, several things can be done that may help thwart anxiety:

- You can put on your shoes and coat out of sight of the dog.
- Go out a door where the dog isn't sure if you actually left.
- Try playing a radio or covering the crate with a blanket.
- Give the dog a Kong toy frozen with peanut butter or cheese whiz for a pacifier.
- Sometimes herbal remedies, flower essences, homeopathic, or even using prescription medications such as Clomicalm, Reconcile (same as Prozac), etc. may help reduce the anxiety level.

Many Weims have personality traits common to dogs suffering from separation anxiety; often it is an issue of owner management than as to degree. When your dog knows what to expect from you and what your expectations of him are, he will have the greatest security, and at the same time unwanted behaviors are depleted.

## **Separation Anxiety Help:**

Go to [groups@yahoo.com](mailto:groups@yahoo.com) and sign in to the k9sepanx group; there is a wealth of information in the archives.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/k9sepanx/>

**Pro Select** makes crates that will hold wild animals (Empire series)

[http://www.dogtownco.com/site/catalog/product\\_col.aspx/catid/103](http://www.dogtownco.com/site/catalog/product_col.aspx/catid/103)

\*Another good link is [http://www.schnauzerrama.org/sa\\_weim.htm](http://www.schnauzerrama.org/sa_weim.htm) (attached article is also on this site)

\* Try to go to a lower protein food. Some people go as low as 10% while working on the SA.

\*Talk to your vet about using a medication WHILE training. Reconcile, which is simply human prozac, can be filled for as little as \$4/month at a human pharmacy. Medication alone WILL NOT work. You MUST train while on the medication.

\* Lots and lots of exercise and training. Seek the help of a behaviorist ASAP!

\* Get these two excellent books by Dr. Patricia McConnell: "Leader of the Pack" and "I'll Be Home Soon." The first will help establish a better relationship between you and your dog and he will be calmer when he really understands his position; and the second deals with both preventing and curing SA. You can get them from Dr. McConnell's website: <http://www.dogsbestfriend.com> or from Amazon.com

\* Another good read is "The Dog Who Loved Too Much" by Dr. Nicholas Dodman

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Nothing In Life Is Free

Denver Dumb Friends League, 1999.

Does your dog: Get on the furniture and refuse to get off? Nudge your hand, insisting on being petted or played with? Refuse to come when called? Defend its food bowl or toys from you? “Nothing in life is free” can help.

“Nothing in life is free” is not a magic pill that will solve a specific behavior problem; rather it’s a way of living with your dog that will help it behave better because it trusts and accepts you as its leader and is confident knowing its place in your family.

### How To Practice “Nothing In Life Is Free:”

- Using positive reinforcement methods, teach your dog a few commands and/or tricks. “Sit,” “Down” and “Stay” are useful commands and “Shake,” “Speak” and “Rollover” are fun tricks to teach your dog.
- Once your dog knows a few commands, you can begin to practice “nothing in life is free.” Before you give your dog anything (food, a treat, a walk, a pat on the head) it must first perform one of the commands it has learned. For example:

#### YOU:

Put your dog’s leash on to go for a walk  
Feed your dog  
Play a game of fetch after work  
Rub your dog’s belly while watching TV

#### YOUR DOG:

Must sit until you’ve put the leash on  
Must lie down or sit & stay until you’ve put bowl down  
Must sit and shake hands each time you throw the toy  
Must lie down and rollover before being petted

- Once you’ve given the command, don’t give your dog what it wants until it does what you want. If it refuses to perform the command, walk away, come back a few minutes later and start again. If your dog refuses to obey the command, be patient and remember that eventually it will have to obey your command in order to get what it wants.
- Make sure your dog knows the command well and understands what you want before you begin practicing “nothing in life is free.”

### The Benefits of This Technique:

- Most dogs assume a neutral or submissive role toward people, but some dogs will challenge their owners for dominance. Requiring a dominant dog to work for everything it wants is a safe and non-confrontational way to establish control.
- Dogs who may never display aggressive behavior such as growling, snarling, or snapping, may still manage to manipulate you. These dogs may display affectionate, though “pushy” behavior, such as nudging your hand to be petted or “worming” its way on to the furniture in order to be close to you. This technique gently reminds the “pushy” dog that it must abide by your rules.
- Obeying commands helps build a fearful dog’s confidence; having a strong leader and knowing its place in the hierarchy helps to make the submissive dog feel more secure.

### Why This Technique Works:

Animals that live in groups, like dogs, establish a social structure within the group called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict and promote cooperation among pack members. In order for your home to be a safe and happy place for pets and people, it’s best that the humans in the household assume the highest positions in the dominance hierarchy. Practicing “nothing in life is free” effectively and gently communicates to your dog that its position in the hierarchy is subordinate to yours. From your dog’s point of view, children also have a place in this hierarchy. Because children are small and can get down on the dog’s level to play, dogs often consider them to be playmates, rather than superiors. With the supervision of an adult, it’s a good idea to encourage children in the household (aged eight and over) to also practice “nothing in life is free” with your dog.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## The Training Tether

Denver Dumb Friends League, 2005.

A training tether is a temporary management tool that can be used to prevent behavior problems or assist in resolving an existing problem. The idea is to tether your dog in the places where your family spends time, such as the kitchen, the TV room, or the bedroom, so he can be with you but doesn't have to be the center of attention, and he can't wander off and get into trouble. *The training tether should only be used when you are close by; never leave a dog tethered when you are not at home.*

### **Getting Started**

A tether should be 2 to 3 feet long and preferably made of plastic coated wire cable with a snap at both ends. The plastic coating protects furniture and the wire prevents the dog from chewing through it. A leash or rope may be used but should be soaked in a taste aversive to prevent the dog from chewing it.

Attach the tether to a heavy piece of furniture or to an eyebolt screwed securely into the wall. Attach the other end to your dog's buckle collar. Choke chains, prong collars or head halters should never be used with the tethering technique. Make the tether short enough that the dog won't get tangled in it, and make the tethering spot a happy place – put a rug or mat there and a chew toy. Don't use a ball that can roll out of range.

### **Getting Your Dog Accustomed to the Training Tether**

Start by putting your dog on the tether a few times a day for five to ten minutes. Give him a reward as soon as he gets to the tethering place, then give him a special treat – like a food stuffed Kong (see our handout "Dog Toys and How to Use Them), while you settle down nearby to watch TV, read, etc. Slowly extend the length of time the dog is on the tether, but also vary the time, mixing short sessions with longer ones. If the dog barks or whines while on the tether, leave the room until he is quiet. Then return and reward his quiet behavior. The idea is to ignore unacceptable behavior and reward calm behavior with quiet praise and/or a small, soft treat.

### **Using the Training Tether for Behavior Problems and Problem Prevention**

- Your new dog - containment and management: If you are busy (reading, watching TV, doing dishes) put your dog nearby on the tether so he can be with you, but he can't wander off and chew something he shouldn't. Supply him with a stuffed Kong or a chew toy and remember to reward him when he is calm and quiet.
- Housetraining: Dogs generally will not eliminate in the space they have to lie in, so the tether can be used between trips outside for elimination.
- Jumping up: If your dog jumps up on guests, put him on his tether before visitors arrive. After the guests are seated and your dog is behaving calmly, allow him to meet everyone.
- Separation anxiety: If your dog follows you from room to room, use the tether to help him learn to relax without you. Leave for short periods -- starting with seconds and building up to minutes. Don't make a big deal of leaving or returning.
- The attention junkie: If your dog pesters you constantly for attention or play, use the tether to teach him that he can be with you without being the center of attention.
- Door darting: If your dog attempts to escape through the door any time someone comes or goes, be sure he is on the tether before the door opens.
- Begging at the dinner table: Place your dog on his tether while you are eating dinner.

### **Rules for Using the Training Tether**

- Only put your dog on the training tether when you are around to supervise.
- Never leave a dog tethered when you are not at home.
- The training tether may also be used outdoors; for example, while you garden or have dinner on the patio, but only when someone is close by.
- The training tether area should be a pleasant and safe place for your dog.
- Never use it as punishment. Don't allow children or other pets to bother your dog when he is on the training tether.
- Reward calm behavior with praise and tasty treats.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Integrating Cats and Dogs

By Norma Bennett Woolf

**Dogs and cats** have been part of family lives for thousands of years. The dog came first, about 10,000 or more years ago, and the cat followed about 5000 years ago, when Egyptians enticed him to dine on rodents that ate the grains stored in silos.

Both have played major roles in the development of civilization: the dog as willing helper, companion, and guardian; the cat as roommate, mouser extraordinaire, and enigma. Dogs earn such descriptions as faithful, affectionate, and courageous; cats are aloof, elegant, and often devilish. Dogs are pack animals, cats are loners, but each species touches something in humans that is unreachable by the other.

Physical differences are obvious. All domestic cats are cut from a similar cloth. Although there are variations in coat type, head and body shape, and size, cats lack the depth and breadth of differences found in dog breeds. The tiny Chihuahua with its smooth or long coat and big, pointed ears is as much a dog as the huge Great Dane, but a child unfamiliar with either may not recognize them as the same species. Cats don't fool anyone - at least with their appearance.

### **Are they enemies?**

The idea that dogs hate cats may have been born because dogs chase cats, and grew because cartoons depicted ongoing battles between the two species. Or it may have been generated because some dog people strongly dislike cats and some cat people disdain dogs. However, dogs and cats can live peaceably as long as owners understand the behaviors of each.

Both dogs and cats are predators. Cats pounce on anything that moves - mice, butterflies, birds, grasshoppers, and feathery toys waved on the end of a stick. Dogs chase anything that moves, especially if it squeals, hisses, or otherwise mouths off. If the cat triggers the dog's prey drive, the dog will chase. If a medium-to-large dog catches the cat, it can easily kill it by grabbing and shaking. Kittens and young cats practice their hunting skills on people's feet, curtains, bedspreads, plants, and dog tails. They hide under chairs and tables, dart at the "prey" hissing and spitting and clawing, and hurry away, sometimes with jerky jackknife movements or agile leaps and bounds, sometimes with breathtaking grace and beauty.

