

**UNDER MY WING PUG RESCUE  
FOSTERING HANDBOOK**

## **FOSTERING:**

Fostering dogs is both the hardest and the most enjoyable thing I have ever done. It is hard because it rends your heart to see what our fellow humans have done to an animal that only wants to be loved.

It is enjoyable because you get to begin a process of rediscovery and healing for the rescued animal. You have the opportunity to teach an abused and/or neglected dog that humans can be loving, can be trusted. You can teach them that sharing their life with us can be rich and wonderful. You will watch a blossoming of a once traumatized animal.

Fostering is not for everyone. Some find it too heart breaking. Some find it too hard to give the dogs up to their forever homes. Some find their anger towards humans and the former owners of rescued dogs too overwhelming. These are things you need to think about. You will be no good to the dog if you are flooded with intense emotions that overwhelm you.

Know your limits. If you are someone who likes an immaculately clean house, fostering probably isn't for you. If you have a busy and active social life that takes up many of your evenings and weekends, fostering probably isn't for you. If your work takes up more than 40 hours per week outside of the home, then fostering probably isn't for you. Think about what kinds of dog behaviours drive you crazy. Can't stand a lot of barking or a dog that marks in the house? You might find fostering a crazy making experience. If you have very small children, cats that hate dogs or a dog that is territorial, you might want to re-think fostering. Can't stand puppy destructiveness? Fostering might not be for you. Feeling guilty that you are not spending the same amount of time with your own animals that you were before fostering? Fostering might not be for you. You will end up "ignoring" your own animals a bit with a needy foster in the house.

People give up dogs for lots of reasons: some of them good, some of them will seem ludicrous. The important thing to remember is the dog in front of you. They are safe and in your care. Don't use up valuable energy on disliking the former owners. Channel that energy into healing this dog.

Do not post recriminations or anger on the pug sites. You never know who is reading them. We could inadvertently discourage someone from turning to us with their needy dog if they feel that harsh judgements will be posted on the internet.

The fostering team leaders are here to help you decide if fostering is appropriate for you and to help you work through issues that you encounter with your fosters.

## **Basic Requirements for Fostering**

There are some basic requirements for fostering pugs. These are requirements based on our experience with fostering over the years.

- 1.) Foster homes must have a fenced yard. There may be exceptions to this rule, but it will be on a case by case basis. The optimum is to have a fenced yard.
- 2.) If you rent your home, we need to speak with your landlord or lady to ensure that you are allowed to have additional animals in the house/apartment.
- 3.) If you have a pool, it must be safely fenced off from the dogs.
- 4.) Foster parents must be with the fosters at all times when the dogs are outside. It is not acceptable to let dogs out in the yard without supervision.
- 5.) Foster pugs should not be put in collars. Harnesses are to be used for walking. Dogs should be without collars or harnesses when in the house if unsupervised. No collars or harnesses in the crate.
- 6.) Foster homes must have a crate of appropriate size and baby gates for blocking off rooms. The crate should be a VARI-KENNEL type—series 200 or 300. NO METAL CRATES. Dogs can be seriously injured in metal crates.
- 7.) Since many dogs come to us with health issues, foster dogs must be fed a high quality, wheat and corn free kibble. Raw diet is also good, but kibble must be premium quality and wheat and corn free. Not all dogs do well on raw. Whatever you feed, GO SLOWLY and watch for allergic reactions. If needed, **UNDER MY WING** – Pug Rescue can provide the dog food (Welness Super5 Mix)
- 8.) Foster dogs are not to be left in the company of other dogs unsupervised until any issues of safety have been overcome. Fosters should be separated from other dogs if you are away from the house.
- 9.) All dogs in residence in the foster home must be spayed or neutered.

## **First Vet Visit**

All foster dogs need to be assessed by a vet within the first week of coming into foster care. This visit should include a fecal sample, check for eye/soft palate/nare/dental issues as well as joint problems. It should be determined at this time if the dog has been spayed or neutered. Foster dogs may be vaccinated at that time if they are not already vaccinated.

This visit is a general assessment of the dog's overall health and well-being and will allow us to begin planning for any further medical issues.

All vet costs are covered by **UNDER MY WING** – Pug Rescue. If your vet is willing to provide a discount to the rescue for their work, that is greatly appreciated. An estimate of further vet work should be provided by the Veterinarian for **UNDER MY WING** – Pug Rescue.

All further vet visits **MUST** be approved by **UNDER MY WING** – Pug Rescue. The exceptions to this are Emergencies and regularly scheduled appointments for dental/spay and neuter/dental. Unapproved vet visits will **NOT** be covered by **UNDER MY WING** – Pug Rescue.

All dogs in foster care will be spayed/neutered & vaccinated before going up for adoption. Please keep all records of veterinary work done. **UNDER MY WING** – Pug Rescue will need some of these for book keeping purposes and the new owners will need some for their records.

### **Food:**

Pugs are notorious for allergies. Many of the dogs we see in rescue have had terrible diets and are suffering from food related issues. As a result, we request that foster dogs be fed a high quality kibble that is wheat and corn free. Wheat and corn are the two biggest allergens in dogs. Many dogs also have reactions to beef. There are many good quality kibble out there that are corn and wheat free. We suggest Wellness, Fromm 4 Stars to name a few. There is an excellent article in the Whole Dog Journal about foods that rates the top ten best dog foods.

If you feed a raw diet, that is also fine. However, not every dog does well on it and it should be introduced slowly with an eye to allergic reactions.

You may find that there will be food aggression with your foster or your own dog. Please feed the dogs separately until you know if food aggression is an issue and supervise the dogs during feeding.

