



# **Diamond's Friends Pet Rescue Foster Manual**

Your Foster Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Foster Coordinator Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# Table of Contents

|                                                                      |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Section 1: Introduction .....                                        | 4  |
| Section 2: Preparing for Your Foster Dog .....                       | 5  |
| Supplies .....                                                       | 5  |
| Dog-Proofing .....                                                   | 5  |
| Section 3: Foster Dog Assignments .....                              | 7  |
| Section 4: Bringing Your Foster Dog Home .....                       | 8  |
| Key Dog Body Language Indicators to Watch for to Prevent Bites ..... | 8  |
| Other Useful Graphics to Understand Dog Behavior .....               | 9  |
| Three Day (Minimum) Decompression Period .....                       | 11 |
| Children and Dogs .....                                              | 11 |
| Dog Introductions .....                                              | 12 |
| Cat Introductions .....                                              | 12 |
| Section 5: Daily Care .....                                          | 14 |
| Daily Routine .....                                                  | 14 |
| Crate Training .....                                                 | 15 |
| Feeding .....                                                        | 15 |
| Leash .....                                                          | 15 |
| House Training .....                                                 | 16 |
| Grooming .....                                                       | 16 |
| Mental Stimulation .....                                             | 16 |
| Safety Protocols.....                                                | 17 |
| Section 6: Medical and Emergency Protocols .....                     | 18 |
| Veterinary Care .....                                                | 18 |
| Signs of Injury/Illness and What to Do .....                         | 19 |
| Collapse .....                                                       | 19 |
| Concerning Combo Symptoms .....                                      | 19 |
| Difficulty Breathing .....                                           | 19 |
| Excessive Bleeding .....                                             | 19 |
| Blood in Poop .....                                                  | 19 |
| Disorientation .....                                                 | 20 |
| Eating Something That Isn't Their Food or Treats .....               | 20 |
| General Bleeding .....                                               | 20 |
| Vomiting .....                                                       | 20 |
| Blood in Pee .....                                                   | 20 |
| Coughing .....                                                       | 20 |
| Drinking More or Less Than Usual .....                               | 21 |

|                                                                                    |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Eye Discharge .....                                                                | 21 |
| Fleas/Ticks .....                                                                  | 21 |
| General Bleeding .....                                                             | 21 |
| Going to the Bathroom More Frequently than Usual .....                             | 21 |
| Lack of Appetite .....                                                             | 21 |
| Limping .....                                                                      | 21 |
| Loose Poop/Diarrhea .....                                                          | 21 |
| Lumps and Bumps .....                                                              | 21 |
| Scratching/Itchiness .....                                                         | 22 |
| Sneezing .....                                                                     | 22 |
| Worms .....                                                                        | 22 |
| Things to Evaluate If You Are Worried About Your Foster Dog .....                  | 22 |
| Breathing .....                                                                    | 22 |
| Hydration .....                                                                    | 22 |
| Profusion .....                                                                    | 22 |
| Temperature .....                                                                  | 22 |
| Information About Zoonotic Diseases from VCA and Washington State University ..... | 23 |
| Section 7: Helping Your Foster Dog Get Adopted .....                               | 24 |
| Adoption FAQs .....                                                                | 24 |
| Section 8: FAQs .....                                                              | 26 |



## **Section 1: Introduction**

Thank you for being willing to foster for Diamond's Friends Pet Rescue! By opening your home to foster homeless dogs, you're not only helping to save lives, you're providing the personalized attention and love these pups need prior to their adoption.

Our foster program is designed to help dogs from California and beyond have a second chance at finding a home. Some of the dogs who need foster homes require extra care and attention, which shelters often don't have the staff or resources to provide. But, in a loving foster home, they can get the individual attention they need to find a forever family.

Foster homes are asked to provide care for the dog, as well as occasional transportation to and from appointments as needed. Care for foster dogs includes feeding according to size and needs, exercise according to energy levels, a structure/routine the dog can depend on, and lots of play time and positive socialization.

Diamond's Friends relies heavily on foster homes to save lives since we have no physical facility. We cannot pull dogs from shelters without committed foster homes for them to go to.

By being a foster, you are saving lives and helping dogs find their adoptive families. We couldn't do what we do without YOU! Thank you!



## **Section 2: Preparing for Your Foster Dog**

Before bringing your foster dog home, it will be important to ensure you have (or will have) the necessary supplies on hand to care for them. It's also essential to "dog-proof" your home so your foster can't get into anything or destroy anything of value or that could be dangerous to them.

### **Supplies**

Diamond's Friends will provide you with any necessary supplies that you may need. However, we greatly appreciate any help that you can provide in supplying items for your foster dog. Any supplies that you purchase are tax deductible (we are a 501c3 organization).

Depending on scheduling, we will either provide supplies in advance of your foster dog's arrival OR upon drop off. We will also help you set up anything you need help with!

Here's what we will provide for your foster dog:

- Food and water bowls
- Food
- A collar with ID tag and an Airtag.
- A leash
- A crate large enough for your foster pup as well as a crate bed
- Poop bags

- Treats
- Toys
- Dog shampoo
- Cleaner for accidents

Other supplies that may be helpful and can be provided upon request include:

- Baby gates
- A puppy pen
- Potty pads
- Belly bands for male dogs
- Chew bones
- A harness

Please alert the foster coordinator if you'd like any additional supplies.