Dogs often bristle at such challenges, leading to a merry chase through the house or yard. Households with both species of pets can solve this problem by keeping them separated if necessary. In some cases, a resident cat will isolate itself when a puppy is added to the family. In other cases, cats and dogs never get used to each other. In still other cases, cat or kitten and dog or puppy play together and build a friendship that finds them curled up together in a crate or bed and drinking out of the same bowl. The type of relationship developed in each household depends on the personality of the animals and the understanding of the owners.

### **Behavior Differences:**

Cats are independent creatures. The least independent cat is more independent than the most independent dog. Cats exude an aura of self-confidence, of mastery over their territory and its inhabitants. Most cats do not deign to obey commands, and if they do, pleasing a human is probably the last thing on their minds. Fido is driven to fit into a family hierarchy; Felix could care less as long as his basic needs are met. Cats are physically and mentally capable of exploring their surroundings in great detail. Dogs are physically clumsy in comparison, for their bodies are not as agile and they are mentally tuned to different stations - they concentrate on dominance and submission, play, and keeping track of the people in their lives instead of exploration. As pets they can complement each other well for those families that need or want the independence of a cat combined with the faithfulness of a dog.

### **Integrating Cats and Dogs:**

Always supervise cats and dogs until you know they will get along. Some adult dogs will carry kittens around, and young kittens will accept this attention, but it's probably best to gently take the kitten away from the dog to avoid injury. If you have more than one dog, do not allow them to gang up on the cat. Two dogs make a small pack; the cat may look like quarry to one and he may entice the other into a hunt. It's

## Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

best to introduce the cat to one dog at a time so that each dog understands that the cat is part of the family, not an object of play or prey.

Make sure the dog does not have access to the cat's litter box. Sooner or later, unless you can check the box several times a day and clean it immediately, Fido will eat the cat droppings. Some owners handle this problem by placing the litter box in a room accessible by a cat door so the dog can't get in.

Separate cats and dogs at mealtime. As complete carnivores, cats need a diet that includes the amino acid taurine; if the dog eats the cat's food and all the cat gets is leavings in the dog bowl, the cat might develop a dietary deficiency. In addition, a dog that guards his food could attack the cat or gulp his meals too quickly and develop digestive problems. Don't leave thawing meat, cooling desserts, or any other food or scraps where a cat can get them. Not only will the cat jump to the table or counter or even spill the waste- basket, he will either drop things on the floor for the dog or send the dog into a frenzy of frustrated whining and barking. Some dogs will bark whenever a cat leaps or climbs to a surface used for food.

If your dog has a high prey drive, make sure to teach the command "leave it" so you can control his chase impulse. It's best to prevent the pursuit, because once the chase sequence starts, the dog will likely be deaf to instructions. Make sure the cat gets plenty of opportunity to stalk and pounce on things other than the dog's tail. Pay attention to both pets as often as possible. You can tell Fido to "down-stay" while you hold the kitten in your lap and tell him matter-of-factly that this newcomer is now part of the family and you will accept no rough stuff. Often the attitude and attention of the owner is enough to prevent serious rivalries or hostilities from developing. For details on introducing a kitten to a high-prey-drive dog, see "Making peace between dogs and cats" by Vicki DeGruy.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## "Living With Multiple Dogs"

By Judith Halliburton, from *Raising Rover*

Far too often, by the time I'm called in on a "fighting dogs" case, there have been serious injuries, and I have to recommend that the client purchase prong collars...Please Human, if you have more than one dog, read this chapter carefully.

**Memorize!** Their relationship has to be established. There is no equality, there is no democracy. There has to be a dominant dog; there has to be a subordinate dog.

Memorize! There is no such thing as jealousy. There is no such thing as hurt feelings.

Dogs are pack animals; even though they are domesticated, pack etiquette is part of who they are. Canines in a pack will not injure, maim, or kill each other, because all members are needed for hunting. If one is injured or killed, it weakens the pack. They will not weaken the pack intentionally. I'm sure you have some idea of Rover's power and the strength of his jaw and teeth (even if he's a Chihuahua). If he wanted to injure, maim, or kill, he could.

Now that that's understood, Human, we can go on. I'm going to dispel the jealousy myth first. Jealousy is a very complicated emotion, with a lot of thought going into it. Dogs don't have the ability for that. What you see in dogs and call jealousy is one of two things: competition (which is the equivalent of sibling rivalry) or straightening out the peck order.

Let's say, for example, we have Rover One and Rover Two. Rover One is dominant. You're petting Rover Two, and Rover One approaches. His ears are up and forward, his tail is wagging, and his body is animated. That's competition. You can pet both dogs at the same time!

Straightening out the peck order works like this: You're petting Rover Two, and Rover One approaches. His ears are up and forward and his chest is out. If his tail is wagging at all, it's moving very slowly. There's no liveliness in his body, and there's purpose to his walk. He will attempt to get between you and Rover Two. He's saying that he doesn't want Rover Two that close to you. You'll notice that Rover Two attempts to back away. Let Rover Two go. He knows what he's doing.

When dogs fight over and over again, it's usually on account of incorrect human interference. For example, when Rover One is straightening out the peck order, the human tendency is to say, "Rover Two, honey, you come back here." To Rover One, you say, "Go on, I was petting Rover Two first," and you push him away. Rover Two is thinking, "Please, oh please, oh please don't do this! I don't mind, I'll just go over here." Rover Two knows that Rover One will have to punish him later. Don't forget, they can't explain it to you. With your tone of voice, you praised Rover Two and disciplined Rover One. You compromised One's position as the dominant dog, and you did it in front of Rover Two.

When Rover One and Rover Two actually have a fight, our human tendency is to go immediately to the underdog, the one showing submission. You go to Rover Two and begin to check him for injuries, saying, "Are you all right? Did Rover One hurt you?" All this is said in a soothing, comforting voice. To Rover One, you say, "Rover One, shame on you! You get out of here and leave Rover Two alone! Bad dog! Bad dog!" All this is said in a stern tone. You praised Rover Two in front of Rover One, and disciplined Rover One in front of Rover Two. Again you've seriously compromised Rover One's position as the dominant dog. Both dogs now believe you want Rover Two to be dominant, and they're thinking, "Oh jeez, now we have to fight all over again!" because their relationship has to be reestablished as it applies to you and your position in the peck order. After a short time, you have two dogs that get along beautifully when no one's around and fight as soon as you're with them!

There's serious danger when this kind of fighting starts: the slightest provocation can start a fight. I call those stimulus fights. For example, the doorbell rings and both dogs run for the door. That can start a fight. They're in the yard, and they both bark at something. That can start a fight. You walk into the room. That can start a fight. Company can start a fight. When stimulus fighting begins, there is no longer any "fight posturing," and absolutely no pack etiquette. With the loss of pack etiquette, and fight posturing, the

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dogs may fight with the intent to hurt each other. They don't know why they're fighting...

It's very simple to prevent serious fighting. Simply *don't interfere*. Now, Human, I know that's not easy to do because when they start fighting, it sounds unbelievably vicious and you think they're killing each other. They are usually not hurting each other. A fight seldom lasts longer than three minutes. It only seems like an hour. Any injuries are usually accidental--a scratch on the face (from a toenail, or tooth) or a nick in the ear. Occasionally, there's a bleeding tongue. If you just can't help it, and you must get involved, do so without saying anything to either dog. If you believe you need to check for injuries, do it silently, and check Rover One first. Do not separate the dogs after a fight. By that I mean, don't put them in separate areas. If you do, you take the chance that they'll fight again as soon as they see each other. Don't attempt to break up a fight alone. You can get seriously bitten and the dogs won't even know they did it. If you honestly believe they're getting hurt, and you have a helper, each of you should grab one dog's tail or hind legs and pull. In my business, I learn constantly. I've just learned that hair spray can stop a fight quickly.

If you have dogs that are fighting or beginning to fight, you can ward off serious problems by putting a few rules into effect. If you absolutely, positively know that Rover One is dominant, give him preferential treatment. You don't have to make a big deal of it. Put his food down first. Pet him first when you come home or the dogs come in the house or you go out to get them. When you give Rover One preferential treatment, you are letting both dogs know that you respect Rover One as the dominant dog.

If you're not sure who is dominant, notice which one goes through a door first. Who's in front when they walk across the yard or the room? Don't base your opinion on food. Dogs have food available to them on a daily basis...Dogs *can* show dominance over food, but don't pin your opinion on that one thing. Pay attention when you see one dog walk across the room and hesitate in front of the other dog. The subordinate dog will turn his head a little and look away. Once he does that, the dominant dog will continue to walk.

If there's been a lot of fighting, sometimes it's very difficult to tell which dog is dominant, because the subordinate dog is constantly on the defensive. I liken him to a child who has been beaten up and pushed around by the school bully. This child is always on guard, looking over his shoulder and ready to defend himself at any moment. It could be the subordinate dog who's starting the fights. If one of your dogs is that defensive, you'll have to watch for subtle signs of who's dominant. Watch them closely and objectively. Objectivity is sometimes hard to achieve. You may have a favorite dog, and you want that one to be dominant or one dog is of a breed you think should be dominant, and you refuse to believe that he's not. Whatever your circumstances are, you can't deny the dominant dog. You must respect the dogs' relationship. You can't decide which one is going to be dominant.

If you have dogs that are fighting no matter what you do, take them to your veterinarian. It's possible the dog that doesn't seem to want to give up has a weakness of some kind; this could make him over defend himself. I had one case where the dogs had reached the point of intentionally injuring one another. It turned out one of them had serious hip dysplasia. In another similar case, one dog had a serious uterine infection.

There is one situation where I recommend interference. If you have an elderly dog with geriatric problems like cataracts or arthritis, or one that is weakened for some reason, put yourself in the Head Honcho position and protect that dog. Under most circumstances, the stronger dog will leave the weaker dog alone as long as it's understood that he's dominant. But every now and then I run into a dog that is a bully or has poor social skills. Also there are dogs that will fight any other dog at any time for no apparent reason. These dogs are few and far between, and usually do fine if they remain in a home with no other dogs...

