

# Guide to Fostering Adult Dogs



Give Happiness

Dear Foster Family,

Welcome! You are about to embark on a memorable life-saving adventure! Thank you for opening your home and heart to fostering homeless pets. Our mission at LHS is to help pets in need through sheltering, adoption, education, spay/neuter, and community outreach. Our vision is a community free of homeless and neglected pets. By fostering, you have taken a huge step toward helping us reach these goals! We want your fostering journey to be enjoyable and successful. There will be bumps in the road, but our staff is here to support you in all ways possible. So, let's get started.

Welcome to our foster community! Please join our Facebook Group: LHS Fosters, to be connected to your new community of fosters. This page was created to support, educate and equip you to be the best foster you can be! Watch this page for announcements from LHS, postings of pets needing fostering, articles, and resources. You will also receive our weekly Foster Happiness E-blast to keep you current on what is happening at LHS and in our foster community. We encourage you to get involved both online and at our foster events. Please visit our website for more resources and information on fostering~ Go to [www.lynchburghumane.org](http://www.lynchburghumane.org), click on "Get Involved", and click of "Foster".

We are excited to have you on board! Please remember, we are here for you.

Sincerely,

Kiera Rogerson

Community Pet Coordinator

Lynchburg Humane Society

## **Let's Get Started!**

Let's get right to it... We can never quite express how much we appreciate all of our foster families! Besides giving love, attention, and a comfortable place for your foster to stay, what is expected of our foster parents?

- Provide efficient and temperature appropriate shelter for your foster pet
- Provide a safe, clean, and nurturing environment for your foster pet
- Have food and clean water accessible to your foster pet
- Monitor your foster pet's physical and mental wellbeing- alert LHS with any abnormal behavior
- Provide exercise and socialization for your foster pet
- Provide transportation to and from shelter/vet appointments
- Keep your foster pet isolated from other pets in the home for the initial recommended period



## **Efficient Shelter.**

Preparing a place in your home for your foster dog is very important. Many dogs may feel overwhelmed and unsure when entering a new environment so, having a place for him to adjust to his new surroundings is a must. An extra bedroom would be perfect for your foster dog to hang out in for the first few days before giving him free rein of your home. This area should be large enough for an appropriately sized crate for the dog and should allow the dog access to his food and water dishes and toys. All of our foster dogs must be housed indoors only. We do not consider a garage, outdoor enclosure, or unfinished basement where no one visits acceptable housing for a foster dog.

## **Supplies.**

LHS will supply everything you need for your foster dog. However, we greatly appreciate any help that you can provide with supplies for your new house guest. We receive most of our supplies through donations, so please be aware that sometimes items can be limited. For example, there may be times we will give you 3 cans of wet food because that is all we can spare at that moment and you will have to return in a few days for more. We know this can be inconvenient, but please recognize it is only so all the pets in the center and in foster care have everything they need. We appreciate your understanding.

## **Safety First!**

It is important to prepare for your foster dog and make his living space as safe as possible. We recommend preparing your home by following these steps:

- ✓ Keep your toilet lids closed
- ✓ Move house plants out of your new foster's reach. Many plants are toxic to pets!
- ✓ If you have small pets (birds, fish, hamsters, etc.) please make sure their cages are secure and out of reach of your new house guest.

- ✓ Keep medications behind closed cupboards where your foster dog cannot reach them.
- ✓ Be mindful that dogs like to chew things like electrical cords, phone chargers, etc. Please keep them out of the pet's reach.
- ✓ Make sure small objects are picked up such as buttons, strings, etc. These can be very harmful if swallowed.
- ✓ Make sure all dog toys and treats are from a reliable manufacturer~ do not give the dogs raw hides. They are not digestible and dogs can easily choke on them.
- ✓ Relocate knickknacks or valuable items that your foster dog could knock down or break.

Once your space is prepared and you bring your foster dog home, please follow these safety precautions:

- ✓ Your foster dog **MUST** be an indoor dog. He must be accompanied when outside.
- ✓ Be cautious of the dog sneaking out when the door is open.
- ✓ We ask that all foster dogs are walked on a harness and leash, but it is very important that you ensure the harness is fit properly so the dog cannot slip it off and get loose. Please practice with the harness and leash inside the home several times before heading outside to walk. It is extremely important that you monitor your surroundings while having your foster dog on a walk. An unleashed dog or cat could come upon you and potentially cause a fight to break loose.
- ✓ Never let your foster dog free roam outside without a leash.
- ✓ If you have a fenced in area, assure that the dog cannot escape your yard by digging under the fence, or jumping over it.