We recommend that dogs be fed twice a day—morning and evening. This has, in our experience, worked best for our dogs. Monitor amounts as many of our dogs are overweight or malnourished when they come into rescue. As a rule of thumb,

pugs on high quality kibble should get between 1/4 and 1/3 a cup of kibble at each feeding.

You may find that your foster will not eat in the first 24 hours. Do not panic as they are frightened and may overcome this quickly. You may need to sit down with the dog and hand feed for a meal or two or mix in some chicken broth to tempt them. Baby food mixed in with kibble will often tempt the most reluctant appetite. Many dogs will refuse the raw diet initially, so introduce it carefully.

### **Harness vs. Collar:**

Foster dogs should be walked with a harness and should not be left in a harness unsupervised. Regardless of how your dog does with a collar, we do not want fosters in a collar. When in the house, the dog should not have the harness on unless it is being used as part of training. Again, the dog must be supervised and should not be left alone with the harness on.

I know of dogs that have strangled while alone in a harness or a collar.

### **Discipline:**

ONLY positive training techniques will be used with foster dogs. No hitting, yanking, disciplinary crating or other forms of negative discipline are to be used. A sharp, loud NO to stop behaviour that you have actually caught the dog in is OK if used with discretion.

Rewarding positive behaviour is, in our experience, more useful with dogs in general and pugs, in particular.

An excellent guide to positive training is: *The Other End of the Leash*.

Pugs will test you so be creative about training.

### **Crating and Gating:**

Many of the dogs that come into rescue have been crated for long hours—often most of their lives. Crating can be very useful if used appropriately. We are not opposed to crating as long as it is not used to discipline a dog, isn't introduced suddenly and the dog does not spend hours at a time in a crate. You may want the foster to sleep in the crate until house training issues are cleared up. This is certainly acceptable as long as the dog has been acclimatized to the crate slowly, is comfortable being there and is not frightened in it. Pugs are a bit famous for being hard to crate train.

Some dogs that have been crated all their lives will defecate and urinate in their crates. This is a tough house breaking issue and will require careful handling. Some dogs will defecate and urinate in their crate out of fear. Go slowly if you are going to crate a foster dog. Read up on training to the crate if you haven't done this before. It's a long and slow process if done correctly and should result in a dog that sees the crate as a safe and happy place.

Many dogs do better being gated into a room with baby gates. It allows them some room to move, they can see out and may reduce anxieties that previous poor crate training has created.

### **House training:**

This is the biggest issues often in fostering. And if you have a pug, you know how tough this issue can be. You may find that your own dog suddenly regresses with a new dog in the house and you are not only dealing with an un-house broken foster, but your own dog seems to have forgotten everything he or she knew about pottying.

First, RELAX. It can be done. I approach all my fosters as if they were new puppies and knew nothing about house training. I start from scratch just as I would a puppy. I make sure that everyone gets out A LOT, 6 to 10 times a day or more. I gate off rooms that I can't clean easily if there is an accident. If I'm going out, I either crate the un-house broken one or I gate them into the kitchen with pee pads or newspapers.

NEVER punish a dog for an accident. EVER. If you catch them in the act, then give them a sharp NO and immediately move the dog outside.

Stay outside with the dog as long as it takes for something to happen—especially first thing in the morning when you KNOW they have to go. Then reward them like crazy with treats. Reward house breaking behaviour with top quality treats. I have treats that I only use for pottying behaviour.

Remember, the secret to house training is patience, consistency and repetition. Out often, stay out with them, praise every outdoor elimination. And if you can't catch them in the act, then put them where it's easier to clean up if they mess up.

### **Aggression:**

I almost never see outright aggression in pugs, but it can happen. Watch the foster and your own dog carefully and learn to tell the difference between aggression and noisy play. If things are getting out of hand—step in and separate everyone. Some of the puppy mill rescues will be fearful of other dogs and may be less than cordial. Ensure that they are safe and not being harassed by your dog. Your dog may only want to play, but it may be seen as aggression, or just

plain annoying to the other dog.

If you are seeing outright aggression in a foster dog, notify one of the team leaders immediately so we can assess what is going on and how to best manage it.

Food aggression and resource guarding are common in foster dogs and often resolves when they realize that there is enough food, attention and toys for everyone. If it continues to be an on going problem, contact the team leaders for suggestions.

Try to avoid situations where your dog or your foster will feel the need to defend toys or food. You can avoid a lot of heart ache by prevention.

### **Know your limits and the limits of your dog:**

Knowing what you and your dog and household can tolerate and what you can't helps enormously.

Dogs that are just out of a puppy mill situation, especially breeding bitches, often don't do well with young rambunctious males regardless of whether they are fixed or not. They see the play behaviour as breeding behaviour and can be aggressive or fearful or both.

You may find that dogs new to your home will pant a lot and drink a lot of water. Watch this and see if it continues. It may be a stress reaction and if so, should disappear in a day or so. If it does not, it may be a sign of a medical issue.

You will have to try and balance the time you spend with the foster and your own dogs. Some fosters are very needy and take up a lot of time. You may find that your own dogs are getting the short end of the stick. Try to arrange time for your own dogs in the absence of the foster and vice-versa. It's a juggling act.

If a foster dog is driving you crazy and is just not a fit for your home—let us know—we can find another foster home. BUT KNOW your own limits in advance, if possible.

I find that I don't put a lot of expectations on my new fosters. I don't expect bad behaviour, but I don't expect a perfect dog either. I try to take it as it comes and not stress about things. Poop and pee can be cleaned up. Food aggression can be managed. Remember, you are learning about this dog and he/she is learning about you. What you end up knowing about this dog will help us determine the forever home he goes to. YOU will be the expert on your foster. You will know if they need to be an only dog, need an older dog companion, or a younger playmate. Your behavioural assessment in conjunction with our experience will give this dog a new start in life. And that is a very big deal, indeed.