I hope that after reading this, you have a better understanding of the dynamics of the peck order and how important it is in your dogs' lives.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## “Doggy Care Tips”

(When in doubt, consult your Vet)

**By Cindy Heydinger** – Mile High Weimaraner Club Member and Rescue Committee Member

**Please Note:** The following tips are based on personal experience with a little information gleaned from trips to the vet and a pet first aid book. **Get a good pet first aid book and a good vet. *The main thing to remember is to be observant of your dog, he relies on you solely.***

**Diet** – Feed your dog a quality food, not full of preservatives, the extra money you spend on what your best friend eats will give you more enjoyable years together. And even if he begs and screams for more food, do not give in and let them get fat, not worth the future problems.

**Baths** – If you can't wipe it off or you can't be in close proximity, better bathe. Use a gentle shampoo. It's best if you have a walk in shower, you're going to get wet, so you might as well join them, plus it helps keep them calmer. Nice, warm water is much more pleasant than COLD out of the hose. Child wading pools outdoors are a good option with a little warm water. Be sure to rinse well. Bathing dries skin so don't bathe too often, remember they are dogs and they like to be smelly. (Oh joy, fresh manure!! And something dead too! Is this heaven?!)

**Nails** – **Clip nails once a week**, even if it is a fight at first. Get a good pair of the “scissor” style. Give a treat after you clip each nail if necessary, at least each foot. It may be a two person job at first, but the bribery helps. Nails that get too long can split or crack, or get caught and tear.

**Teeth** – Keep clean, start young, and do often. Getting dog use to having it done by you will pay off in long run.

**Upset Tummy and Diarrhea** – If your dog is eating grass, he could just be hungry (gastric juices upset the stomach) or he is looking to take care of a truly upset stomach, by inducing vomiting. If a dog does not want to eat, observe for a while and try again later. Do not coax into eating by “enhancing” food. If dog continues to refuse to eat and acts lethargic, consult your vet. Sometimes Pepto Bismol (Pink Bismuth) can be given either in chewable tablet form (less messy, but not as fast acting) or liquid form (baby medicine dropper or needleless syringe best way to administer). Tablets are good to have on hand. If tablets, 2 given as you would give a pill, open wide and put down throat. If liquid, give 3cc down back of throat. Give a second dose within an hour, if necessary. Stool may be dark after Pepto treatment. Do not continue for more than 12 hours without consulting vet. Canned pumpkin (about ¼ cup with each meal) is a great way to help with diarrhea.

**Ear Infections** – Floppy eared dogs have a tendency for ear infections, especially after being in water. Bacteria like warm, moist, dark places to grow. Watch for frequent ear scratching. If you see dark areas in ears and it is a bit smelly, consult vet. Sometimes it is just a bit of dirt, and a careful swabbing or wiping with tissue will help prevent, but watch closely. Check ears often, at least once per week. Swimmer's ear solution works for dogs also.

**Anal Glands** – If your dog is seriously licking areas to either side of base of tail and a wicked little stench is overtaking you (you'll know this was not a fart, because your dog is not smiling and acting as if nothing happened), there may also be a discharge on carpet, etc., your dog's anal glands may need expressing. Anal Fluid is secreted with bowel movements naturally, but if stool is frequently soft or he has overactive glands, he may need your assistance in relieving pressure. This is a messy procedure for which the vet will charge reasonably, but can be worth the price as infections can occur. You can express the glands yourself if you cover each of you (it will take two – one to hold, one to “milk”) in old clothes and latex gloves. Use lots of newspaper spread out well (please do this out doors) the fluids are under pressure and squirt randomly and far, plus they reek. Have some Wet Ones available to clean around anal area. When you hold the tail up, you can feel glands on either side just below anal opening (5 & 7 on clock); using your thumb and fingers you can manipulate and squeeze fluids out. If fluids are dark yellow to reddish and or thick, observe for next day, if licking continues, consult your vet, there may be an infection that antibiotics will help clear up. You may need to express once a month.

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**Calming agent** -- Benadryl or generic works as a temporary calming agent. Capsule form works fastest. Two capsules per 60 to 70 pound dog. No more than 3 doses. Rescue Remedy also works quite well.

**Pain** – Consult your vet. Ascriptin, which is aspirin buffered with Maalox, is the only pain reliever I would recommend giving a dog. The Maalox protects the stomach. If you are pretty certain your dog has a minor sprain with a little swelling, a couple of Ascriptin will help. Observe closely, pain relief can also cause the dog to move more than it should and make injury worse. If swelling continues after 3 hours consult vet. Pain medication can make a dog feel better than they should and the dog could overdo it and make the injury worse. Use extreme caution with pain medications. Pain is nature's reminder of limitations.

**Cuts and Scratches** – A little triple antibiotic ointment is a good thing. Don't use hydrogen peroxide on open cut, it damages tissue. Flush with saline solution if dirty. Watch closely for infections. If the cut is deep, there is a four hour window for stitches to be effective. If you can talk to your vet over the phone for advice on treatment first, that may be way less expensive than walking through the emergency vet service doors. This is your child, but don't panic, and use you best judgment, you can always get a second job. A special savings account or credit card reserved for medical emergencies is possibly a better option than "pet insurance."

Remember that laughter and love is still the best medicine.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## "A Simple First Aid Kit"

by Norma Bennett Woolf

Dog owners can treat minor injuries for their pets if they have the appropriate remedies, tools, and equipment available. The following items were included in a first aid kit that the Cincinnati Veterinary Medical Association gave to police dog handlers at a recent workshop. A home first aid kit needs many of the same items.

### First Aid Kits:

- **Gauze sponges** -- 50 four-by-four inch sponges, two per envelope
- **Triple antibiotic ointment**
- **Rubbing alcohol**
- **Ear syringe** -- two ounce capacity
- **Ace self-adhering athletic bandage** -- three-inch width
- **White petroleum jelly** (Vaseline or similar)
- **Eye wash**
- **Sterile, non-adherent pads**
- **Pepto Bismol tablets**
- **Generic Benadryl capsules** -- 25mg, for allergies
- **Hydrocortisone acetate** -- one percent cream
- **Sterile stretch gauze bandage** -- three inches by four yards
- **Buffered aspirin**
- **Dermicil hypoallergenic cloth tape** one inch by 10 yards
- **Hydrogen peroxide**
- **Kaopectate tablets** maximum strength
- **Bandage scissors**
- **Custom splints**
- **Vet Rap bandage**

### Other suggested items:

- **Blanket**
- **Tweezers**
- **Muzzle**
- **Hemostats**
- **Rectal thermometer**
- **Ziplock bags**
- **Paperwork**, including the dog's health record, medications, local and national poison control numbers, regular veterinary clinic hours and telephone numbers, and emergency clinic hours and telephone number.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## "Signs of Canine Illness – How to Tell if Your Dog is Sick"

By Norma Bennett Woolf

Owners who observe and handle their healthy dogs have a head start on recognizing early signs of illness in their pets. Those who know what a healthy pet acts, feels, and smells like can spot differences in behavior and bodies and determine whether a trip to the veterinarian is necessary. Healthy dogs have a temperature of 101-102° F, a respiratory rate of 15-20 breaths per minute, and a heart rate of 80-120 beats per minute. They have pink mucous membranes (gums, inside of lips, tongue, inside of eyelids) and rapid capillary refill action in these areas. They have clean-smelling ears and skin and a full haircoat. Their skin is pliant, an indication of proper hydration, and their eyes are clear and bright.

If your puppy or dog shows any of the following signs, be prepared to call your veterinarian:

- **Eyes: swelling, discharge, redness, etc.**
- **Nose: running, crusting, discharge, etc.**
- **Ears: discharge, debris, odor, twitching, scratching, shaking, etc.**
- **Coughing, gagging, sneezing, retching, or vomiting.**
- **Irregular breathing, shortness of breath, prolonged or heavy panting, etc.**
- **Intestinal activity**
  - Color and consistency of bowel movement
  - Frequency of defecation
  - Bloody stool
  - Evidence of parasites, etc
- **Change in amount of food intake**
- **Change in body weight**
- **Change in water intake**
- **Urine**
  - Color, Frequency, Amount
  - Straining
  - Dribbling, etc.
- **Odor**
  - Mouth?
  - Skin?
  - Ears?
  - Other?
- **Coat & skin**
  - Wounds
  - Tumors
  - Hair loss
  - Dander
  - Color change
  - Biting
  - Scratching
  - Bite marks
  - Evidence of parasites
  - Licking, etc.
- **Behavior**
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Fatigue
  - Lethargy
  - Sleepiness
  - Trembling
  - Stumbling
  - Falling, etc.

Noticing signs is half the battle; keeping a record helps the veterinarian make a diagnosis. Be sure to note when the symptom first appeared, and whether it has been intermittent, continuous, increasing in frequency, getting better, or getting worse.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Dealing with Diarrhea

By WellVet.com

**Please Note:** The following suggestions are based on personal experience and advice from dog owners and vets who have helped rescue dogs. When in doubt, please consult your veterinarian.

Acute diarrhea starts suddenly and lasts for a few days to a week or two. Most cases of acute diarrhea can be handled at home.

When do you need to take your dog to see the veterinarian? Look at how they are acting. Dogs that can be watched at home will act reasonably fine the whole time. They eat, drink, play, and have fairly normal energy. Of course, everyone with diarrhea will not feel 100% normal, so expect your dog to be a bit "off" until the diarrhea resolves.

**If your dog has diarrhea and seems to be reasonably strong, happy and active, simply follow these guidelines:**

- Cut the amount of food you are feeding in half. Some dogs will do well to have NO FOOD for 24 hours.
- Feed home cooked bland diets; they are vastly superior to the commercial bland diets promoted by many veterinarians
- **Bland foods include:**
  - 1/3 meat
    - Cooked meats that are very low in fat such as chicken (you can also boil hamburger, which will remove all the fat)
  - 2/3 rice or other bland grain
    - Cottage Cheese
    - White Rice (some will do better on cooked oatmeal)
  - Do not add any oils or fats to the diet at this point
- **To the Bland Food, add:**
- Yogurt 1-3 tablespoons per meal
- Provide a probiotic.
- Boiled Sweet Potato: 2-4 tablespoons OR Canned Pumpkin 2-4 tablespoons

Keep feeding this bland diet for at least a couple days after the diarrhea clears up. No treats while treating diarrhea!