## **Dog-Proofing**

Many foster dogs come from a shelter environment, and even if they have previously lived in a home, we don't always know how they will react in a new home. Before bringing home a new foster dog, you'll want to evaluate the area where you are going to keep them.

Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the dog to chew on/ingest, and securely latch any cupboards and doors that the foster dog could get into.

Never underestimate your foster dog's abilities! They have likely spent time on the streets looking for their next meal, so don't put it past them to get into trash cans, open cupboards, or even hop on your counter.

Here are some tips for dog-proofing your home:

- Make sure that all trash cans are covered or latched and keep them inside a closet. (Don't forget the bathroom trash bins.)
- Keep the toilet lids closed.
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off counter tops.
- Move house plants or secure them. Some dogs like to play with them and may knock them over. (**Note:** please let the foster coordinator know if you'd like a list of plants that are poisonous to your foster dog.)
- Make sure aquariums or cages that house small animals, like hamsters or fish, are securely out of reach of your foster dog.
- Remove medications, lotions, or cosmetics from any accessible surfaces.
- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach. Dogs may chew on or get tangled in them.
- Pick up any clothing items, which can be harmful to your foster dog if consumed.
- Relocate knickknacks or valuables that your foster dog could knock down , chew on, or interrupt in any way.



## Section 3: Foster Dog Assignments

The foster coordinator will work with you to identify a foster dog who will best fit within your home. We will always do our best to match you with the dog who matches your lifestyle and schedule.

Things we will consider when matching you with a foster dog include:

- Your schedule
- Who you live with (other adults, kids, and pets)
- Your experience with dogs
- Your lifestyle (do you prefer spending your weekends hiking or binging the latest Netflix show?)
- If you rent, size/breed restrictions from your landlord
- How long you can foster for
- Any “deal breakers” that would cause you to return a foster dog

Our goal is to match you with a foster dog who you will be able to handle and that will thrive in your home. We are VERY careful about our matching process since we rely heavily on our foster homes to provide a safe place to their foster dog to stay until the dog is adopted. We have no physical facility, so our foster homes are vital to our ability to save lives!

When you and the foster coordinator have decided on a suitable foster dog, an appointment will be scheduled for you to get your foster dog and any supplies you’ll need.



## **Section 4: Bringing Your Foster Dog Home**

When you bring your foster dog home, they may be frightened or unsure about what's happening. This is normal since their world has just been turned upside down. It would be like if you moved in with new roommates you had never met before. There's an adjustment period that's needed!

PLEASE DO NOT leave your foster dog unsupervised in your home or unattended with your kids or personal pets at any time. If you are unable to supervise interactions or monitor your foster dog, please crate them. This is for their safety and the safety of everyone in your home.

### **Key Dog Body Language Indicators to Watch for to Prevent Bites:**

Please DO NOT hug or kiss your foster dog. Most dogs don't like these actions and will bite!

1. Whale Eye (when a dog shows the whites of his/her eyes, this is a sign of stress)
2. Lip Licking
3. Trembling in fear
4. Yawning
5. Full body shake (when not done after a bath, indicates the dog is trying to shake off stress)
6. Growling
7. Cowering
8. Baring teeth

## 9. Snarling

If your foster dog does any of these things, move away and give some space to decompress.

### Other Useful Graphics to Understand Dog Behavior



## Understanding dog behaviour

YOUR DOG'S BODY LANGUAGE CAN HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE FEELING

### A happy dog

A dog who is happy will be relaxed.

1

Dog has a relaxed body posture, smooth hair, mouth open and relaxed, ears in natural position, wagging tail, eyes normal shape.



2

Dog is inviting play with bottom raised, smooth hair, high wagging tail, eyes normal shape, ears in natural position, may be barking excitedly.



3

Dog's weight is distributed across all four paws, smooth hair, tail wagging, face is interested and alert, relaxed and mouth open.

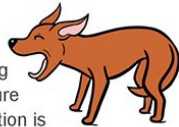


### A worried dog

These dogs are telling you that they are uncomfortable and don't want you to go near them.

1

Dog is standing but body posture and head position is low. Tail is tucked under, ears are back and dog is yawning.



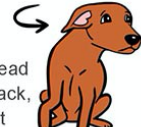
2

Dog is lying down and avoiding eye contact or turning head away from you and lip licking and ears are back.



3

Dog is sitting with head lowered, ears are back, tail tucked away, not making eye contact, yawning, raising a front paw.



### An angry or very unhappy dog

These dogs are not happy and want you to stay away or go away.

1

Dog is standing with a stiffened body posture, weight forward, ears are up, hair raised, eyes looking at you – pupils dark and enlarged, tail is up and stiff, wrinkled nose.



2

Dog is lying down cowering, ears flat, teeth showing, tail down between legs.



3

Dog is standing with body down and weight towards the back, head is tilted upwards, mouth tight, lips drawn back, teeth exposed, eyes staring, ears back and down, snarling.



Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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# DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"  
look away/head turn



STRESSED  
yawn



STRESSED  
nose lick



"PEACE!"  
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"  
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"  
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED  
scratching



STRESS RELEASE  
shake off



RELAXED  
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"  
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE  
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"  
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"  
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"  
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"  
play bow



"READY!"  
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS  
head tilt



HAPPY  
(or hot)



OVERJOYED  
wiggly



"MMMMM...."



