

DESEXING LARGE TO GIANT BREED DOGS AND ATHLETIC WORKING DOGS AT RISK OF JOINT DISEASE

Timing of desexing:

Multiple studies have been done over the years to determine at what age your pet would benefit most from being desexed. Unfortunately, there is no straight forward answer that fits all of our pets. They are all different depending on their breed and size and have different personalities and requirements.

Below is a list of things to take into consideration when deciding the best time to desex your pet.

Main advantages of desexing early (5-6 months):

This is mainly of concern in regards to [behavioural changes in our male pets](#), and [mammary tumours in our female pets](#).

Desexing early can:

- prevent wandering and unwanted pregnancies,
- prevent aggressive/dominant behaviours [in male dogs](#)
- incur a shorter procedure and faster recovery/healing time
- lower the risk of mammary cancers [in female dogs](#)

[\(The risk of developing a mammary tumour is 0.5% if spayed before their first heat \(at about 6 months of age\), 8% after their first heat, and 26% after their second heat\)](#)

Main advantages of desexing later at 'skeletal maturity' (between 12-18 months for large breeds; 18-24 months for Giant breeds):

- lowered risk of joint disease including cruciate ligament disease
- lowered risk of hip dysplasia
- lowered risk hormone related urinary incontinence [in female dogs](#)

Taking the above into consideration, the below guidelines can be used as a recommendation for choosing at what age to desex your pet.

[In female dogs: Desexing between the first and second oestrous cycle can still reduce the chance of mammary cancer but may allow more time for normal growth of the long bones to reduce the risk of joint disease.](#)

As a general guide [for male dogs](#):

- Small to medium breed dogs: 5-6 months of age
- Medium breed, athletic/working dogs: 9-12 months of age
- Large breed dogs: 12-18 months of age
- Giant breed dogs: 18-24 months of age

Disadvantages/risks/requirements of delaying desexing

Your pet will need to be monitored closely during 'puberty' to prevent:

- o development of unwanted aggressive behaviours to other pets in the home and outside the home, as well as family and friends. This may require additional training (testosterone can reduce your pet's focus and training can be more difficult).
- o unwanted pregnancies
- o escaping/wandering behaviours
- o humping behaviours towards people, other animals or toys

It is recommended if you decide to delay desexing for the benefit of your pet, that you enrol in further training after puppy preschool to avoid having unwanted behaviours that can become a lifelong challenge for both your pet and yourself if not resolved early.

First aid

COMMON PET EMERGENCIES



POISON

Chemicals, foods, allergic reactions



MOBILITY

Seizures, severe limp, unconsciousness



TRAUMA

Bites, bleeding, impacts



HEAT

Heat stroke, heat stress



THROAT

Choking, severe vomiting, refusal to eat/drink



OTHER

Eye injury, inability to pass waste, blood in waste

You should always seek veterinary help if you suspect your pet has any of the above conditions. Make sure you keep your vet and emergency service's contact information easily accessible.



SEIZURES

- The most important thing to do is protect your pet from self-injury.
- DO NOT place your fingers or any object in your pet's mouth.
- Clear the area around your pet to help prevent injury during the seizure.
- Do NOT attempt to restrain your pet, but you can place a hand on their body.
- When the seizure has stopped, contact your veterinarian for further instructions.
- If the seizure does not stop within 3 to 5 minutes or if your pet comes out of the seizure and goes into another one within an hour, transport the dog immediately to the vet.

+ pet first aid tips +



WOUND CARE

- Place pressure with gauze or a clean cloth to stop bleeding.
- If there is debris, flush the wound with saline or clean water.
- For deep wounds, or severe bleeding, keep pressure on the wound until you can get your pet to a vet.



POISON

- If you suspect poisoning, seek care immediately.
 - If you cannot get to the vet immediately, please call your emergency vet for further instructions.
- Australia's poison hotline (13 11 26) is mainly for humans, however in some cases they can give advice for pets.