**When should you take your dog to the veterinarian? If your dog seems to:**

- Act very sick
- Be lethargic
- Show bloating or abdominal pain
- Be feverish (Rectal temperatures above 103.5 degrees F)
- Be dehydrated (one way to try to decide if a dog is dehydrated is to feel his or her gums... if they feel dry or tacky, there may be dehydration present)
- Have persistent vomiting
- Be passing large amounts of blood in the stool

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## “What to Feed Your Weim?”

By Michelle Daum – Former Mile High Weimaraner Club Rescue Coordinator

**Please Note:** The following suggestions are based on personal experience and advice from dog owners who have an interest in nutrition for pets.

Please refer to the following page on how to rate a pet food.

There are so many choices today for dog food. Fifty years ago, there was no such thing as dog food. People just fed dogs their leftovers. After years of producing dog food, the industry has become incredibly savvy. The main thing to consider when feeding your dog is making sure it is a nutritious and balanced food. Dogs do not eat a variety of foods to get all of their nutrients. Instead, they eat one food and it must contain everything they need to survive and be healthy.

More and more often we are seeing allergies in Weimaraners. Corn is the biggest culprit, but rice and wheat are becoming more common as are meat allergies. If corn is in the first four ingredients of what you are feeding, think about changing foods.

My personal favorites are: Canidae, Pinnacle and Wellness. High-quality foods such as these can only be purchased at a pet supply store or from an independent distributor. Due to the lack of nutritional value, we cannot recommend any commercial dog food sold at grocery or discount stores. If you must buy a food from these locations, the only food we could recommend is CostCo's Kirkland Lamb & Rice. Again, if Corn is one of the first four ingredients, you probably want to look at other options.

Websites of Interest:

<http://www.canidae.com> - Canidae

<http://www.oldmotherhubbard.com> - Wellness

[http://www.breeders-choice.com/dog\\_products/pinnacled.htm](http://www.breeders-choice.com/dog_products/pinnacled.htm) - Pinnacle

<http://www.championpetfoods.com/> - Champion Pet Foods: Orijen and Acana

<http://www.api4animals.org/79.htm> - Article on what really is in pet food

<http://www.mhwc.org/weimaraners/bloat.html> - WCA five year Bloat Study

<http://www.petempawrium.com/> - Pet supply in Arvada – excellent source for information about foods

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Pet Food Rating – Do It Yourself

Below is a rating system for pet foods that may be helpful in showing you where your current brand lies and what are considered QUALITY ingredients. Dog food brands labeled human grade, organic and grain-free, rate the highest. Not surprising to see Science Diet, Purina, Iams and Royal Canin at the bottom, with an F (Failed) rating – most commercial dog foods, found in grocery and big box stores, contain cheap ingredients. Don't be fooled by advertising that you see on T.V. or the front of the bag – sure, that Beneful shows chunks of meat, veggies and fruit – but READ THE INGREDIENTS! (Exact quote of ingredient from Beneful: Ground yellow corn, chicken by-product meal, corn gluten meal, whole wheat flour, animal fat preserved with mixed-tocopherols (form of Vitamin E), rice flour,” – so the top 6 ingredients of this dog food have no meat! Wait, you might say – the second ingredient reads “chicken by-product meal” – what does that mean?? Chicken by-product meal consists of the ground, rendered, clean parts of the carcass of slaughtered chicken, such as necks, feet, undeveloped eggs and intestines, exclusive of feathers, except in such amounts as might occur unavoidably in good processing practice. So, in effect, the chicken by-product meal is not actually meat of any kind. Gross! If you wouldn't eat it, why would you feed it to your dog? Not to mention all the cheap fillers listed in this dog food – corn listed twice, wheat and rice flour. Yikes! Where's the nutrition?? If you choose to feed a food loaded with these cheap fillers, it is the equivalent of feeding junk food to a dog. Imagine how awful you would feel if you ate a McDonalds burger meal every single day for the rest of your life. Not only would you be extremely overweight, your health would be very poor. Quality ingredients matter!!

Quality food companies put their money into quality ingredients for your pet, not in mass advertising. And when you see the big name brands introducing "new and improved natural formulas" don't be fooled into believing that a lack of artificial ingredients means the rest of the food is good quality. Corn and wheat are natural, but you won't ever find it in our pet foods here because it is merely a cheap source of filler in food with little to no nutritional value. Keep in mind the Pet Food Recalls of 2007 & 2008 – all of these recalls were a result of cheap grains, used as fillers, being contaminated with chemicals or mold. Not only do cheap grains offer no nutrition, they could be deadly.

Remember – if your dog food contains fillers, they will poop a lot more and eat a lot more, therefore costing you a lot more in the long run. Feeding a high-quality dog food, without fillers, you will end up feeding LESS and your dog will poop less – a win-win for everyone! Not to mention, that the higher quality of diet you feed your dog, the longer your dog will live, the more fit/trim your dog will be, and the fewer trips to the vet.

We are not endorsing a specific brand of dog food, we only want you to understand the importance of choosing a dog food and how to interpret the ingredients.

### **How to grade your pet's food:**

#### **Start with a grade of 100:**

- 1) For every listing of "by-product", subtract 10 points ("by product" is NOT meat!!)
- 2) For every non-specific animal source ("meat" or "poultry", meat, meal or fat -not actual protein source stated such as chicken, lamb, turkey etc) reference, subtract 10 points
- 3) If the food contains BHA, BHT, or ethoxyquin, subtract 10 points for each
- 4) For every grain "mill run" or non-specific grain source, subtract 5 points
- 5) If the same grain ingredient is used 2 or more times in the first five ingredients (I.e. "ground brown rice", "brewers rice", "rice flour" are all the same grain), subtract 5 points
- 6) If the meat protein sources are not in the top 3 ingredients, subtract 3 points
- 7) If it contains any artificial colorants or preservatives, subtract 3 points for each
- 8) If it contains corn (ground corn, corn gluten, whole grain corn etc) subtract 3 points
- 9) If corn is listed in the top 5 ingredients, subtract 2 more points
- 10) If the food contains any added animal fat other than fish or flaxseed oil, subtract 2 points
- 11) If it contains soy or soybeans, subtract 2 points
- 13) If it contains wheat or a component of wheat such as gluten, subtract 3 points
- 14) If it contains "digest" subtract 5 points
- 15) If it contains salt, subtract 1 point

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## Extra Credits:

### Bonus credit If the food contains NO grains, add 10 points

- 1) If any of the meat sources are organic, add 5 points
- 2) If the protein source is meal vs meat, add 5 points
- 3) If the food is baked not extruded, add 5 points
- 4) If the food contains probiotics or prebiotics, add 3 points
- 5) If the food contains fruit, add 3 points
- 6) If the food contains vegetables (NOT corn or other grains), add 3 points
- 7) If the animal sources are hormone-free and antibiotic-free, add 2 points (these may be hard to determine as many manufacturers of natural holistic food use these products without actually printing the information on the bag)
- 8) If the food contains barley, add 2 points
- 9) If the food contains flax seed oil (not just the seeds), add 2 points
- 10) If the food contains oats or oatmeal, add 1 point
- 11) If the food contains sunflower oil, add 1 point
- 12) For every different specific animal protein source (other than the first one; count "chicken" and "chicken meal" as only one protein source, but "chicken" and "" as 2 different sources), add 1 point
- 13) If it contains glucosamine and chondroitin, add 1 point
- 14) If the vegetables are pesticide-free, add 1 point

### Score:

100+ = A+ 94-100=A 86-93 = B 76-85 = C 75 or lower= **Failed**

### Some Top Dog Food scores (not in order of points):

Canidae / Score 117 A+  
Foundations / Score 111 A+  
Hund-n-Flocken Adult Dog (lamb) by Solid Gold / Score 100 A  
Innova Evo / Score 129 A+  
Wolfking Adult Dog (bison) by Solid Gold / Score 102 A+  
Pro Series Holistic 120 A+

### A sample of "popular" store brands scored:

Iams Lamb Meal & Rice Formula Premium / Score 73 **F**  
Pet Gold Adult with Lamb & Rice / Score 23 **F**  
Purina Beneful / Score 17 **F**  
Purina Dog / Score 62 **F**  
Purina Come-n-Get It / Score 16 **F**  
Science Diet Advanced Protein Senior 7+ / Score 63 **F**  
Science Diet for Large Breed Puppies / Score 69 **F**

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## "Homemade FrostyPaws (for your dog)"

Frosty Paws is a commercially-made "ice cream" for dogs. I never met a dog that didn't like it. This is a homemade version which I got off the Web. This recipe uses totally different ingredients than the commercial counterpart. This recipe will make about 18 Frosty Paws.

1 quart vanilla yogurt  
1 medium banana  
2 T peanut butter  
2 T honey

Puree the banana in a food processor or blender. Add the peanut butter and honey and continue processing until smooth. Add yogurt and process just long enough to blend all ingredients together. Place 18 small paper cups (bathroom size) in a baking pan (one 9x13 or two 8x8 work well). Fill paper cups to about 2/3's full. An ice cream scoop or a measuring cup makes the job easier. Freeze until solid. Transfer the frozen treats to zip-lock bags for storing in the freezer.

Note: If you buy the commercial Frosty Paws, you can keep the plastic cups they come in and use those instead of the paper cups. You could also use the plastic cups that come from Jello or Pudding.

## "What About Some Nice Kong Recipes"

Kong Dog Toys are widely used and recommended for therapy and prevention of under-stimulation, boredom, separation anxiety and other behavior problems. Following are some simple ways Kongs can be utilized to promote good behavior in your dog.

