

## **Submissive and Excited Urination**

### **Submissive Urination:**

Submissive urination is a normal way for dogs and puppies to demonstrate submissive behavior. Even a dog that is otherwise housetrained may leave dribbles and puddles of urine at your feet and on the floor when greeting you.

Although submissive urination can be somewhat annoying, it is the ultimate show of respect and deference for higher rank. It occurs frequently with young puppies who have not yet learned and perfected other social skills and means of showing respect. However, there are older dogs who still do this. Submissive urination in an adult dog often is a sign of insecurity. Often unsocialized, abused, or very shy dogs will submissively urinate. Other dogs that engage in submissive urination may simply have not been shown that there are more acceptable ways to show respect, such as paw raising (shake hands) or hand licking (give a kiss).

Submissive urination may be present in overly sensitive or mistreated dogs because they feel the need to constantly apologize. This state is often caused by excessive or delayed punishment which frightens and confuses the dog without teaching him/her how to make amends. The dog resorts to the only way he/she knows to show respect and fear, by submissive urination.

When your dog submissively urinates, it is best to just ignore it. If you try to reassure the dog, he/she will think you are praising him/her for urinating and will urinate even more. If you scold the dog, he/she will feel an even greater need to apologize by urinating. Either reassurance or scolding will only make submissive urination worse.

Treatment of submissive urination must be directed towards building your dog's confidence and showing your dog other ways to demonstrate respect. The quickest way to accomplish this is by teaching your dog a few basic obedience exercises such as stay, sit, fetch, etc. A dog that can earn praise by obeying a simple routine of "Come here, sit, shake hands," will soon develop self-esteem and confidence. A confident dog who can say, "Hello, Boss" by sitting and shaking hands does not feel the need to urinate at his owner's feet.

### **Excited Urination:**

Just as with submissive urinations, it is normal for some dogs to urinate when they become excited.

Excitement urination usually occurs in puppies and is caused by lack of bladder control. The puppy is not aware or just does not associate the urinating with something that is negative. Punishing a puppy who urinates excitedly will only confuse him/her. Since he/she does not know why you are angry, the excitement urination will quickly become submissive urination in an attempt to appease you. As your puppy matures and develops bladder control, the problem will usually disappear. However, in the meantime, it is probably a good idea to do something to help keep your puppy dry.

The best treatment for excitement urination is to prevent your dog from becoming overly excited in the first place. You can do this by exposing your dog to the stimulus that excites him, over and over until it no longer excites him/her. Most likely, your dog gets excited and wets when you return home. If so, simply ignore him/her for a couple of minutes. Don't even look at your puppy. Just turn around and leave again for a few minutes, return and ignore, leave, return and ignore. Keep doing this until you can see that your dog is not only unexcited, but is actually getting bored with the whole thing. If excitement urination is a problem when visitors arrive, have them do this too. When your dog has calmed down and is no longer excited when you come in, then very quietly and gently say hello. If any signs of excitement or urinating appear, quickly exit and repeat the coming-and-going routine.

Another option is if your puppy gets excited and urinates when you come home, then let the puppy come outside when you get home. That way when he/she urinates, it will be in an area where it is not a big deal. Remember to ignore all excitement urination and never scold or get angry at your dog when it occurs. As mentioned before, your puppy should grow out of this.

If your dog did this as a puppy, and now in his/her old age the dog has started it again, your dog may have an incontinence problem. If you mention this to your veterinarian, he/she can prescribe medication that can help.