



SUBMISSIVE URINATION

Does your dog urinate when meeting new people or when being scolded? This probably isn't a housetraining issue, but rather "submissive urination." Submissive urination is when a dog urinates to show social appeasement and/or convey that they aren't a threat. While most common in puppies, adult dogs can also display this behavior. If your dog is urinating when they're excited, like when you've just returned home from work, and isn't showing any of the signs listed below, you're probably dealing with excitement, not submissive, urination.

Submissive urination commonly occur in situations where your dog is uneasy like:

- 🐾 Greeting new people or other animals.
- 🐾 Confronting a new or "scary" object such as a wheelbarrow or statue.
- 🐾 During physical contact (ex. petting) or when being scolded.

Signs that usually precede submissive urination: Cowering, lowering the head or body, raising a front paw, tail tucking, flattening the ears back, lip licking and/or squinting eyes.

What to do:

- 🐾 *First, visit your veterinarian to address any medical issues that may contribute to the behavior.*
- 🐾 Change things up to reduce their uneasiness in situations when urination usually occurs.
- 🐾 Encourage visitors to ignore your dog at first meeting or when they enter your home. It might be hard, but waiting until they settle helps reduce the chance of submissive urination. Once they settle, interact with them calmly. Look off to the side instead of straight into their eyes.
- 🐾 Sit on the floor or squat down to avoid leaning over your dog. Leaning over a dog can make them nervous, so getting down to their level can help. Touch them under the chin or on the chest, rather than on top of the head or ears to engage them in a calming and reassuring way.
- 🐾 If necessary, in the short-term, do all initial greetings outside to minimize damage to floors.
- 🐾 Toss a handful of small treats or a few favorite toys just to the side of your body as the dog runs up to greet you to create a brief, positive distraction so they can greet more calmly.

What NOT to do:

- 🐾 Do not hug or pat the dog's head when greeting or interacting.
- 🐾 If they start to urinate (or you think they might) do not look at, touch, or speak to the dog. It is important not to scold or punish the dog for urinating, as this may worsen the behavior.
- 🐾 Train only with force-free methods. Never yell at, strike, or otherwise frighten your dog.

These dogs are sensitive and respond best to positive reinforcement training. They also benefit from confidence-building activities like hand-targeting, agility, and playing with outgoing dogs.