It is important for dogs to succeed at their "work". Make it easy to remove the Kong stuffing at first. AS THEY BECOME MORE EXPERIENCED, YOU MAY WANT TO MAKE THEIR JOB MORE CHALLENGING - HERE'S HOW:

1. **Pack** stuffing tighter.
2. **Wedge** biscuits inside the cavity using the inside rim of the opening to secure them.
3. **FREEZE IT!** Very Popular! Try various combinations of canned food, gravy, noodles, rice and mashed potatoes mixed with food nuggets and freeze. KONGSICLES are a favorite with many hot dogs! Put a dab of peanut butter in the small end of the Kong to plug it. Turn it upside down in a cup. Fill it full of water, chicken broth or fruit juice and freeze. Cool doggies! Kongsicles are recommended for outdoor use.
4. **CHEESE IT!** Mix cheese pieces or cheese spread with food nuggets and microwave until cheese melts. Let it cool to a safe temperature. NOTE - Use a cup to contain the Kong when freezing or microwaving.

### **KONG STUFFING RECIPES**

As you create recipes, be sensitive to your dog's tummy as you experiment.

Following are recipes created by veterinarians, dog trainers and dog lovers worldwide.

- **BANANA RAMA:** 1 fresh banana · 2 tbs wheat germ · 1 tbs plain yogurt (can use your pet's favorite flavor as well) · Kong Toy that best fits your pet's chewing temperament. In a bowl, mash up banana. Then, add wheat germ and yogurt. Mash all ingredients together and use spoon to add to Kong. Freeze for 4 hours. Makes 1 serving for Medium Kong. Double for every Kong Size that is bigger.
- **CHEESY DENTAL KONG DELIGHT:** 3 slices of your pet's favorite cheese · Dental Kong Toy. A very simple and creative way to make any pet drool in delight. Just place the 3 slices of cheese directly onto the grooves of your pet's Dental Kong (if model has rope - make sure cheese does

## Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

- not get onto it). Melt in microwave for 20 to 30 seconds. Give to pet after it cools.
- **PHILLY STEAK:** steak scraps · 1 ounce cream cheese · appropriate Kong Toy. Place small scraps of the steak inside Kong toy. Spread cream cheese in large hole to hold scraps.
- **FRUIT SALAD:** apple and carrot chunks · 1/4th of a banana · appropriate Kong Toy. Place apples and carrots in Kong Toy. Mash the banana in large hole to hold fruit in place. You can include other fruits and veggies: orange slices · peach and/or nectarine chunks · celery sticks · broccoli and/or cauliflower · tomato and black olive mixture.
- **VEGGIE KONG OMELET:** 1 egg · your choice of shredded cheese · any vegetables that your pet may like · appropriate Kong Toy. Scramble egg and fold in vegetables. Put into Kong toy. Sprinkle some cheese over the top and microwave for about 20 seconds. Cool thoroughly before giving to dog.
- **MAC 'N CHEESE:** Leftover macaroni and cheese · small cube of Velveeta · appropriate Kong Toy. Melt Velveeta in microwave until gooey. Add mac 'n cheese to Kong Toy. Pour heated Velveeta into Kong. Make sure it has cooled before giving to your pet.

### FAMOUS RECIPES

- **AUNT JEANNIE'S ARCHEOLOGY KONG** (for advanced dogs) LAYER ONE (deepest): roasted, unsalted cashews · freeze dried liver bits. LAYER TWO: dog kibble, cookies or liver biscotti · Cheerios · sugar-free, salt-free peanut butter · dried banana chips, apples and apricots. LAYER THREE: carrot sticks turkey or leftover ravioli or tortellini · Kong Toy (the larger the better!). Pack as tightly as possible. The last item inserted should be an apricot or piece of ravioli, presenting a smooth "finish" under the main opening. LIGHT VERSION: substitute crumbled rice cakes for cashews, Caesar croutons for freeze-dried liver, fat free cream cheese for peanut butter. - by Jean Donaldson
- **KONG ON A ROPE:** Dry dog kibble · appropriate Kong Toy – Rope. Take the rope, pull it through the Kong Toy and knot it. Hang this upside down from a tree, deck or post. The small hole should be facing the ground. Take the kibble and fill the Kong Toy. Make the toy hang just low enough that it is out of your dog's reach. The dog will spend hours trying to retrieve the kibble from the Kong Toy. At the end of the day, take the remaining kibble and give to your pet as a reward. This is advanced work for your dog. – by Ian Dunbar
- **FROZEN JERKY POPS:** Peanut butter, bouillon, Jerky Strips, Water, Appropriate Kong Toy, and muffin tin. Smear a small amount of peanut butter over small hole in your Kong Toy. Fill with cool water and add a pinch of bouillon. Place a Jerky Stick inside Kong Toy and freeze. This can also be put (once frozen) in a children's size swimming pool for a fun day of fishing for your pet. - by Terry Ryan
- **SIMPLE, TRIED AND TRUE:** Peanut butter, appropriate Kong Toy. Smear peanut butter inside the cavity of your Kong Toy. It's that easy! - by trainers and vets worldwide
- **TRIXIE'S FAVORITE:** Trixie, a 50 pound Aussie/Springer mix, loves turkey, chicken or marrow bites mixed with slightly moistened food nuggets frozen inside her Kong. She is very clean about unstuffing - some dogs are not! - by Joe Markham

Every dog has a favorite recipe - finding your dog's will be fun!

REMEMBER: Some foods are not healthy for dogs, and your specific dog may be sensitive, allergic or intolerant to certain ingredients. Consult with your veterinarian first.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Things That Are Toxic To Dogs

There are many foods that pose potential life-threatening hazards for dogs. Below is a partial list of these foods. Please keep in mind that any food NEW to the dog may cause stomach upset. Too much of a dog's regular food can also cause stomach upset. There are many plants that are toxic to dogs, so please do your research on the Internet to determine what plants are ok to have in your home and yard.

- Chocolate
- Alcohol
- Hops
- Caffeine – tea, coffee, etc.
- Nicotine
- Grapes and Raisins
- Onions/Garlic/Onion Powder
- Macadamia Nuts
- Mushrooms
- Large amounts of liver
- Baby food that contains onion powder
- Vitamins containing Iron
- Ibuprofen
- Moldy or Spoiled Food
- Bread Dough
- Fatty trimmings or excess fat
- Cooked bones found in fish and poultry
- Citrus Oil Extracts
- Xylitol (artificial sweetener)
- Swiffer WetJet Cleaning Solution
- Lawn Fertilizer
- Antifreeze
- Rat Poison, Decon, etc.

## Poison Control

If your dog has ingested something, and it is recent enough, you may be able to provide home care for your dog. However, do not chance it! Please call one of the following numbers for advice:

- ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center **(888) 426-4435**
- Alameda East Veterinary Hospital (open 24 hours) **303.366.2639**

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Pet Insurance

Pet Insurance is a great tool for pet owners today. There are many companies out there, so it is important to evaluate your options before selecting a pet insurance company. Please know that pet insurance does not cover all things, and based on your pet's age and medical history, there can be exclusions. Older pets will naturally have more expensive premiums. Sometimes, it may be more cost effective to save money for an emergency or accident, rather than pay the premium. Most pet insurance works by you paying the vet bill, then submitting the bill to the insurance company for reimbursement, which can take 4-6 weeks. Many vet clinics offer CARE Credit, which is a line of credit for veterinary procedures. Keep in mind that emergencies such as bloat are very expensive (\$3,000 - \$6,000). Cancer treatments, many of which are covered by cancer policy riders, run about \$350/week for 12 weeks of treatment – and some are even more expensive. Be sure to read the fine print regarding what each policy covers in terms of overall dollar amounts – these vary from company to company.

Pet insurance should be used for emergencies and accidents, not as preventative medicine. Most policies will offer coverage for the annual exam and vaccines, however, the premium for this coverage is often more than the actual visit would cost you at a reasonably priced veterinarian. And, vaccines are really not necessary every single year. *(For more information on vaccines, do some research on the Internet. In the state of Colorado the only required vaccine is rabies, and officially that vaccine can now be given ONCE every SEVEN years!)* **We do recommend at a MINIMUM – an annual vet exam and blood analysis to ensure your dog in healthy.**

Below is a list of pet insurance providers – none of which are endorsed by MHWR. This is only meant to spark your research, and is not meant as a comprehensive list of providers.

- Veterinary Pet Insurance: [www.petinsurance.com](http://www.petinsurance.com)
- PetCare: [www.petcareinsurance.com](http://www.petcareinsurance.com)
- ShelterCare: [www.sheltercare.com](http://www.sheltercare.com)
- AKC Pet Healthcare: [www.akcpethealthcare.com](http://www.akcpethealthcare.com)
- Pets Best: [www.petsbest.com](http://www.petsbest.com)
- ASPCA Pet Insurance: [www.aspcapetinsurance.com](http://www.aspcapetinsurance.com)
- Pet First Healthcare: [www.petfirsthealthcare.com](http://www.petfirsthealthcare.com)
- Embrace: [www.embracepetinsurance.com](http://www.embracepetinsurance.com)
- Union Plus: [www.unionplus.org/pets/pet-insurance](http://www.unionplus.org/pets/pet-insurance)

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Choosing a Veterinarian

By Darci Kunard, Mile High Weim Club, Rescue Director

Selecting a veterinarian is extremely important! Your veterinarian should be someone you can trust to help you keep your dog safe and healthy. Veterinarians can be a great ally for you and your dog, but they can also be an enemy. Stay away from veterinarians associated with national chains – they have standardized procedures and profit-making ventures, often at your expense and to the detriment of your dog. Ask lots of questions when choosing your vet, and remember if their office is extremely nice and new, you may be paying for that scenery in the form of large vet bills. Wouldn't you rather pay a more reasonable fee, in a less fancy office? Note that the décor of the office does not equate to excellence in veterinary medicine! Beware of veterinarians that push new medications and vaccines – do YOUR OWN research on the Internet before giving your dog something new. Never feel pressured to do something you aren't comfortable doing! Do not consider the advice of a veterinarian as the advice of God. All veterinarians are human beings that experiment through trial and error. A second and third opinion are often recommended.

First and foremost, be an advocate for your dog! You are the dog's owner and guardian – not the vet – and therefore, you must make the decisions for your dog.