"I LOVE YOU,  
DON'T STOP"

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*dili*

## Three Day (Minimum) Decompression Period

It's important not to overwhelm your foster dog when they first arrive in your home. Even if they seem happy and ready to roll, it will NOT hurt to follow decompression protocols.

Prepare a special area for your foster dog to help ease their adjustment into a your home. It is better to confine the dog to a small room or area at first to let them adjust before giving them free run of your home. This area should allow the dog access to a crate, food, and a water dish. We require that all foster dogs be housed indoors and when outdoors, they remain in a safe, fully confined yard.

For at least the first 3 days to 1 week of your foster dog being home, please limit the people and pet introductions to your foster dog so that they are only meeting immediate family and *maybe* your personal pets. If you have other pets at home, it is especially important to give your foster dog a space of their own where they can stay while getting used to all the new sounds and smells. Please keep outings and walks short and to a minimum during this time.

Do not be alarmed if your foster dog does not go to the bathroom or is hesitant to eat for the first 24-36 hours. This is totally normal. If refusing to potty or eat less longer than 36 hours, please alert the foster coordinator.

Please be patient with your foster dog during decompression. You (and they) may have a rough few days (and nights), but if you keep things mellow and work on getting them on a schedule, things will improve.

## Children and Dogs

Since we don't always know a foster dog's history or tolerance level for different types of people and activities, please teach your children how to act responsibly and respectfully around your foster dog. Consider showing them the dog body language graphics in this section to help educate them on how to understand the difference between a fearful dog and a comfortable one.

We will do our best to place you with an appropriate dog for your home situation, but please supervise all interactions between children and your foster dog.

Helpful things to remind your children:

- **Do not hug or kiss the foster dog (this rule is for the adults too).** This is the fastest way to get bitten since hugs and kisses make dogs uncomfortable.
- Always leave the foster dog alone when he/she is eating, chewing on a bone, playing with a toy or sleeping. Some dogs may nip or bite if bothered while eating or startled while sleeping.
- Do not bother the foster dog if he/she is in his/her bed or crate.
- Do not take away a toy or prized possession from the foster dog.
- Do not tease the foster dog by pulling on their fur, tail, ears, or legs.
- Don't force interactions with the foster dog. Let him/her come to you.
- Don't chase the foster dog around the house or run quickly around the foster dog. This may scare him/her.

- Pick up all your toys. Some dogs may not be able to tell the difference between what's theirs and what belongs to the kids.

Please do not allow young children to walk the foster dog in public because they may not be strong enough or experienced enough to control a dog during encounters with other dogs, cats, birds, squirrels, etc. that cross their path.

## **Dog Introductions**

Taking things slowly is best when doing dog introductions. It increases the odds of a successful integration and minimizes the chances of scuffles. You can always ask your foster coordinator to help with introductions.

Once your foster dog has completed their three-day decompression, if they seem like they are getting more comfortable, you can introduce your foster dog to any personal dogs you have one at a time. If the foster dog is having trouble settling in, you may need to wait a few extra days for introductions. Please consult with the foster coordinator if you have questions.

To facilitate introductions, tire both your foster dog and your personal dog/s so that energy levels are not through the roof. Once both pups are tired out, introduce them outside on neutral turf during a pack walk. You will need someone to help you with this. Start by walking both pups at a distance of about 10 feet apart parallel to each other, then slowly close the distance as they seem comfortable.

Once the dogs are close enough, you can slow down and have them do a butt-sniff meeting. Try to avoid having them go nose to nose. You can do this by walking the dogs in circles, with one leading the other so that they can have a "proper" introduction. After the butt sniff, continue on with your walk. Once home, continue to keep your foster dog and resident dog separated.

Continue this protocol for a couple of days until the dogs seem comfortable and at ease with each other. At that point, you can allow them to interact in an enclosed yard with leashes dragging to see how they do (please keep leashes on so you can easily separate them if needed). If that goes well, you can move inside and keep leashes on to see how they do.

Make sure that high-value items (food, chew toys, plush toys, Kongs, or anything else that your dogs hold in high regard) are put away whenever the dogs are interacting. You don't want to allow the possibility of a fight over important resources. Those high-value items are best placed in the individual dogs' personal areas that they don't share.

If you cannot supervise your foster dog with your resident dog, please keep them separated. Always crate your foster dog when you cannot supervise them to ensure everyone is safe.

Finally, please ALWAYS feed your foster dog in their crate. Never feed your dogs in the same room as the foster dog. Always separate them at feeding time.

## **Cat Introductions**

NEVER leave your foster dog unsupervised with any cats in your home.

We can't ensure that your foster dog has been "cat-tested," so if you have cats, you'll need to make the introduction to the foster dog carefully and safely.

Start by keeping them separated at first. You can either keep your cats in a separate room (equipped with food, water, litter boxes and beds) or confine your foster dog to a room. Over a one to two-week period, let your foster dog and your cats smell each other through the door, but don't allow them come into direct contact with one another. Exchanging blankets or towels between the areas will help them get used to each other's smells.

After a week or two depending on the reaction your foster dog has to your cat, a face-to-face introduction might be an option. Keep your foster dog on a leash and allow your cat in the same area. (If you have more than one cat, introduce one cat at a time.)

