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# AMSCOPE

Newsletter of the American Miniature Schnauzer Club

May 2022

Volume 42

Issue 5

## 10 Ways to Build a Stronger Bond with Your Dog



Whether you have a puppy or an adult dog, or whether you have been together for a day or for ten years, there are always some special things you can do to enrich the close relationship between the two of you. Here are 10 ways that you can build an even stronger bond with your dog.

### Teach Some Tricks

Training is a great way to build a stronger bond with your dog. You can be training a basic behavior or something more complex, but training helps to give your dog's brain a workout. As he masters those training tricks and you reward him with love, praise and a few well-earned [Bil-Jac Dog Treats](#), you are also establishing a deeper connection between the two of you. Not sure where to start? [Read our post on basic dog training tips](#) to find out how you can begin to build that bond with your buddy.

### Get Some Exercise Together

Not only is exercise good for both you and your dog's wellbeing, it can also help the

two of you grow closer. Going for a walk or a run is a great way to create a fun routine that can give your dog a chance to check out new sights and smells, all while at each other's side.

### Create a Routine

Dogs are creatures of habit, so creating routines for several different behaviors can help you play a role in their regular habits. Setting and maintaining regular feeding times, bathroom breaks, and other routines can make your dog feel comfortable with you and their environment which builds trust. Dogs want to know what is expected of them and deliver that consistently to make you proud.

### Engage in Play Time

There are times your dog may like to play by himself, but he also loves to engage in play with you. By being an active participant in play time, your dog can feed off your excitement and strengthen his bond with you. Regular, active play can also help cut down on problem behaviors [according to a study released by Bristol University](#).

### Bond Through Brushing

A quick grooming session can not only maintain your dog's coat, it can also help the two of you grow closer. Your dog may be hesitant at first, but through gentle encouragement and affection, your dog can grow to love the attention and the experience.

### Hand Feed Your Dog from Time to Time

Hand feeding your dog with treats a few times a week is another way to build a special bond with your pooch. Since your dog needs to be careful eating out of your hand, it forces him to focus on you and your commands. By rewarding good behavior with treats, your dog can gain trust and learn that you are his provider.

### Pet with Purpose

When you pet your dog, it's important that he knows that he has your full attention. A few absentminded head rubs are nice, but they're

not going to mean nearly as much as when you're really invested in petting your pooch. Take some time, make the extra effort, and focus all your attention on your dog when you pet him. See what he enjoys the most. Is it rubbing his ears? A scratch under the chin? Or simply a good ol' belly rub? Let him know how much of a good boy he is, because he's most definitely a good boy.

### Create Some Cuddle Time

It's healthy to be active with your dog, but it's also nice to slow down and spend some time relaxing together. Chilling on the couch, sitting on the bed, or meeting your best friend on the floor for some cuddle time is a nice, relaxing way to bond with your dog, as the physical contact can create a sense of safety and comfort that lets your dog know that he's a true part of your pack.

### Be Consistent with Communication

Consistent, positive communication is an important part of strengthening your bond. Whether you're training your dog or going through his daily routine, make sure that you're being consistent with both the words you use and nonverbal signals. By clearing up misunderstandings and encouraging good behaviors, you can build up trust with your dog.

### Give Them Space from Time to Time

Sometimes the way to build a stronger bond with your dog is to give him a place where he can be alone. Dogs are den animals. Make a space, such as a crate or a dog bed in another room, where your dog can retreat to in case he needs to get away for a while in case he feels overwhelmed, wants to stay away from loud houseguests, or is in the mood for a quiet nap.

Taking the time to be mindful of all the things that can bring you and your dog closer shows him how much you care and how important he is to you and the whole family.

**The deadline  
for the June issue is  
May 8**

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# LOOK

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**BEILES--Carl M. Carl M.**  
Beiles, age 88, of Brookville, NY, died March 28, 2022. Carl grew up in the Bronx and then Woodmere, NY. He attended Harvard College

class of 55 and graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1959. He completed his residency at New York Hospital and his surgical fellowship at St. Vincent's Hospital. Throughout his 40 years as a general surgeon, he enjoyed teaching at North Shore University. A lifelong New York Yankees fan and avid gardener. Loved by family, friends, and patients. He is survived by his devoted wife of 50 years, Carol, and by his son Paul and his wife Jane, and daughter Emily Kaufman and her husband Mitch,

## 7 Health Issues to Look for When You Have an Older Dog

by *Dr. Hanie Elfenbein, DVM, PhD*

All dogs get older. And like us, **dogs age at different rates**, especially dogs of different breeds and size.

For example, giant breed dogs like **Great Danes** are generally considered to be a senior by roughly 5-6 years old, whereas a smaller breed dog like a **Chihuahua** would probably only enter the senior stage at 10-11 years.

As your beloved dog enters his senior years, you should be prepared for certain changes that might occur in your dog's health. Visit your veterinarian regularly; many vets recommend twice a year for senior dogs.

If you notice any of the following issues, talk to your veterinarian to determine the course of treatment.