The best way to find a good veterinarian is to ask people who have the same approach to pet care as you. You can also search for veterinarians in your area at [www.pets911.com](http://www.pets911.com). Some veterinary hospitals are members of the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA). AAHA membership signifies that a veterinary hospital has voluntarily pursued and met AAHA's standards in the areas of facility, equipment, and quality care. Other veterinarians are board certified in a particular area of veterinary medicine such as ophthalmology, surgery, or cardiology, which means they studied an additional two to four years in the specialty area and passed a rigorous examination. Once you've narrowed your search, schedule a visit to meet the staff, tour the facility, and learn about the hospital's philosophy and policies. This is a reasonable request that any veterinarian should be glad to oblige. Write down your questions ahead of time, and get a list of fees for normal procedures such as: office visit, emergencies, vaccines, tummy upset, etc. Please note that fees vary from clinic to clinic and are often based on the location of the clinic.

### **What Do I Look For?**

- Is the facility clean?
- Are appointments required?
- How many veterinarians are in the practice?
- Are there technicians or other professional staff members?
- Are dog and cat cages in separate areas?
- Is the staff caring, calm, competent, and courteous, and do they communicate effectively?
- Do the veterinarians have special interests such as geriatrics or behavior?
- Do fees fit your budget, and are discounts for senior citizens or multi-pet households available?
- Are x-rays, ultrasound, bloodwork, EKG, endoscopy, and other diagnostics done in-house or referred to a specialist?
- Which emergency services are available? And, what are the hours?
- Is location and parking convenient?

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## “5 Year Bloat Study”

**By Lawrence Clickman, VMD Non-Dietary Risk Factors, reported by Judy Colan**

The following is an article from The Weimaraner Magazine March 2002

The 5-year bloat study, funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation and several Parent clubs, including the WCA, has been completed. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the study I will give you a brief summary of the purpose and aims of the study and the findings.

**Objective:** To identify non-dietary risk factors for gastric dilatation-volvulus (GDV) in large breed and giant breed dogs.

**Animals:** 1991 dogs over six months of age of the following breeds were enrolled in the study: Akita, Bloodhound, Collie, Great Dane, Irish Setter, Irish Wolfhound, Newfoundland, Rottweiler, Saint Bernard, Standard Poodle, and Weimaraner.

**Procedure:** Dogs of varying ages that did not have previous history of GDV were recruited at dog shows. The dog's length and height and the depth and width of its thorax and abdomen were measured. Extensive information concerning the dog's medical history, genetic background, personality and diet was obtained from the owners. Owners were contacted by mail and telephone at approximately one year intervals to determine the status of the dog. The following is a synopsis of the findings. Many of these findings are contrary to methods of prevention which have been favored in the past.

### **Factors which were found to INCREASE the risk of bloat.**

1. Increased Age
2. Having a first degree relative who has bloated (offspring 4X the risk, siblings 3X the risk & parents 1.5X the risk)
3. Deep, narrow thorax/abdomen
4. Underweight
5. Feeding only once daily
6. Fearful, easily upset dogs
7. Raising food bowl
8. Rapid eaters

### **Factors which did NOT appear to influence risk of bloat.**

1. Moistening food
2. Exercise before or after mealtime
3. Change of weather
4. Stress
5. Unrestricted access to water before or after mealtime

**The one factor that was consistently associated with a lower risk of bloat was having a personality that the owner described as "Happy."**

### Increased Age

There is a 20% increase in risk for each year increase in age.

### Having a First Degree Relative with Bloat

This turned out to be one of the strongest predictors. Dogs with such a relative had a 3 and 4 fold increased risk of developing bloat. A first degree relative was defined as either a parent, sibling, or offspring.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Deep narrow Thorax/Abdomen

Dogs which were broader in body type had a lower incidence of bloat. Dr. Glickman postulates that the deeper and narrower the abdomen, the greater the room for the stomach ligaments to stretch down or lengthen as part of the aging process.

## Underweight Dogs

Dr. Glickman felt that these underweight dogs may have problems with their gastrointestinal tract which prevents them from gaining weight and that would predispose them to bloat.

## Feeding Only Once Daily

Several studies, including this one, showed that as the number of meals increased per day, the risk of bloat decreased.

## Fearful, Easily Upset Dogs

Personality turned out to be a major predictor. According to Glickman, it is not the amount of stress in a dog's life that is significant, but the way in which the dog handles the stress. "When animals are placed under stress, there are certain stress hormonal and neural responses. Some of these responses affect gastric motility. A fearful dog may have a very different response physiologically to stress than a happy, easygoing dog. We think those physiological responses may contribute to the rotation of the stomach because of the motility. This is the second or third time we have demonstrated temperament, particularly easygoingness or fearfulness is related to the risk of bloat."

## Raising Food Bowl

The study revealed that the higher the bowl, the higher the risk. Dr. Glickman feels the elevation may be causing an increased incidence of swallowing air which could account for the higher risk.

## Rapid Eaters

Since bloat does not usually occur immediately after eating, Dr. Glickman has no explanation for this. He did find that the faster the dog ate, the greater the risk of bloat.

## **Dr. Glickmans Recommendations For Lowering The Risk Of Bloat**

1. Don't breed a dog if a first degree relative has suffered an episode of bloat.
2. Consider a prophylactic gastropexy for dogs that fit the high risk profile.
3. Owners of anxious or fearful dogs should consider behavior modification and consult a behaviorist.
4. Feed smaller, multiple meals instead of one large meal per day.
5. Do NOT elevate food bowl.
6. Owners who have dogs that eat rapidly should do anything to slow the speed of eating. The most common and effective way was to place a large object in the food bowl that the dog had to eat around. A suggestion was a heavy link chain which forces the dog to eat under and around it.

## **Results of 5 Year Bloat Study By Lawrence Glickman, VMD Dietary Risk Factors**

Dietary risk factors for bloat (GDV) in dogs were identified using the 1991 dogs from the study. 106 dogs that developed bloat were selected as cases while 212 other dogs from the study were randomly selected as controls. A complete profile of intakes was constructed for each dog based on owner-reported information, published references and nutritional database.

The study confirmed previous reports of an increased risk of GDV associated with increasing age, having a first-degree relative with GDV and having a raised food bowl. New significant findings included a 2.6 fold (160%) increased risk of GDV in dogs that consumed dry foods containing fat\* among the first four ingredients. The GDV increased 3 fold (200%) in dogs that consumed dry food containing citric acid\* as a preservative. Dry foods containing a rendered meat meal with bone product among the first four ingredients significantly decreased GDV risk by 53%. Moistening of dry food alone was not associated with GDV but consumption of owner-moistened dry foods that also contained citric acid significantly increased GDV 4 fold (300%). Approximately 30 and 33% of all cases of GDV in this food related study could be attributed to consumption of dry food containing fat among the first four ingredients or citric acid, respectively. These findings can be used by owners to select dry foods that may reduce the risk of GDV.

\* The information on fat and preservatives can be found under "Ingredients" not "Guaranteed Analysis"

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Kids and Dogs: Safety First!

**Kid-proof your dog, and dog-proof your kids!**

**By Norma Bennett Wolff**

*High-pitched laughter peeling behind her, Nancy ran around the corner of the house smack dab into the dog chained by the garage. Unnerved by the noise and startled by the child, the dog lunged and bit Nancy on the nose. She screamed, and the dog bit again. Nancy ended up with several stitches in her face and nightmares; the dog was euthanized for biting; and both families were traumatized.*

The tragedy could have been avoided if Nancy's folks and the dog's owners had been prepared.

- First of all, a dog should never be chained outside unattended. Most dogs of guard or working heritage suffer personality quirks when tied and many become downright aggressive. Dogs are better off in fenced areas, where they can see the barrier between them and the world, where they can feel somewhat safe from noisy, frolicking children. In addition, many dogs instinctively equate the high-pitched sounds of children with the distress sounds of prey animals, and they react by biting the child as they would have bitten the prey animal in the wild.
- Second, children should be taught how to behave around dogs, even if their own family does not own a dog. For example, a child should never approach a strange dog without asking the owner if it's OK to pat the dog. If the child sees a loose dog on the street, he should not approach it even if he knows the dog belongs to his friend. He should tell someone that he saw the dog, but should make no attempt to pat or grab it.
- Nor should he scream or run away, for these actions can result in an attack by the dog. A running being frequently says "prey" to the dog and triggers the chase response in his brain. Once triggered, this response is almost impossible to interrupt. The dog is reacting to chemical stimulus, not rational thought, and is extremely difficult to sidetrack.

**Most dogs, even those that are well-trained, do not consider children as figures of authority.**

Furthermore, since children frequently stare intently at animals, a dog may feel threatened by this short person who is trying to catch him. Even the best-natured dog may bite to protect himself in these circumstances, especially if he feels cornered.

Once a child is given permission to approach a dog, she should present her closed fist for the dog to sniff. This protects the fingers in case the dog is frightened and tries to nip.

**Children should never hug a dog** – a dog sees this as a dominant behavior, not as affection!

Furthermore, children should never, ever put their face in the dog's face. Children should be taught to never hit dogs with their hands or an object, to lower their voices when playing with the dog, to leave the dog alone when he's sleeping, eating, or ill, and to never tease a dog in any fashion. Many dog bites occur because the child teases the pet beyond endurance.

Dog owners share the responsibility for bite prevention as well. They should socialize their puppies to small children at an early age. Or encourage safe interaction between children and the dog. Do NOT let strange children run up to your dog – if necessary calmly tell the child to back away. No dog deserves to be put in a losing situation, wherein the dog is completely surprised and taken off-guard by the approach of a strange, running, possibly loud child. Use these opportunities to teach children about safety around dogs, hopefully the parents will appreciate your efforts. Explain that dogs need to be approached to the side, and very slowly and quietly. Not all dogs are good with children, or tolerate the presence of a child. Pay VERY close attention to your dog's signals – is the dog nervous, growling, lifting it's lip? Then tell the child not to pet the dog. And, don't encourage the dog's behavior by saying "it's ok" – it is NOT ok to behave this way, and it doesn't soothe the dog to say that.

Socialization can be as simple as walking the dog near a playground where children are making noise, running about, playing ball or Frisbee or soccer or walking through the neighborhood while the kids wait for the school bus. The dog can be told to walk at heel through a crowd of children, to sit-stay and watch the play or allow the children to pet his head, to down-stay until the end of the game. Constant exposure of this type will accustom the dog to the presence and antics of children. However, even still, a dog may

## Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

never be comfortable around children. You must know your dog's limits and not exceed or push the envelope with your dog.

