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# AMSCOPE

Newsletter of the American Miniature Schnauzer Club

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## How to Know if Your Dog is Depressed

By Gemma Johnstone

Unlike humans, dogs can't verbalize what they are feeling. But even though dogs experience different emotions than we do, experts recognize that dogs can experience mental health problems similar to depression. But how do you know if your dog may be depressed?

### How to Spot Signs of Depression in Dogs

Dog depression symptoms will vary, depending on the individual dog and how serious the problem is. There are some key things to look out for, however. Keep an eye out for changes in body language during their interactions with people and other pets, decreased appetite, and lethargic behavior.

Dr. Leslie Sinn runs Behavior Solutions and is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB) and a certified professional dog trainer. "The main thing would be a change in normal demeanor," she says. "What I hear from most of my clients is that their dog is not that willing to engage in activities that previously they seemed to really enjoy."

She gives the example of a dog who normally loves to play fetch. If a dog who usually loves fetch is now playing for one or two rounds and then loses interest, it's clear their attitude has changed. You then might be wondering "Is my dog depressed?"

Dr. Sinn also lists other signs, including "clingy, needy behavior, and, perhaps, a

need to be closer to the owner in general." Some dogs, however, can go the other way, and they can become overly withdrawn.

### Ruling Out Pain or an Underlying Medical Condition

The symptoms of dog depression are often commonly similar to those displayed by a dog suffering from an underlying medical condition or chronic pain. Sometimes, these issues can even be triggers for depression.

Dr. Sinn always encourages owners to have their dogs medically evaluated to rule out any medical problems. "In general, if a dog is slowing down or is reluctant to engage, especially in the absence of some life-changing event, then I would bet huge amounts of money that it is medical or pain-related," she says.

Senior Labrador retriever laying down indoors.

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### Common Causes of Depression in Dogs

If you suspect your pet is suffering from dog depression, ask yourself what has changed in their life and environment. There are a variety of triggers for depression. Sometimes it's an obvious thing, but it can also be more subtle changes or a combination of issues that have built up over time.

"Depression, in animals anyway, is something that we tend to associate with a specific event," says Dr. Sinn. "It could be the loss of an owner, the loss of a buddy that they have grown up with, or a huge lifestyle change — a big move, or the addition or subtraction of key members of their social group. It tends to be context-specific."

She explains that "people should look at their dog's basic environmental and social circumstances" to understand what may have brought about the changes in their behavior.

Common triggers for dog depression may include:

Grief while mourning the loss of a human or animal companion  
Chronic pain

Trauma, including injury, abuse, or long-term stress

Environmental changes such as a house move, rehoming, or the addition of a new baby or pet to the household. Even things like children going back to school after extended holidays or a change in your work pattern could be factors.

Social isolation

Not getting enough physical and/or mental stimulation. This is especially true for high-energy, driven, working breeds.

Dr. Sinn explains that some of the most severe cases of dog depression she's seen have come from "dogs coming out of just horrific rescue circumstances — hoarding situations, meat farm dogs, that kind of thing."

Dr. Kelly Ballantyne is a board-certified veterinary behaviorist and the leader of Insight Animal Behavior Services. She says that serious behavioral issues can often result from a combination of genetics, early life experiences, physical and social environments, and ongoing learning processes. "We regularly meet with experienced dog owners who provide appropriate amounts of exercise, enrichment, play, and training, and still have dogs that suffer from fear, anxiety, and depression."

"You could have a very, very anxious dog that has a lot of behavioral suppression," adds Dr. Sinn. "It really kind of freezes or shuts down and that whole process can lead to depression. The dog doesn't want to eat, DEPRESSION....cont'd on p. 2

**December issue is the last issue of AMSCOPE**

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# LOOK

Please let me know if you make a change

\* **DECALS & PINS.** You can get AMSC decals (\$1.00) and replacement pins (\$7.50) from

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Have you set up your Member login on our new, revamped website? If not, go to <https://amsc.us/my-account/> click on "Lost Your Password?" to set up your account using the email AMSC has on record.

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**Remember:  
Fall is prime  
time for  
fleas.**

DEPRESSION...from p. 1

doesn't want to move, doesn't want to do much of anything. It doesn't want to engage and, consequently, removes itself from social interaction." In these severe cases, treating the problem may not be straightforward.

**How to Treat Depression in Dogs**  
As Dr. Sinn points out, dogs are amazingly resilient. If there is a significant event associated with their depression, often some simple environmental and social changes can make a huge difference. She suggests things like "spending some extra time with them, taking them on extra fun walks, playing a little tug, or having a little grooming session." Usually, with a little time, extra attention, and enjoyable enrichment, your dog will move through their depression without any major difficulty.

For some dogs, their depression is a more permanent issue that can be more serious in the long term. This dog will need extra support. Dr. Sinn is keen to reiterate that these dogs have often had a particularly traumatic past, and it is not a surprise that they need extra help.

sad pure-bred dog, puppy Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, lie, close up muzzle @tankist276 - stock.adobe.com  
Often behavioral guidance from a professional is recommended, and, in some instances, you may want to discuss pharmacological support with your vet. "We don't medicate out of convenience for the owner," says Dr. Sinn. "But if the poor dog is unable to function the majority of the time, then something needs to be done to address the quality of life and welfare of that individual."

Dr. Ballantyne explains that medications are very helpful in cases where a dog's underlying emotional state is interfering with their ability to learn new behaviors or negatively affecting their quality of life. "This is especially true when there are many different types of triggers for the dog's fear or anxiety, or when the triggers are unavoidable." She gives the example of a depressed dog who is terrified of storms and lives in an area

where storms are frequent for months throughout the year.