Do not allow the foster dog to charge or run directly up to the cat. Try to distract the dog as best you can so that the cat has the chance to approach without fear. Watch the body language of each animal closely and don't continue the interaction if either pet becomes over-stimulated or aggressive. The idea is to keep the interactions positive, safe and controlled.

If your foster dog seems to want to chase your cat, please alert the foster coordinator immediately so that further evaluation and reassessment of the foster placement can be done.



## **Section 5: Daily Care**

Your foster dog will require daily care, and the foster coordinator will provide more detailed information about the specific needs of your foster dog when the foster dog is dropped off. However, you can expect to provide the following while your foster dog is in your care.

Freedom in your house should be something your foster dog earns, not something that you give right off the bat. As the dog shows he/she can be trusted to obey commands and go potty outside, more freedom in the house can be given. Slow and steady wins the race, and you won't traumatize your foster dog by not letting him/her have a free-for-all in your home on day one.

Don't forget, everyone needs to learn what it's like to live together. It's all new, so slowly breaking down barriers just like you would with a new person in your life is perfectly appropriate.

### **Daily Routine**

When you first take your foster dog home, take care not to overwhelm them with too many new experiences all at once. Sometimes, too much stimulation can cause a dog to behave unexpectedly toward a person or animal, which is why it's a good idea to keep introductions to a minimum during the first few days to a week after you bring your foster dog home. Following decompression protocols will help with this.

It's also important to establish a daily routine of regularly scheduled feedings, potty breaks, and walk times. Dogs take comfort in having a routine they can count on.

Also, on a daily basis, be aware of your foster dog's appetite and energy level. If they're not eating well or seem listless, something may be wrong medically. Please alert the foster coordinator to any medical or behavioral concerns you have with your foster dog.

## **Crate Training**

Crate training, done in a positive way, can be an effective component of house-training. A crate can be a safe place for your foster dog to have "down time" and can also limit their access to the entire house until they know the rules. A crate should never be used as a form of punishment, and a dog should never be left in a crate for an extended period of time during the day without walks and potty breaks.

You can prevent problems with crate training by setting your foster dog up for success. He/she should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats and/or toys in the crate and encouraging him/her to go in. Some dogs warm up to the crate slowly, and that's ok. Please also feed your foster dog all meals in his/her crate.

If he/she is afraid to go in, place a treat in the crate as far as he/she is willing to go. After he/she takes the treat, place another treat a little farther back in the crate. Keep going until he/she is eating treats at the very back, then feed him/her his next meal in the crate with the door open, so that he/she can walk in and out at will.

Crate training a fearful dog can take time, so be patient and encouraging. If a crate is properly introduced and used, your foster dog will happily enter and settle down.

## **Feeding/Water**

All foster dogs should be fed a diet of dry food unless otherwise specified by foster coordinator. We try to use the food that the dog ate at the shelter to avoid tummy troubles and ask that you use the same or a food of similar or better quality. If you switch foods, please do so gradually by mixing the old food with the new food.

Feed your foster dog once or twice daily in their crate, and please keep dogs crated for 30 minutes after eating to reduce the chances of a life-threatening condition called bloat. The amount to feed them will be based on the age and weight of your foster dog. Make sure the dog always has access to fresh, clean water.

You can give your foster dog treats (unless he/she has known allergies, of course). Giving treats helps you and your foster dog to bond with each other.

You may receive chew bones for your foster dog in your supplies. These include either Benebones, deer antlers, or Nylabones. We recommend limiting chew time to 15 minutes per day maximum.

Please do not give your foster dog rawhide. This can cause life-threatening blockages that can lead to death.

## **Leash**

As your foster dog starts to earn more access to your home, please keep a dragging leash him/her. This makes it much easier to catch your foster dog if he/she starts behaving inappropriately so that you can correct their behavior and ensure they are following the house rules.

## **House-Training**

It's unlikely that your foster dog will be perfectly house-trained at first. Most of the dogs in our foster program have lived in a shelter for a while, often with minimal walks or chances to relieve themselves outside. At the very least, be prepared for an adjustment period until your foster dog gets used to your schedule.

Because a dog has a better chance of being adopted if he/she is house-trained, please help your foster dog to understand this skill. Take your foster dog outside to go potty multiple times per day (4-6 times daily, depending on age and size, puppies will need many more potty breaks).

Initially, you may need to take him or her out more frequently to remind her where the door to the outside is and to reassure him/her that you will take him/her out for potty breaks. When your foster dog goes potty outside, immediately reward them with a treat to help speed up the learning process.

Most dogs will give cues — such as standing near the door or sniffing the ground and walking in small circles — to indicate that they need to go out. Keep the dog in a crate when you are not available to supervise him/her indoors to avoid accidents.

If your foster dog has an accident inside the house, don't discipline or punish him/her. It will only teach him/her to fear and mistrust you. Clean up all accidents with the Nature's Miracle cleaner we provide or another cleaner that is safe for your carpets.

Crate training can also be helpful when it comes to potty training. Take your foster pup outside immediately after he/she comes out of the crate. Then he/she can have some free time in the house, then back in the crate for a bit until it's time for the next potty break. Using the crate to create a structure your foster can depend on for pottying can fast-track the housebreaking process.

## **Grooming**

A clean and well-groomed dog has a better chance of getting adopted, so please bathe your foster dog as needed and brush him/her regularly if they have longer hair or requires more frequent grooming. Contact the foster coordinator handling your foster if you feel that your foster dog needs to see a professional groomer.