1. **The dog should never be left alone with a child less than five years of age.** Let me repeat that – NEVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD ALONE WITH YOUR DOG!! Even for a second, or even to turn your back – that is NOT ok! As the adult, it is YOUR job and responsibility to protect your child and your dog. A young child may challenge or injure the dog unintentionally and the result could be tragic. Dogs and children should be separated at snack time so the dog doesn't learn to steal food from tiny hands.
2. **The dog should have a place he can call his own, a retreat, a private room, a den.** This can be a pen in the back yard or a crate in the house. The children should never be allowed to bother the dog when he is in his place.
3. **If the dog has access to a fenced yard, owners should make sure that neighborhood children cannot accidentally or intentionally tease him.** Kids often begin by goading the dog to bark, then to snarl. Or they may throw things at him to chase him away from the fence. However it begins, the end result is usually the same: the kids learn that teasing the dog gives them a feeling of power tinged with the possibility of danger and the dog learns to hate kids. This hatred may be manifest as fear or as aggression, and may end when a child is bitten and the dog is taken to the pound to be placed in a new home, (if lucky).
4. **If the dog does not like the children, the children must change their behavior.** Most dogs are wary of staring, of quick movements, and of high-pitched screams, all of which are typical of small children. Here are a few hints to alleviate the tension between dog and children.
5. **Provide a crate where the dog can escape the attention of boisterous or over-zealous children.**
6. **Teach children to leave Ranger alone when he's in the crate, to pat him gently--no squeezing around the neck, please--and to leave him alone while he's eating.**
7. **Do not play tug-of-war with any dog who has access to children.** A dog that learns to tug on any item will soon figure that anything he can grab is his, even if it's a child's toy, clothing, or appendage.
8. **Teach children not to run past the dog and scream,** for this can excite the dog and lead to dominant and even aggressive behavior.
9. **Never tie a dog in the yard.** Children tend to tease tethered dogs even without realizing it, which can lead to aggressive behavior. Many instances of dogs attacking children occur when the dog is tethered in the yard and a screaming or running child enters its space.

The sight of a child and a dog napping together on the sofa or the floor, playing in the yard, or contemplating the sunset is a wondrous thing. The potential relationship between a child and the dog who considers himself the family guardian is precious, and it needs to be nurtured and guided. Families can accomplish this by teaching the dog and the child to respect and cherish each other. If this can be done, fewer children will be bitten and fewer dogs will be euthanized for aggressive behavior.

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## “When Baby Makes Four”

By Patty Cornelius

It never fails, each week we get at least one call into our rescue program from a tired, frantic new parent saying “Help! We have a new baby and we need to find a home for our Weimaraner!” New parents are often finding life with a weim and a baby difficult to handle. The problems they now face could have easily been avoided with some prior planning and a little bit of time and patience. There are thousands of dogs dumped in shelters each year because a new baby came along and life suddenly became too hectic for the family. Most of these dogs never make it to another home. In fact, owner released dogs often are given only 1-3 days to find a new home before they are euthanized.

If you are a new parent, or an expecting parent, you are not the first, and most definitely will not be the last person who will face the challenge of bringing a new baby into a house where the dog has been the only “child”. In today’s society where couples are waiting longer to have children, couples often bring a pet or pets in the household and these pets become “surrogate” children. The animals receive all of the attention that a child would normally receive. I personally think a dog is great practice for a child - but this practice is also causing too many dogs to be neglected and even abandoned as children start to enter the picture.

Remember, you are the one who chose to bring this dog into the family and his well being is your responsibility for the rest of his life. It’s unreasonable to expect your loyal, loving pet to instantly accept a new baby into the household. It won’t happen overnight. You will need to begin to prepare your dog for this drastic change in the months before the baby is due.

### **BEFORE THE BABY IS BORN**

#### Obedience Training

It is important to practice obedience training, or in some cases, begin obedience training. Without this, it will be nearly impossible to maintain sanity in the house once the new one arrives.

Your dog has a natural desire to be a part of a pack. You need to evaluate your dog’s position in your pack. Is he the alpha dog of the family? Does he boss you around? By this, I mean does he growl or snap at you when you try to get him off of the couch or take away his toy? Does he demand to be petted? Will he wait to start eating his food if you told him to? If your dog has taken over the house as the pack leader, it’s never too late to reestablish control. A dog that controls the adults in the house will most definitely try to control the children in the house. The results of this could be disastrous. If you need help in reconfiguring the pack order in your house, please contact someone in our rescue organization or a dog trainer. It isn’t hard to do, but you need guidance to make it happen safely and effectively.

You may need to reestablish your dog’s boundaries in the house. This may be the time to kick Fido out of your bed and make him sleep on a dog bed. You will be too tired to deal with this after the baby comes. Think about the behaviors that need to be changed before the baby arrives and start working to correct them immediately.

Take time to practice and reinforce commands like “sit”, “down”, “stay”, and “off”. As always, make training a positive experience. Use only positive reinforcement such as treats or praise. NEVER use negative reinforcement like hitting or isolation when training a dog. This will only serve to make your dog fearful and untrusting - the opposite of what you want to gain from obedience training.

Begin to gradually reduce the amount of attention you give the dog. If Fido is used to being the center of attention in your household, he will expect this to be the same when the baby arrives. If he is suddenly not the center of attention, he will associate the baby with this lack of attention and he may develop a negative attitude about the baby.

## Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

If you have a dog that is very demanding, one who nudges, barks, or paws at you for attention, you need to eliminate this behavior before the baby comes. This kind of behavior could startle or even injure the baby. If he paws at you to pet him, ignore him for a few seconds. Make him sit. When he does, pet him. This will make him associate sitting next to you with being petted. Do not reinforce the negative behaviors of nudging, pawing, and barking by giving in. Ignore them, make the dog sit, then give him the attention he needs. The behaviors will eventually go away if you are consistent.

If you have a dog who is a “mouther” (one that likes to put your hands in his mouth), a dog who play-bites, or nips affectionately, this behavior will also need to be eliminated before the baby arrives. To eliminate this behavior, use a sharp “NO!” when it happens. Walk away and ignore the dog. Do not continue to play. He will associate biting with you ending the play session. If you are consistent, it will stop. If the “NO!” command is not enough, try a squirt bottle filled with water. Dogs hate to be squirted in the face with water.

Once you have your dog back under your control - a dog who responds to commands, doesn't exhibit dangerous behaviors, and realizes he's not the center of your world any longer - the initial introduction to the baby and the months following will be much easier to handle.

### Preparing Your Dog For Life With A Baby

Next, you need to start familiarizing your dog with child-like behaviors. Try to expose your dog to as many babies and children as you can. This is called socialization. Start by letting your dog observe children at play and slowly move toward the children. Every time your dog does this without any negative behaviors, reward him with a special treat. If your dog growls, snaps, or acts frightened, leave quickly but calmly. Don't get upset and don't scold the dog. It's important to keep his stress level down during this training. Try again later but take it more slowly next time. Try using more frequent rewards for good behavior. Make him sit while watching the children play. Give him a tasty treat when he does. If he acts fine while walking towards the children, treat him then.

Begin to prepare your dog to be handled by a child. To do this, give him a special treat. While he is enjoying the treat, begin to poke, grab, and gently pinch his coat. Do this gently at first and then work up to a level of intensity that a child might exhibit. This training will be done only as a precautionary measure. You should train the child as he or she grows older not to poke, pinch, or hit the dog. In doing so, you are helping to prevent serious injury to your child. The dog will learn to respect the child if the child is taught to respect the dog.

Food safety is another area you need to focus on during this period of time. You need to get your dog used to having others near his food bowl while he is eating. While the dog is eating, drop in a special treat or two. Verbally praise him as he gobbles it up. Try to do this every time he eats. While he is eating, make some noise in the house, run, scream, do the things a baby or toddler would do so that the dog becomes accustomed to a little chaos during dinner time. Remember to praise him each time he exhibits the desired behavior. This is another practice that should be done only as a precautionary measure. It is important for you to train your child not to disturb the dog while he is eating. Do not allow the child to touch the dog or the food during dinnertime. Again, you are risking serious injury to your child if you allow this to happen.

While you are preparing the nursery, don't shut the dog out. Let him in to become familiar with the new sights and smells. Let him sniff blankets, toys, and clothes. Make sure he is not trying to put any of these items in his mouth. You might need to take time to practice the “drop it” command if he tries to put the baby's things in his mouth. Remember, you won't have the time or the energy to do this after the baby is here.

This time before the birth of the baby is a good time to teach your dog how to heel beside you while you push a stroller. It will not be safe for the baby or the dog to try to teach this when the baby is in the stroller. Daily walks are a great way to spend quality time with the dog and the baby together. This will also help promote the bond between the dog and the baby. Your Weimaraner's exercise requirements will not change with the arrival of the baby. In fact, with all of that nervous energy, he may need more

## **Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner**

exercise than before. Try to plan time for his exercise needs. We always say in rescue “A tired dog is a good dog!”

### **ONCE THE BABY ARRIVES HOME**

After the baby is born, before he or she comes home, the father should bring home something that has the baby’s scent on it. This might be a blanket or a nightgown. Allow the dog to sniff and become familiar with the baby’s smell. Praise and reward him for sniffing gently. Do not get him over excited by the praise.

Upon entry to the house, let the father or another person carry the baby into the house. The mother should greet the dog the way she normally does. Immediately give him a very special toy or treat. This will help distract his attention away from the baby. This also makes the entry of the baby a positive start for the dog.

During this initial entry, it’s best to have the dog on a leash. This way you will have quick control over him if something unexpected happens. Let him sniff around for a minute as the baby comes in the door. Eventually, the mom should sit on the couch with the baby. Before she sits, she should give the “sit” and “stay” command. The father, or someone else, should have hold of the leash. After the dog sits, the mom should sit with the baby and allow the dog to say hello. Praise him as he gently says hello to the baby. If the dog does something inappropriate at this time, calmly and without emotion, remove the dog from the situation and try again later.

