



DOG CARE



Food Guarding

When a dog feels the need to guard their food, we should approach our rehabilitation training techniques from the mindset that the dog is in at that point in time. That is, "This may be my last opportunity to eat, therefore if I wish to survive, I must protect this food".

If we keep this current thought process of the dog in mind when rehabilitating a dog, it will enable us to assist the dog to "change" its perception when it comes to food. We are able to do this in a number of ways.

- Divide the dog's meal into two bowls and give the dog the opportunity to eat from both bowls. This still allows for the same nutritional value for the dog yet starts to change the dog's perception that there is more than "that last bowl" of food available.
- The dog must learn to sit for its food and you should ask your dog to wait for their meal before they are allowed to eat.
- You then need to provide the dog with higher value food that comes from you, not a food bowl. Do not approach the dog so they feel threatened, stay at a safe distance so that the dog "chooses" to approach you for the higher value food

NB: You may need to back tie your dog so you can be sure that you can stay at a safe distance.



In this photo, the dog's meal is divided into two bowls; the fresh sausage is to be hand feed to the dog by you.

- Start by saying the dog's name and gently tossing the fresh sausage in or near the dogs food bowl. We are aiming for the dog to realise that you have higher value food than what is in its bowl.
- We then need to encourage the dog to sit before allowing it to receive fresh sausage. Look for your dog to be sitting, similar to saying "please", only when they display manners will they be rewarded.

What we are aiming for with this method of training is for the dog to start to see it as a “good” thing when you approach them when eating as you bring higher value food, opposed to “trying to take” the food away. Using the above technique is teaching the dog that when you approach their food bowl, good things come if they sit and wait.

Care should always be taken when dogs have access to food or bones and like all behaviours, regardless of species, new behaviours and thought processes take time to develop into habits.

Should you require any further information or support please feel free to contact the Animal Aid team on 9739 0300 or email kennels@animalaid.org.au