## **Mental Stimulation and Exercise**

Depending on your foster dog's age and energy level, he or she should get at least two 30-minute play sessions or walks with you per day. Try a variety of toys (balls, squeaky toys, rope toys, etc.) to see which ones your foster dog prefers. Remember to discourage the dog from playing with your hands, since mouthing won't be a desirable behavior to adopters.

You can also offer your foster dog a food-dispensing toy for mental stimulation. You hide treats in the toy and the dog must figure out how to get the treats out. Try a TreatStik ([treatstik.com](http://treatstik.com)), or

Kong or West Paw product ([kongcompany.com](http://kongcompany.com)), ([westpawdesign.com](http://westpawdesign.com)), available online and at pet supply stores. Please let the foster coordinator know if you'd like any of these toys.

Please do not take your foster dog to dog parks without prior permission from the foster coordinator since it's impossible to predict how they will react to a new dog and vice versa. We are not fans of dog parks because it's hard to predict the behavior of other dogs, but there are times where we may make exceptions to this for dogs that need to be around other pups to build their confidence around people.

## **Safety Protocols**

Please keep a collar with ID on your foster dog whenever he/she is outside of their crate. If they are in their crate, we do recommend removing their collar (if you can safely do so) for safety reasons.

Foster dogs must be kept indoors, not outside. Please supervise your foster dog when he/she is outside to ensure that he/she doesn't escape or have any negative interactions with other people or animals. Your foster dog is only allowed to be off-leash in an enclosed backyard that is completely fenced in.

When walking or hiking with your foster dog, please keep him or her on leash at all times. This means that your foster dog is not allowed to go to off-leash in dog parks or other off-leash dog areas. We do not know how your foster dog will act in these situations, or how other dogs will react, and we need to ensure that all animals are always safe.

In addition, we don't know if the other dogs they encounter are vaccinated appropriately or carry diseases, so it is best if your foster dog does not meet any unknown dogs. Having recently come from a shelter setting, foster dogs can be vulnerable health-wise.

We will make exceptions to the dog park rule in certain situations/for certain dogs. If you'd like to know if an exception can be made for your foster dog, please contact the foster coordinator.

Your foster dog cannot ride in the bed of an open pickup truck. When you're transporting foster dogs, please keep them inside the vehicle. If you'd like an extra crate to keep them safely confined in your car, please let the foster coordinator know and we can arrange for you to have a travel crate.

If your foster dog will be around horses or in areas where horses are kept, please do NOT let them eat anything off the ground. Sometimes horses will spit out Ivermectin and dogs will eat it, causing blindness and other dangerous health issues.



## **Section 6: Medical and Emergency Protocols**

When you pick up your foster dog, you will receive medical information that specifies the dates that vaccines and preventative medications are due and any known medical conditions to treat.

If you are fostering a dog who is on medications, please make sure that he/she gets all prescribed doses. Do not end medication early for any reason. If your foster dog has not responded to prescribed medications after five days (or in the time instructed by a veterinarian), please contact the foster coordinator.

If your dog has had surgery, you will receive specific post-op care instructions from the vet.

### **Veterinary Care**

Diamond's Friends provides all medical care for our foster dogs at our approved veterinary hospitals. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster dog's well-being, our team must authorize any and all treatments for foster dogs at our approved veterinary partners.

Our two main veterinary clinics are Costa Mesa Animal Hospital on 17<sup>th</sup> Street in Costa Mesa, and the emergency clinic we use if Costa Mesa Animal Hospital is not open is BluePearl Pet Hospital in Irvine.

If your foster dog needs to go to the veterinarian, please notify the foster coordinator by phone. They will schedule the appointment (and will try to do so at a time that is convenient for you) and advise you of your appointment time. They will also make every effort to coordinate transport for

your foster dog unless it's an emergency situation OR you'd prefer to be the one taking your foster dog to their vet visits.

Foster pawrents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster dog to a veterinarian without prior authorization from the foster coordinator.

## **Signs of Illness/Injury and What to Do**

Dogs generally do a good job of masking when they don't feel well, so determining if your foster dog is under the weather will require observation of the dog's daily activity and appetite levels. Please reach out to the foster coordinator with any questions you may have regarding the health of your foster dog.

The best ways to prevent illness is to ensure all animals in your home are up to date on vaccines, washing bedding/toys regularly, cleaning food/water bowls daily, and keeping up with grooming.

If you notice any of the following issues with your foster dog, please report them to the foster coordinator. Some are urgent, some are potentially urgent, and others are ok to wait until "normal veterinary business hours" to report. They have been listed and marked accordingly. However, when in doubt, please don't hesitate to contact the foster coordinator immediately if you aren't sure if a situation is urgent. It's always better to be safe than sorry!

### **Collapse (Urgent)**

If your foster dog collapses and cannot get back up on their own, contact the foster coordinator immediately.

### **Concerning Combo Symptoms (Urgent)**

If your dog is having a combo or two or more of the following symptoms, please contact the foster coordinator immediately and separate them from other pets in your home. These symptoms combined could indicate a life-threatening condition.

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Lethargy
- Abdominal Swelling
- Drooling
- Distress/Discomfort

### **Difficulty Breathing (Urgent)**

If your foster dog is having difficulty breathing, contact the foster coordinator immediately.