CHOKING

- If choking, hold the upper jaw open with one hand, and look for a foreign object.
- Unless you can clearly see and grasp the obstruction, do not put your fingers into your dog's mouth or throat.
- Lift smaller dog's legs into the air so gravity can help dislodge the obstruction.
- If you can't remove the foreign object, using the heel of your hand, deliver 4-5 sharp blows on the dog between the shoulder blades.



Teaching your puppy Stand

Teaching our puppy to stand is a useful cue so that we can comfortably groom and wash our dog, fit them for their harness before a walk, or check them over for ticks.

It's important to teach our puppies to be handled for husbandry necessities from a young age, this will ensure that they're comfortable as we work with them and not stressed. It's important to go slowly as they are still learning to be handled and give them regular breaks so that they don't become overwhelmed.

Getting your puppy to Stand on cue

- 1** Ask your puppy to sit, "Yes!" and reward once in position.
- 2** Bring a treat to your puppy's nose and move your hand slowly out directly in front of them. Ensure that you only move a few centimetres away from their nose at a time.
- 2** As soon as they stand up from the sit, "Yes!" and reward.
- 3** Repeat this 3-5 times.
- 4** Teach your puppy the cue for this behaviour "Stand!", by saying "Stand!" as soon as they are in the correct position.
- 5** Practice with cue 3-5 times.
- 6** Start to fade the lure. Repeat the behaviour 3 times and on the third time, continue with the same hand motion without food in your hand. "Yes!" and reward as normal, and give a reward.
- 7** Generalise this behaviour by practising in low-distraction environments and working up to high-distraction environments. e.g. Start in your house, then progress to your back yard, then the front yard, then down the street, in a quiet park, in a busy park.

TIPS

- Keep your hand close to your puppy's nose to prevent them from taking multiple steps to reach your hand.
- Practice with high-value treats in stressful situations e.g. during brushing or bath time.
- Practice handling your puppy in this position as it will be the default position that they will be groomed in.

Navigating adolescence

1. Structure!

Even though they seem all over it, don't give too much freedom too soon. Keep structure around daily habits, crate, gates, toilet training & training.

2. Light-hearted approach

Avoid showdowns. Keep training moving forward with a playful, fun tempo. Concentrate on things dogs love. Targeting behaviours- 'go to bed', targeting your hand or their nose or paw to objects, attention to you, and recall (short and long) are great behaviours to work on and perfect during this next stage of life.

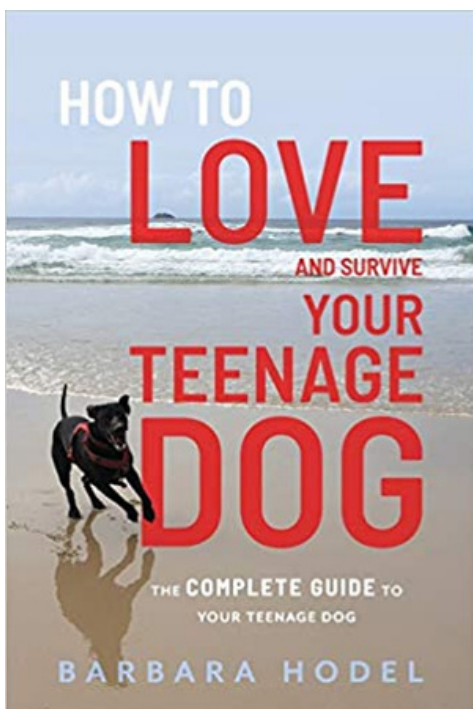
3. Enrichment! Work to eat.

Opportunities to get 'dogginess' on should be a priority. Experiment with puzzles, snuffle mats, hide-n-seek games and food-stuffed toys.

4. Calm massage & gentle handling

Calm voice, calm environment. While relaxed gently touch paws, ears, face, and tail and run your hands from nose to tail. Continuing handling is important as our puppies will be going to the vet for desexing, and ensuring that they are well prepared with handling will reduce stress on the big day!

