



## **MOUTHING**

As your adoption counselor discussed with you, your dog can be mouthy. This means that your dog may put their mouth on you more readily upon introduction, during play, or during body handling.

### **The Plan:**

Dogs have a natural need to use their mouths as part of their enrichment – you often see them use their mouths when they are playing with each other. It is your responsibility as your dog's handler to direct their mouthing to an appropriate item or situation (aka not you!).

### **The Practice:**

- If your dog is dog-social, you will see a significant decrease in their mouthing behaviour if they have regular access to do what they love most(!) – play with their dog friends!

If your dog is not dog social (or *is* and needs further stimulation) these are our following recommendations;

- Pay attention to the timing of your dog's mouthing. Is it before or after a meal, before or after exercise, before bed, etc. Try to provide your dog with the appropriate outlet *before* the mouthing happens. For example, if your dog gets very mouthy when they are over-tired, place your dog into their crate or sleeping area *before* they begin to mouth excessively.
- Provide your dog with access to a variety of toys with differentiating textures. You will notice that your dog may prefer a specific texture – try to match a toy that emulates this.
- If your dog does have something in its mouth that it is not meant to have, take hold of the item and hold it still (if the item is your arm, hold it still).  
The more you try to tug the item out of your dog's mouth or open your dog's mouth to remove the item, the more resistance you will get. Your dog can also see this as a game and play 'keep away' from you once they have a hold of the item.
- Once you have the item in your hand, direct your dog to LEAVE IT in a calm tone. Keep the item still and your tone calm as you repeat the direction; LEAVE IT.
- Once your dog LEAVES the item load them up with praise – no treats!  
Giving your dog treats at this time can actually encourage them to put their mouth on the inappropriate item in order to receive the treat.

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## **Georgian Triangle Humane Society**

549 Tenth Line, Collingwood ON, L9Y 0W1  
705-445-5204 | [info@gths.ca](mailto:info@gths.ca) | [www.gths.ca](http://www.gths.ca)  
Registration Number 86800 4185 RR0001



**Support:**

Our Behaviour Support Team can help to provide resources and tips if you experience concerns in the home environment. With your adoption the GTHS will provide an over the phone consultation in order to provide you with tips and resources to set your new dog up for success. In all cases of dog adoptions, the GTHS recommends hiring a professional dog training or behavioural consultant to ensure your relationship with your new dog starts off on the right paw! A list of local trainers is enclosed in your adoption package.

Our Behaviour Support Team can be reached at [behaviour@gths.ca](mailto:behaviour@gths.ca)

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