### **Excessive Bleeding (Urgent)**

If your foster pup severely injures himself/herself and there is bleeding that you are struggling to get under control, contact the foster coordinator immediately and prepare to transport your foster to the closest veterinarian.

### **Blood in Poop (Potentially Urgent)**

If you notice blood in your foster dog's poop or pee, please alert the foster coordinator immediately. If there is blood in your foster dog's poop and you notice lethargy and vomiting as well, please isolate them from other dogs in your home immediately until further testing can be done to determine the cause of the foster pup's ailment.

### **Disorientation/Stumbling (Potentially Urgent)**

If your foster dog seems to be disoriented or stumbling when he or she walks, please alert the foster coordinator. This could indicate they ingested something they shouldn't have. Sometimes it can be benign (they accidentally ingested some marijuana on a walk) or more serious (they ingested something life threatening).

### **Eating Something That Isn't Their Food/Treats (Potentially Urgent)**

If your foster dog ingests something other than their own food or treats, please alert the foster coordinator immediately to determine if it's an emergency.

### **General Bleeding (Potentially Urgent)**

If your foster pup cuts or scrape themselves but you can apply pressure and control the bleeding without them becoming reactive, please do so, then alert the foster coordinator once the bleeding is under control. If you can get a picture of the injury, that is helpful. Depending on the severity of the injury, a vet appointment may be needed. However, if your foster dog will not let you treat the injury without becoming reactive, please contact the foster coordinator so an immediate vet visit can be made.

If you are fostering an unspayed female pup, please do not be alarmed if you notice bleeding coming from her vulva. This means she's in heat. Alert the foster coordinator during normal business hours (or immediately if the dog has a spay surgery scheduled within 24 hours of noticing she's gone into heat). We will provide you with doggy diapers to minimize the mess.

### **Vomiting (Potentially Urgent)**

Vomiting once or twice isn't a major cause for concern. Sometimes it can just be indigestion or even hunger. However, if your dog vomits more than twice times in a 24-hour period, please alert the foster coordinator.

### **Blood in Pee (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

This generally isn't life threatening, but if you notice blood in your dog's pee, please alert the foster coordinator so an appointment can be made for a urinalysis. Generally, this is an indication of a urinary tract infection, kidney infection, or kidney stones.

### **Coughing (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

Sadly, kennel cough and upper respiratory infections (URIs) can be common issues in the dogs we get from local shelters. Fortunately, these are not life threatening. If your foster dog develops a dry, hacking cough, please contact the foster coordinator so that a vet appointment can be made and make sure the foster dog isn't sharing food/water/toys with other dogs in your home.

If your dogs are on Bordetella, they have a lower risk of developing kennel cough. Kennel cough and URIs are rarely life threatening (even though the coughing sounds horrible), so please don't panic if it seems like your foster dog is coming down with kennel cough.

### **Drinking More or Less Than Usual (NVBH)**

This could just be happening because it's hot or they had a ton of exercise, but if it seems like they are drinking more than what is normal for more than a day or two, please alert the foster coordinator to see if a vet visit is warranted.

### **Eye Discharge (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

If your foster dog has colored eye discharge, please contact the foster coordinator so a vet appointment can be made for further evaluation. This can be a sign of infection, allergies, or a foreign object in the dog's eye.

### **Fleas/Ticks (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

All foster dogs are treated with flea/tick/HW preventative before going into foster homes. However, if for some strange reason you notice more 2 or more fleas on your foster dog or you notice any ticks, please alert the foster coordinator to receive another dose of preventative.

### **Going to the Bathroom More Frequently than Usual (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

This likely isn't an emergency but may indicate a UTI, especially if it's accompanied by blood. Please alert the foster coordinator so that a vet appointment can be made for further evaluation.

### **Lack of Appetite (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

If this lasts for a meal or two, it's generally nothing to be concerned about. However, if it persists for more than a day or is accompanied by other symptoms like lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, etc., please alert the foster coordinator immediately.

### **Limping (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

If your foster dog suddenly starts limping, they may have pulled a muscle. This isn't urgent, and it's best to give them a few days of crate rest so they can heal. If the limp doesn't seem to be resolving after a few days, please alert the foster coordinator so a vet appointment can be made for further evaluation.

### **Loose Poop/Diarrhea (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

If your foster dog is having loose poop/diarrhea, especially right after they get to your home, it is likely due to stress or a potential diet change if we have switched them to a different food. We recommend fasting them for 24 hours and giving their stomach a chance to settle.

If the loose poop/diarrhea continues or happens more than three times in 24 hours, please alert the foster coordinator. This could indicate giardia (treatable, not life threatening) or another condition that requires treatment.

### **Lumps and Bumps (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

If you notice any unusual lumps or bumps on your foster pup, please alert the foster coordinator so an assessment can be done to determine if further testing is required.

### **Scratching/Itchiness (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

This is a common issue and not urgent. If you notice excessive scratching from your foster dog that lasts more than three days or you notice any hot spots/sores from scratching, please alert the foster coordinator so a vet visit/appropriate medication can be provided.

### **Sneezing (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

It's not uncommon for dogs to sneeze, but if the sneezing is persistent and constant, please alert the foster coordinator. It could be a sign of kennel cough, something lodged in the pup's nasal passage, or another type of infection. For persistent sneezing, please crate your foster dog and keep them separated from other pets until we can get a diagnosis and treatment.