### **Daily Necessities.**

Of course, basic necessities should always be accessible to your foster pet. These necessities include fresh food, clean water, comfortable bedding, and a clean environment. We provide everything (except water and environment, of course). You are always welcome to come in when we are open to pick up any of these supplies. We rely on our foster parents and trust that they are always doing the right thing for the pets.

### **Medical Protocols.**

Dogs usually do a good job of hiding when they are not feeling well. It is very important that you monitor and observe their daily activity and appetite levels. If you see anything abnormal or concerning, you should report it to your foster coordinator right away.

You will receive emails letting you know when your pet is due for a vaccine or medical checkup. It is your responsibility to set these appointments up by using **Calendly**. On the last page of this packet you will find all the information you need to make these appointments. Vaccinations are considered non-emergency medical appointments and should always be made online using this program. Our vet is very busy caring for all of our many pets, and her time and availability is limited. Please do not just show up without an appointment.

## **What should you do if your foster pet is showing signs of illness?**

If your foster pet is showing any of the following symptoms, please email your foster coordinator and set a medical appointment right away.

- Runny discharge from the eyes or nose/ swollen eyes
- Lack of appetite
- Lack of energy
- Diarrhea (*please bring in a fecal sample to LHS*)
- Vomiting and/or weight loss
- Mild dehydration
- Coughing and/or sneezing
- Lack of bowel movement for more than 24-36 hours
- Straining in the litter pan or urinating outside of the litter pan
- Any patches of hair loss
- Frequent ear scratching

### **Nonemergency Appointments-**

Email  
[foster@lynchburghumane.org](mailto:foster@lynchburghumane.org)  
to set up a medical  
appointment.

## **What should you do if you have an emergency medical situation with your foster pet?**

It is very important that you follow protocols when it comes to emergency medical situations with your foster pet. If your new house guest is experiencing any of the following symptoms it is imperative that you act right away!

### **Emergency Medical Contact**

**9am to 5pm- Bring  
your foster pet to the  
shelter immediately.**

**AFTER HOURS CALL**

**434-473-1383**

- Continuous diarrhea longer than 24-36 hours
- Continuous vomiting longer than 12 hours
- Severe Lethargy- Not able to move or get up
- Loss of appetite- Has not eaten for more than 24 hours
- Bleeding of any kind (from nose or in urine/ stool)
- Any trauma (hit by a car, dropped, limping, unconscious, etc.)
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe dehydration- dry gums, weakness, vomiting, not urinating, skin tenting (when the skin is pulled up, it stays there)

**Medications-** If you are fostering a dog who is taking medications, it is important that he/she gets their entire dose. If for some reason, there is not enough medication to finish out the prescribed days email your foster coordinator to pick up more. Do not stop medication early without our veterinarian's approval. Please contact your foster coordinator if your foster dog is still showing symptoms of illness after finishing prescribed medications.

## **Behavior.**

One of your biggest goals as a foster parent is to prepare your foster pet for living successfully in a home. Good habits will make your foster dog more appealing to a potential adopter. We recommend and teach positive reinforcement. The basics of positive reinforcement is to reward the pet's desirable behaviors and ignore the less than desirable behaviors they display. Never punish a dog for unwanted behaviors, instead use distraction to pull him away from that behavior. For example- If the dog jumps up on you, grab her favorite toy to lure her down. Try to catch the behavior before it occurs. So, when you see her getting ready to jump, distract her

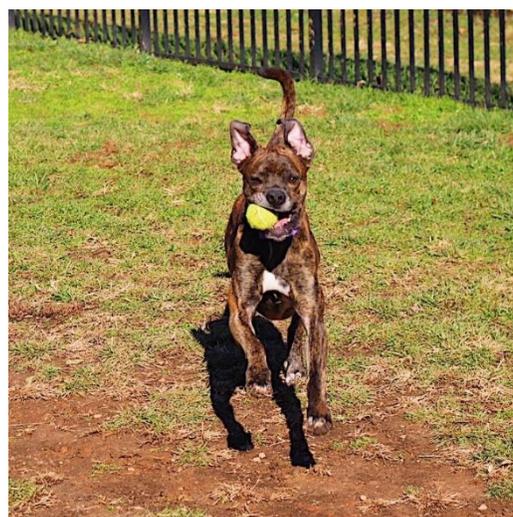
with the toy. Eventually this will curb her desire to jump up on people. It is important to have your whole family understands and uses positive reinforcement. If everyone is not on the same page, it will cause confusion for your foster dog and she will not know what is expected of her.

Some dogs you foster may have behavioral issues. If we are aware of these issues, we will disclose this to you before fostering, but please know that sometimes these behaviors do not show in the shelter and immerge when the dog becomes comfortable in a home environment. It is important that you let your foster coordinator know if your foster dog is showing any unwanted behaviors. Most behaviors can be worked with and may require a vet check as well as a plan for behavior modification. Your foster coordinator will work with you on this so please email her right away with any concerns.