I highly recommend the book "How to love and survive your teenage dog" By Barabara Hodel.



"How to love and survive your teenage dog will help you to understand your teenage dog better and navigate these challenges, by covering: an understanding of the unique challenges you and your teenage dog face; why and how your relationship matters in the training process; the role of anthropomorphism and consideration of dog emotions and minds; the benefits of positive reinforcement; the importance of lifelong socialisation; how to keep your and your dog's sanity despite some common setbacks; and promoting the value of calmness."

Further training

If you are interested in further training or have any behaviour needs that pop up for you or your dog in the future, I recommend the following behavioural trainers and behaviour vets.

Trainers and next level puppy school



Positive response dog training
Phone: 3459 2121 or 0424 058 450
Email: info@positiveresponse.net.au
Location: Mt Gravatt/ Cleveland/Raby Bay/ Jimboomba



Fur get me not
Phone: 0402 767 821
Email: info@furgetmenot.com.au
Location: Rocklea

Vet Behaviourists



Healthy Pet Behavior vet
Phone: (07) 3569 6830
Location: Arana Hills

Engage Vet Behaviour and Training

Engage Vet Behaviour and Training
Phone: 0456 957 096
cate@engagevetbehaviour.com.au



DOG TRAINING BY ZEN
500 Brookfield Road, Brookfield Queensland 4069, Australia
0419279109

Teaching your puppy to shake

Teaching your dog to shake is fun and easy behaviour to learn. It is a fun trick that helps teach obedience and deepen the bond between you and your little one. It can even be used as a fun way for your dog to greet someone new!

Getting your puppy to shake

- 1** Ask your puppy to sit. Show puppy a treat, then close your fist over the treat. Hold your closed fist close to his foot, about 5cm off the ground.
- 2** If your dog lifts his paw even a little, or even shifts weight onto the other paw, tell him he is a good boy and give him the treat. Most dogs will bat at your hand to get the treat, so as soon as this happens open your hand to reveal the treat and tell him 'good' or 'yes', whatever your signal is for doing the right thing.
- 3** Hold out your other hand to 'shake' when your dog lifts his paw, 'shake' his paw while he takes the treat.
- 4** Reward him immediately he does the correct thing, even if he only lifts his foot a little bit the first time.
When he is reliably lifting his paw for a treat, add the word 'shake'.
- 5** Gradually phase out the treats, so he only gets a treat intermittently once you are sure he knows the trick.

TIPS

- If your dog stands up, ask him to sit again.
- Only practice for 5-10 minutes every day, any longer and you will both get tired and frustrated.
- Always end on a positive note, if you are getting frustrated and your dog isn't 'getting it', go back to a trick he does know and reward him for that.

Teaching your puppy to roll over

It is helpful if your puppy already knows how to drop/ lie down before you teach them this trick.

Getting your puppy to rollover

- 1** Ask your puppy to lie down. Hold a treat close to their nose, closed palm facing up.
- 2** Move the treat from their nose towards their shoulder, luring him to lie flat on his side. Once the puppy lies on their side, praise and reward them.
- 3** Repeat this a few times, always remembering to praise and treat when they get it correct.
- 4** When they are lying on their side, move your hand from their shoulder to their backbone. Moving your hand like this should encourage them to roll to their other side. As soon as their body flips over, give them the treat and lots of happy praise.
- 5** Keep practicing until they have learnt the behaviour. When they get the action right, add the command, "roll over!"
- 6** Gradually reduce the hand motion and treat lure, until your dog can perform the trick on just a verbal cue.

TIPS

- Only roll your dog on soft surfaces like carpet or grass so he doesn't hurt his back.
- Some dogs don't like to roll over. It can be a little scary for them to put their belly up. Try it a few times and but if it's not fun for your dog, choose another trick.