### **Worms (Normal Veterinary Business Hours)**

While most dogs have been dewormed prior to being pulled from the shelter, sometimes it takes a couple of rounds of dewormer to get the job done. Typically, the worms we see are tapeworms, which are transmitted when dogs ingest fleas, so you don't have to worry about any of your family dogs getting these.

If you see worms in your foster dog's poop, please try to snap a clear photo and send it to the foster coordinator so that they can get you the necessary medication for treatment.

### **Things to Evaluate If You Are Worried About Your Foster Dog**

There are a few things you can check on your foster dog if you have concerns.

#### **Breathing**

Most dogs take 15-30 breaths per minute. Count your foster dog's breaths for 30 seconds, then multiple that number by two. If your foster dog is at rest but their breathing rate is higher than 15-30 breaths for minutes for more than a couple of hours, please alert the foster coordinator.

#### **Hydration**

If you want to make sure your foster dog is drinking enough water, gently grab and pull up on the scruff of their neck. If the skin bounces back quickly, they are well-hydrated. If it takes more than a couple of seconds, hydration could be an issue. Please alert the foster coordinator if this occurs and your foster dog is not drinking.

#### **Perfusion**

This can help identify a potential issue with oxygen levels and circulation. The easiest way to check this is to lift their upper lip, press somewhat firmly on the dog's gum, and see how quickly the color returns to the spot you pressed. If color returns almost instantly, that's a great sign! If it takes more than a few seconds, please contact the foster coordinator immediately.

#### **Temperature**

If you have thermometer you can specifically use for a dog and some petroleum jelly, you can check their temperature (but please don't do this unless your foster dog allows handling and you are comfortable doing it). Appropriate insertion is 1 inch for small dogs and 2-3 inches for larger dogs. A normal temperature for a dog is between 100 and 102 degrees Fahrenheit. If your dog has a fever, please alert the foster coordinator.

# Information About Zoonotic Diseases from VCA and Washington State University

## What are the most common zoonotic diseases of dogs and/or cats?

- Ringworm
- Salmonellosis
- Leptospirosis
- Lyme disease
- Campylobacter infection
- *Giardia* infection
- Cryptosporidium Infection
- Roundworms
- Hookworms
- Tapeworms
- Scabies
- Harvest mites
- Rabies
- Capnocytophagosis
- Pasteurellosis
- Cat Scratch Disease
- Tularemia
- Sporothrichosis
- Plague
- Q fever
- External parasites
- Infections with pathogenic *E. coli*
- Toxoplasmosis
- MRSA

## How can I reduce the risk of contracting one of these diseases from my pet?

Simple hygiene and common sense will drastically reduce, if not eliminate, the risk of zoonotic spread of disease from dog to people. Some of the things you can do include:

- Make sure that any sign of illness or disease in your dog is diagnosed and treated promptly by your veterinarian. If your dog is sick, make sure you wash your hands after all contact with him.
- Bathe and groom your dog. This will increase the chance of early detection of any skin lesions.
- Give your dog a broad-spectrum deworming product on a regular basis. The simplest way to do this is to use a monthly heartworm product that includes a dewormer.
- Wear gloves when gardening or working in areas where dogs, cats, or other animals may have urinated or defecated.
- Pick up any feces on your property and stoop and scoop when you take your dog for a walk. Dispose of all waste materials promptly and safely.
- Do not allow your children to contact your pet's feces **OR** your pet to contact your children's feces.
- Always ensure you wash your hands after handling any animal.
- Provide separate food and water dishes for your dog, and wash and store them separately from your family's dishes.
- Wash pet bedding frequently.
- Use flea and tick control products on a routine basis.

Following these simple precautions ensures you have done everything to reduce any risk to you and your family.



## **Section 7: Helping Your Foster Dog Get Adopted**

We rely heavily on our foster homes to help market our adoptable dogs. Since you are the one spending the most time with your foster dog, you'll know his/her likes, dislikes, quirks, and temperament better than anyone else. You'll also be able to take pictures/videos and have your foster pup wear an Adopt Me harness or vest on walks. You will be the one who knows the type of home your foster dog will fit best in.

Ultimately, you are the best resource to help your foster dog get adopted.

### **Adoption FAQs**

#### **How can I help my foster dog find a great home?**

As you get to know your foster dog, we ask that you stay in contact with the foster coordinator so that he/she can update the foster dog's biography online to reflect accurate information about the dog's preferences and quirks. Some people write their own biography for their foster dogs, which we encourage, though they may be edited. We also welcome any quality photos and videos you take of your foster dog in your home. We can use the photos to accompany the online biography and share on social media.

#### **What if I know someone who's interested in adopting my foster dog?**

If someone you know is interested in adopting the dog, please contact the foster coordinator and give them their details. Also, tell the prospective adopter to start the adoption process (filling out an adoption application) as soon as possible. Once the dog is up for adoption, we

cannot hold him/her for anyone, but we do want to accommodate referrals from foster pawrents if we can.

**Will it be hard to say goodbye to my foster dog?**

Saying goodbye can be the most difficult part of fostering, but keep in mind that many more dogs need wonderful foster homes like yours. Remember, you are playing a crucial role in helping to bridge the gap between their last home and their next home.