"I think it's important to acknowledge that pharmaceutical options aren't the only treatment for dogs suffering from mental illness, but rather just a part of the treatment plan," points out Dr. Ballantyne. She notes that the most effective treatment plans may include a combination of pharmaceuticals, managing your dog's environment, and behavior modification.



## NEW APPLICANT

**Linda Kroeger**  
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KROSCHU

Linda would like to become a regular AMSC member to promote and support breed standards in form and function especially among those showing in performance events. She has read and agrees to abide by the Breed Standard and the Code of Ethics. She has owned AKC Min. Schnauzers since 1972 and has produced three litters in the past five years. Linda is involved in Conformation (4 yrs.) Obedience (38 yrs.) Breeding (2yrs.), Barn Hunt (8 yrs.) and Scent Work (6 yrs.). Linda attends approximately twelve events per year and is a member of Portland MSC since 1998, Springhill's Rat Pack, BHA/NASDA group and helps to prepare for Barn Hunt Trials and assists during trials since 2022. She is willing to help with Obedience, Barn Hunt, Scent Work and Conformation. Linda is retired.

**Sponsors:** Kaye Kirk, Laurie Moore

**PEANUT BUTTER ALERT FOR YOUR PETS**

A new type of peanut butter (and other nut butters) is being sold with less suger, but now includes xylitol as a sweetener. This is what is used in sugarless gum and it can be deadly to dogs. Many people use peanut butter as a dog treat, or to fill a Kong, or disguise medications; if they now use the type with Xylitol, it could be very dangerous.

Share this with anyone with a dog.

"The results suggested that ... gonad retention during the first 24 months of life—are strongly associated with lifelong avoidance of bilateral CCL rupture...Risk for CCL rupture was not influenced when gonad removal took place after the 24-month developmental period." CCL injuries are one of the most common causes of pain and arthritis in dogs.

**New study shows dogs that are not neutered in the first 24-months of life have a 95% reduced risk of bilateral knee ligament (CCL) rupture.**



On behalf of the entire AMSC membership we offer heartfelt thanks to Carla Borrelli AMSCOPE Newsletter Editor since 1994

Words cannot express our gratitude for Carla's decades of volunteering, - our longest serving committee chair!

As this chapter closes, and we move Club business to email and Amscope Quarterly magazine, we will remember fondly the invaluable news, information and "All things AMSC" that Carla provided.

Vicki Kubic – AMSC President

**This is a tip** that I hope you'll never have to use, but one that I feel strongly that every dog owner should know. It's an acupressure point taught in almost every canine first-aid class because you can use it to keep your dog alive, in emergency situations until you reach veterinary care.

Although some may scoff at acupressure thinking it is too weird or fringe, there are many stories of how this simple technique has resuscitated dogs that have been pronounced "clinically dead."

If your dog suffers a seizure or traumatic injury and loses consciousness this techniques isn't only worth a try, it could save his life.

**Simply rest one hand comfortable on your dog, and place your thumb just above your dog's upper lip, halfway between his nose and mouth and gently apply about 2 pounds of pressure for approximately 30 seconds. It should help your dog regain consciousness.**

**I have already said my good byes..... No need to say more... Carla**



EMOTIONS...con't on p.4



Carla Borrelli, Editor  
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**FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE:** The following information is given to help conduct AMSC business, Please remember that the Secretary and AMSCOpe editor should BOTH be notified of address chnges.

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AMSC Web page: <http://amsc.us>  
AMSC home page: <http://akc.org/akc/>

## AMSC Ear Crop Survey

The AMSC Crop/Dock committee is requesting your assistance to develop a list of Veterinarians who:

crop Miniature Schnauzers  
are willing to teach ear cropping to other veterinarians  
are interested in learning a proper show crop

It is becoming more difficult to find veterinarians that crop ears. This committee wants to ensure AMSC members have properly trained veterinarians who will do show quality ear crops for Miniature Schnauzers. We want to encourage and provide help to interested veterinarians that wish to learn this procedure through networking.

This all starts with you! Whether an owner or breeder we desperately need members to share information with our committee. Information will be kept confidential until we have written permission from veterinarians to share and or use their information in our networking plan.

To achieve this, we need the help of AMSC members and breeders. We are requesting that you complete this online survey. The committee will then connect with the veterinarians for additional information.

Should you have an issue completing the online survey or have questions about it, please reach out to Beth Santure at 734-657-3640 or bsanture@gmail.com or to Barbara Donahue at 215-896-9666 or barbaramd\_2000@yahoo.com.

Please complete the survey only once per person!  
Sign in to Google to save your progress. [Learn more](#)

How many Miniature Schnauzers do you own?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  10 or more

How many cropped Miniature Schnauzers do you own?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  10 or more

Was your dog cropped prior to purchase?

Yes  No

If you had your dog cropped after purchase, please provide the name and contact information of the veterinarian.

Do you breed Miniature Schnauzers?

Yes  No

How many puppies from an average litter of 5 do you have cropped?

1  2  3  4  5  6= Not Applicable; not a breeder

Do you sell uncropped puppies as pets?

Never  Seldom  Usually  Always

Not Applicable; not a breeder

Do you crop a pet puppy prior to purchase if the buyer requests it?

Yes  No  Not Applicable; not a breeder

What was the approximate cost of the last ear crop you had done and the month/year? If not applicable, write N/A

Please provide the name, vet clinic name, address, phone. number and email address of the veterinarian that crops your puppies below. If not applicable, write N/A.

Do you know a veterinarian that is interested in learning to perform a Miniature Schnauzer ear crop?

Yes  No  Maybe

Does this vet currently crop other breeds? If yes, which breeds? If not applicable, write N/A

Please provide the veterinarians name, vet clinic name, phone number and email information below. If not applicable, write N/A

Please provide your name and contact information in case we have additional questions.