It is also important that you understand it is very common for a dog to be nervous or unsure in a new environment. She is merely trying to get adjusted to her new environment. We also recommend that during the first couple of weeks of having your foster cat you minimize the new people and pet introductions. If you do have other pets in the home, keeping your new guest isolated for the first few days is crucial. She will need her own space while she gets used to the new smells, sounds, and schedule of her new foster home. Once you have introduced your foster cat to your own pets, we still recommend they are separated when you are out of the home and unable to monitor them. This will assure everyone stays safe.

### **Exercise and Socializing.**

Doggie play time provides stimulation and encourages socialization for your foster dog. Please provide a couple of play sessions for your new house guest daily. This will help them stay active and healthy in body and mind. The length of each play session should depend on the age and health of your foster dog. Please do not leave your new house guest unattended with toys that can easily be digested. Also, please always discourage your foster dog from play-biting hands and feet. Many adopters will find this undesirable behavior, so remember, use positive reinforcement and redirect the dog with a real toy.



### **Why Isolation?**

It is important to isolate your new house guest for at least the first few days after you bring her home. Puppies need more isolation time than adults do because they do not carry as many immunities or may not have had enough vaccines yet. Your adult foster dog may be feeling stressed from moving to a new environment and having some time to herself will be crucial. We provide crates for crate training as well. Just let us know if you need one. Having your foster dog isolated for the first few days will also give you a chance to monitor her eating, drinking, and bathroom habits more closely.

## **Introducing your Foster Dog to your Resident Dog(s).**

If you have dogs already at home, you can bring your dog in and we can do a meet and greet at the center before you take your foster dog home. If we know both dogs do well with other dogs and you are going to introduce them at your home we have some guidelines for you to follow to ensure a successful introduction. It is always a good idea to do the meet and greet outside in a large yard or on a parallel walk. Keep all dogs on a leash and allow them enough space to get away from one another if they want to. Do not force the introduction. Make sure to keep the leash loose and do not pull it tight (this will cause more tenseness in the dog). Once you know they are doing well, you can drop the leashes and let them mingle. It is very important that you do not leave the dogs unattended. Always make sure that high-value items, such as food, toys, or bones are put away whenever the dogs are interacting. This will assure there is no protecting of these items which could lead to a fight. Keep these items in the dog's personal place for when they are separated from each other. NEVER feed your dog(s) and the foster dog in the same room. ALWAYS put them in closed separate areas at feeding time and NEVER leave your foster pet alone with your pet(s) unsupervised. Check out our foster portal for more information on meet and greets.



## **Introducing your Foster Dog to your Resident Cat(s).**

If you have a cat at home and you are taking a foster dog home, it is important to introduce them carefully and safely. Keep them in separate rooms at first. Over a week period let the dog and cat smell each other under the door. You may even swap their blankets back and forth so they can get used to each other's scent even more. Once the week of sniffing is going well, you can do a face-to-face introduction. KEEP YOUR FOSTER DOG ON LEASH, but allow your cat out into the same area. If you have more than one cat, please introduce them one at a time.



Watch the body language of both animals closely. Do not allow the dog to charge or run at the cat. Make sure you have control of the leash. If either pet becomes over-stimulated, agitated, or fixated remove the dog from the situation immediately. You want to keep the interactions they have as positive as possible. You can give the pets some decompression time before trying this again. If the same body language continues, it may not be the best fit. Let your foster coordinator know, and she will help you find a dog that may do better with your cat(s). PLEASE never leave the dog and cat together unsupervised. Check out our foster portal for more information on meet and greets.



Thank you for taking the time to read through this packet. We are excited to have you foster with us. Remember, we are here for any questions or concerns you may have. Keep us informed on the progress you are having with your new foster house guest. We love to get photos and updates on how they are doing. We look forward to hearing from you!

Lynchburg Humane Society

1211 Old Graves Mill Road  
Lynchburg, VA 24502

434-448-0088



## Foster Contacts

### **Foster Coordinator**

434-448-0088 Ext. 106

Foster@lynchburghumane.org

### **Medical Emergencies**

9am – 5pm ~

Come to the Center

After Hours ~

**434-473-1383**

## Foster Resources

### **Behavior Questions**

chris@lynchburghumane.org

### **Make Vaccine Appointments**

<https://calendly.com/lhsfoster>

### **To Make Medical Appointments**

foster@lynchburghumane.org

### **Foster Facebook Page**

LHS Fosters

### **Foster Portal**

<http://lynchburghumane.org/foster-portal/>