**What if I want to adopt my foster dog?**

We do give fosters right of first refusal to adopt their foster pup up until we start the meet and greet process with other potential adopters. However, we do encourage you NOT to adopt the first dog you foster with us. This is because that first “goodbye” is the hardest, and we don’t want you to let the emotion of that influence your adoption decision.

**How involved do fosters get to be in the adoption process?**

As involved as you want! You can review all adoption apps (minus the adopter’s personal info/contact info) to help guide our decision to pursue or decline an app. You can also let us know what questions you’d like us to ask potential adopters during the interview process that occurs before we coordinate a meet and greet. If you’d like to attend the meet and greet, you are welcome to do so. We also consult with you post meet and greet to ensure what we saw/learned during the meet and greet sounds acceptable to you before making an adoption offer to a potential adopter.

**What are the adoption fees?**

The fees vary from dog to dog. Typically, the fee for adult dogs is \$400 and puppies is \$500, however, these fees may vary based on the costs we incur for each dog or the needs of a particular pup.

**Will I get updates on my foster dog once he or she is adopted?**

Yes! We do daily check ins with our adopters day 1-3 (decompression) and then weekly for the first month, then monthly for the first 3 months. After that, we do annual adoptiversary check ins. Any updates we get from adopters will be shared with you if you’d like.



## Section 8: FAQs

Here are some frequently asked questions we get about fostering.

### **What do foster families need to provide?**

Foster families provide:

- A healthy and safe environment for their foster dog
- Transportation to and from appointments as needed
- Socialization to help teach dogs positive family and pet relationships
- Exercise and positive stimulation to help them develop into great family members
- If possible, training!

### **If there's a medical emergency with my foster dog, what do I do?**

Please contact the foster coordinator immediately. If they are immediately unreachable and your foster dog is experiencing a life-threatening emergency, please take them to Costa Mesa Animal Hospital if it's between the hours of 9am and 4pm 7 days per week or to BluePearl if it's outside of those hours.

### **How much time do I need to spend with a foster dog?**

As much time as you can! With that said, the amount of time will vary depending on the energy level and needs of the dog you are fostering. It's also good to make sure your foster dog is

getting some “solo time” to learn how to cope with being alone. Avoiding the development of separation anxiety is extremely helpful when it comes to adoptability.

**How long will the dog need to be in foster care?**

This will be specific to your situation. Some dogs are adopted quickly, others take more time. We try to match you with a dog that we think fits the fostering timeline you can commit to since we try to avoid fosters bouncing from one foster to the next.

**Will I need to give medicine to my foster dog?**

Some of the dogs in our foster program come from unknown circumstances and may need medical care. While we do our best to ensure that we are aware of all the conditions that a foster dog may have prior to going into a foster home, some illnesses have incubation periods, meaning symptoms can arise after you take a dog home. So, while some dogs do not require any medicine, others may. If your foster dog needs medications, we can show you how to administer them. Or, if you aren't comfortable with a medical needs dog, we can try to place a dog with you that doesn't have medical needs.

All dogs in our program see a vet before their intake as well as after they arrive in our care (although these intake vet visits may not occur immediately prior to a dog entering your home, it may take us a few days to get them a vet visit).

**Can I let my foster dog play with my personal pets?**

There are a few guidelines that we ask foster families to adhere to regarding their personal pets. While foster dogs playing with other pets is often fine, we advise that you consult with your veterinarian beforehand to ensure that all of your personal pets are healthy and up-to-date on all vaccines. If you have questions about the vaccines we recommend based on where your foster dog comes from, please ask us.

Dogs in shelters are very susceptible to illness and can carry or catch different diseases. If, for any reason, your personal pet becomes ill while you are fostering a Diamond's Friends dog, we cannot provide medical care or cover expenses for your personal pet.

We request that you review the Medical and Emergencies section about zoonotic diseases to protect yourself and your pet from any illness that may be transmissible.

**What if I want to adopt my foster dog?**

If you want to adopt a foster dog, you will need to complete an adoption application and follow the full adoption process. An adoption fee will apply.

If you do decide to adopt your foster dog, please contact the foster coordinator handling your foster right away so we can assist you with the process.

**Who will take care of my foster dog if I need to go out of town?**

If you have travel plans while you are fostering a dog for Diamond's Friends, you will need to contact the foster coordinator handling your foster dog so we can arrange another foster parent

until you return. Please provide a minimum of two week's notice to ensure that we can find a great place for your foster dog. If your trip is over a holiday, please provide as much notice as possible so we can make arrangements.

You cannot leave your foster dog with an unauthorized person or pet sitter. We have specific requirements for foster pawrents, and pet sitters have not completed a foster questionnaire, signed the release waiver, or received/reviewed our foster manual.

### **What if my foster dog bites me?**

If any of your foster dog bite you and break skin, causing you to bleed, you need to report the bite to the foster coordinator handling your foster within 24 hours of when the bite occurred. The law requires that we report all dog bites. A reportable bite means that the teeth of the dog, not the nails, must have broken the skin. If you are unsure if something qualifies as a bite, please report it to Diamond's Friends.

### **What if my foster dog is not working out?**

You are not required to continue to foster a dog if you feel it's not working out. Please contact the foster coordinator handling your foster and we will make alternative arrangements for you and your foster dog as quickly as possible. However, we do request that you give us at least one week to find an alternate placement.