You should NEVER leave the dog and baby alone for any amount of time no matter how trustworthy you feel the dog may be. It only takes a split second for an accident to happen.

Many families make the mistake of isolating the dog from the baby. This only creates anxiety in the dog and makes him more likely to get over excited or upset about the baby. Make sure the dog is included in this initial arrival and in all aspects of the routines with the baby. Let him sit by you as you feed or bathe the baby. Keep him included in the daily household routines just as he is used to. Do not banish your pet to a life in the backyard. This will only make matters worse and it’s not fair to your pet.

### **AS YOUR CHILD GROWS OLDER**

Training your child how to treat the family pet is just as important as training your family pet how to treat the child. Most dog bites happen when children are not treating the dog respectfully. How long would you put up with someone poking you with a stick, throwing blocks at you, or trying to stuff raisins in your ears? Dogs get irritated by annoying behavior just like we humans do.

Children are not born knowing how to interact with pets. You will have to teach the child the proper way to touch the dog. Start with a gentle touch on the back. Encourage them to keep their hands away from the dog’s face. Let them know that it is never okay to sneak up on the dog.

Also, as stated before, teach the child to stay away from the dog while he is eating or while he’s enjoying a treat or a toy. Tell them to NEVER try to take food or toys away from the dog.

Do not allow your child to play tug-of-war or wrestling games with the dog. This is the behavior that puppies exhibit within their pack when they are trying to establish the pack order I mentioned previously. When the dog beats the child at these games, he sees it as dominating the weaker member of the pack and this will lead to more problems down the road. Teach your child how to play games like fetch and hide and seek instead.

Teaching children to live with pets is an on-going process. Some parents put the entire responsibility of care for the dog in the hands of the children. While it is important for the children to learn to share the responsibilities of the family pet, it is not reasonable to expect the child to be the sole care taker. It

## Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

wouldn't be fair for the dog to miss dinner for the night because Susie forgot to feed him. It's also not fair that the dog has to do his business on the living room rug because someone forgot to take him out. Any parent who says they are getting a dog "for the kids" is only fooling themselves. Once the "honeymoon" period wears off, the children aren't as eager to feed, walk, and play with the dog.

### CONCLUSION

As you probably already know, dogs can bring an immense amount love and happiness to your home. The arrival of a baby does not have to change any of this. With a commitment of time and patience from you, your child can grow up knowing the joys of living with a dog.

Part of our rescue mission is to help counsel and educate Weimaraner owners with problems they may encounter. We are here to answer your questions and provide information to you at no cost. If you need to contact us about the issue of a new baby or any other problems you may be experiencing with your Weimaraner, please feel free to email us at [bark@weimrescuetexas.org](mailto:bark@weimrescuetexas.org) or call our voice mail number at (972) 994-3572.

***Please NOTE: The information in the above paragraph came from the Weimaraner Rescue of North Texas group. If you have questions about adding a human child to your home, please contact us at [RescueInfo@mhwc.org](mailto:RescueInfo@mhwc.org).***

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# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## List of Common Problems Afflicting Weimaraners

Cryptorchidism or undescended testicle(s): bilaterals sterile; unilaterals fertile but barred from showing; widespread in many breeds. Inheritance: threshold; recessive(?).

Dermoid or corneal dermoid cyst:

Congenital cyst on cornea; contains skin, glands and hair. Inheritance: unclear

Distichiasis or double eyelashes:

extra row of eyelashes, usually on the lower lid but can be on the upper lid causing irritation to the cornea characterized by tearing.

Entropion or diamond eye:

Eyelids roll in and hair rubs on the cornea; effects are irritation, tearing and visual losses from scarring. This occurs in many breeds.

Von Willebrands Disease: Factor VIII Deficiency or hemophilia A; AHF:

Slowed clotting time; prolonged bleeding at time of tail docking, hematomas, etc. Inheritance: recessive, sex linked.

- <http://www.weimclubamerica.org/health/vonwillebrands.html> -September 1994
- Updated information coming soon (6/2001)

Factor XI Deficiency or minor bleeding disorder:

Potentially severe after trauma or surgery. Inheritance: autosomal dominant; incomplete penetrance.

Gastric Torsion or GDV, bloat/torsion, twisted stomach:

Bloat is a disease common to deep-chested dogs that can involve twisting or torsion of the stomach with a subsequent blockage of the esophagus at one end and the intestine at the other. Bloat happens quickly and is often fatal without immediate veterinary attention.

Its symptoms include retching with no vomiting, extreme salivation, obvious discomfort, and distention of the abdomen. Gulping food can bring on an attack of bloat, so Weimaraners should be fed twice daily to avoid the hunger pangs that lead to eating too fast. Some breeders believe that foods containing soybeans shouldn't be fed to breeds that are susceptible to bloat because the beans can produce gas.

Many cases of bloat occur in the evening, after the dog has perhaps shared the family snack of pizza or some other highly-spiced food and then exercised. Treatment is expensive and not always successful. Feeding moistened dog food and postponing exercise for a couple of hours after the meal may help prevent bloat. You can also visit the The Great Dane Bloat Book (<http://www.ualberta.ca/~dc8/szbloat.htm>) for more info.

Hip Displasia, CHD or poor hips:

Progressive developmental deformity of hip joints; mild to crippling. Inheritance: polygenic; threshold. For more information visit the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (<http://www.offa.org>)

Hypertrophic Osteodystrophy or HOD:

Painful, swollen joints and bones; fever; may outgrow it but often left with bone deformities; most prevalent in giant breeds; auto immune reaction to vaccines; also associated with oversupplementation. Inheritance is unknown.

Links:

- WCA Policy On Vaccinations (<http://www.weimclubamerica.org/health/shots.html>)
- Hypertrophic Osteodystrophy (<http://www.weimclubamerica.org/health/hodarticle1.html>) : An article by Judy Colan. - October 1998
- Identificaton of a genetic marker for HOD in the Weimaraner (<http://www.weimclubamerica.org/health/hodparil2001.html>). An article by Dr.John Angles - April 2001

## Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

### Hypomyelinogenesis - Delayed Myelination:

Born with improper nerve covering; tremors and incoordination; may improve and even be normal by one year old. Occurs in six breeds including Weimaraners, Brittany Spaniels and Bernese Mountain Dogs. The prognosis for puppies is good. Affected dogs are born with the myelin sheathing on the nerves underdeveloped. It is similar to Parkinson's Disease in humans, but unlike humans, the dogs are able to regenerate the sheathing with time. Because this insulating coating is missing, impulses sent along the nerves fanned out, missing their intended location and exciting all nerves along the pathway. Once the myelin is regrown, there are no further signs of the problem and puppies go on to lead normal lives.

### Hypothyroidism -

Inadequate output of the thyroid hormone causing the coat to thin, becoming coarse, brittle and falling out easily. Other signs that develop gradually are lethargy, obesity, drooping of the eyelids, mental dullness, and irregular heat cycles. Mild thyroid deficiency frequently goes undetected. Diagnosis involves a blood test. Treatment: requires lifetime treatment with thyroid hormone.

### Mastocytoma or mast cell tumor:

Malignant and often rapidly spreading nodular skin tumors.

Inheritance: unknown

### Nictitating Membrane Eversion:

Haw has poor attachments; cartilage is rolled; everts, showing red swelling and curved cartilage.

Inheritance: autosomal recessive (uncertain).

### Persistent Right Aortic Arch:

Abnormal artery constricts esophagus half-way to the stomach; vomiting; must be corrected surgically.

Inheritance: polygenic; threshold.

### Pituitary Dwarfism:

Normally proportioned dwarf, immature and retarded; may be fatal.

Inheritance: autosomal recessive.

### Retinal Atrophy, Generalized Progressive or general PRA:

Retina degenerates; first, night blindness; then total blindness before middle age.

Inheritance: autosomal recessive.

### Syringomyelia, spinal dysraphism; hopper's disease:

Dog stands in a crouch position and hops to move; non-progressive; associated with myelin dysplasias.

Inheritance: unknown

### Thymic Atrophy:

By one to three months, the dog has stunted growth, wasting and suppurative pneumonia.

Inheritance: unknown

### Tricuspid Valve Dysplasia:

There is a bad valve between heart chambers which causes other heart problems to develop.

Inheritance: unknown

### Umbilical Hernia, rupture or "outie":

Bulging of the abdominal contents in sac at umbilicus; common; usually harmless unless it is very large.

AKC Policy On Umbilical Hernias (<http://www.akc.org/dic/events/surgery.cfm>)

Inheritance: threshold

### Ununited Anconeal Process or elbow dysplasia:

Growth plate in elbow does not fuse; secondary degenerative joint disease: pain and limp; surgical correction required.

The OFA has more information on elbow dysplasia. Inheritance: polygenic

# Easing the Transition with Your New Weimaraner

## Dog Ten Commandments

1. My life is likely to last 10 to 15 years - any separation from you will be very painful.
2. Give me time to understand what you want of me.
3. Place your trust in me - it is crucial for my well being.
4. Don't be angry with me for long and don't lock me up as punishment...You have your work, your friends, your entertainment...  
**I HAVE ONLY YOU!**
5. Talk to me. Even if I don't understand your words, I understand your voice when you're speaking to me.
6. Be aware that however you treat me, I'll NEVER forget it.
7. Before you hit me, remember that I have teeth that could easily crush the bones in your hands but I choose NOT to bite YOU.
8. Before you scold me for being lazy or uncooperative, ask yourself if something might be bothering me. Perhaps I'm not getting the right food, I've been out in the sun too long or my heart may be getting old and weak.
9. Take care of me when I get old. You too will grow old.
10. Go with me on difficult journeys. Never say, "I can't bear to watch it" or "Let it happen in my absence." Everything is easier for ME if you are there. Remember that I love you.

Please remember that Mile High Weimaraner Rescue is HERE to HELP! Call, email or post to the Yahoo Group. We want your adoption to be successful. If you are having difficulties please contact us! And, if for any reason, at any time, you can not keep your dog – you MUST call us first. Your adoption contract legally obligates you to return the dog to OUR rescue. We care about dogs in our rescue, so if you can't keep the dog, call us!