### 1. Vision Loss and Other Eye Problems

Has your dog begun bumping into things, falling or displaying signs of eye discomfort (redness, cloudiness, etc.)? He may be suffering from vision loss or an eye disorder.

Deteriorating eyesight is part of the normal aging process for dogs. Many dogs will develop a cloudiness in their lens as they age, and though this is normal, it does decrease the precision of their eyesight.

Even though it may be due to aging, take your pet to the vet to rule out treatable eye diseases such as **corneal damage**, **dry eye syndrome** or **conjunctivitis**. **Cataracts** can also be treated surgically.

Loss of vision is usually irreversible, but there are certain things you can do to help your dog adjust. Ask your veterinarian for tips on handling senior dogs with vision loss.

### 2. Increased/Strained Urination

Increased urination or straining to urinate may be an indicator of kidney disease or urinary tract infection, both of which are more commonly seen in middle-aged to older dogs.

Fortunately, **urinary incontinence** and strained urination can often be alleviated with prescription dog medication or dietary changes. Urinary incontinence quickly leads to uncomfortable urinary tract infections. Consult your veterinarian if you suspect a problem.

### 3. Bad Breath, Bloody Gums and Other Oral Problems

If you haven't been diligent on brushing your dog's teeth or bringing him in to the vet's office regularly for a professional cleaning, he's probably beginning to display the signs of oral diseases (**bad breath**, **excessive drooling**, **gum inflammation** and loose teeth).

Dental hygiene, after all, is primarily about good maintenance. However, it's not too late to start. Take your dog to your veterinarian and discuss how you can resolve the issues and prevent them from occurring in the future.

### 4. Lumps, Bumps and Other Skin Problems

Your dog may encounter skin and coat issues at any age, but he is more susceptible to them as he gets older. These may show up as rashes, lesions, swelling, lumps, dry skin or **hair loss in dogs**.

But there are often things your veterinarian can do to help alleviate the symptoms (such as make dietary changes) or even cure the underlying cause of the issue.

Many **dogs develop lumps** under their skin as they age. **Lipomas**, or fatty growths, are common and benign—meaning they pose no problem for your pet.

However, fatty growths and other more dangerous growths can look very similar, so it is best to have them evaluated by your veterinarian.

Lumps are of increased concern when they are new, when they grow, or if they change shape, color or size.

### 5. Weight Gain or Loss

Some older dogs have **difficulty maintaining their weight** and may need a dog food with a higher calorie content or better palatability, while other dogs tend to **gain** weight and may need a diet for less active dogs.

Neither being overweight nor underweight is ideal for your dog. Overweight and **obese dogs**, for instance, have a higher incidence of diseases such as **diabetes**, heart disease, **arthritis** and even cancer.

Discuss with your veterinarian when it would be appropriate for your dog to switch from an adult dog to a senior dog diet. Ask about the benefits of **therapeutic diets**, which can provide key benefits to

**Older Dog.....con't on p. 3**

### Older Dog...from p. 2

help manage conditions commonly associated with aging dogs.

In addition, devise an [age-appropriate exercise routine for your senior dog](#) with the help of your vet. A proper diet and exercise plan can be important in delaying the signs of aging and increasing your dog's longevity.

#### 6. Difficulty Playing and Getting Around

It may be hard for you to see your previously active dog having difficulty getting around the house or playing fetch like before, but joint issues such as [arthritis](#) are common in older dogs.

Discuss with your veterinarian whether dietary changes (such as the addition of [antioxidants](#) and [omega-3 fatty acids](#)) would be helpful. Dog ramps and orthopedic dog beds can also help you accommodate your senior dog's less-mobile state.

[Physical rehabilitation](#) can also reverse some mobility losses and is a valuable tool for aging pets.

#### 7. Behavior and Memory Problems

Changes in your dog's behavior may be a normal part of aging or a symptom of a disease like dog dementia ([canine cognitive dysfunction](#)).

Therefore, you need to consult your veterinarian should he exhibit signs of confusion, disorientation, memory loss, irritability, unusual pacing or other personality changes.

Some specific signs of canine cognitive dysfunction include staying awake or pacing at night, having urinary accidents and forgetting cues (e.g., sit, stay) that he once knew.



## Please Heed This Poison Alert or You Could Live to Regret It

Written by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

Recently, a 3-year-old dog named Canon in Tennessee got into some Mentos sugar-free gum. The dog's heartbroken mom, Christy Figlio, didn't realize until after he had been euthanized that the source of Canon's illness and rapid deterioration was the result of xylitol poisoning from the gum.

*"We really wanted everybody to know so they don't have to go through this because it was horrible," Figlio told Inside Edition. "Always check the label."* **Xylitol Poisonings in Dogs More Than Doubled in 7 Years**

Each year as the number of products containing xylitol expands, sadly, so do the cases of poisoning in dogs. In 2007, the first year the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (ASPCA-APCC) started tracking cases of xylitol toxicity in dogs, the Center received 1,764 calls. In 2014, they handled 3,727 xylitol calls.<sup>2</sup>

That's over a 200 percent increase in just seven years, and includes only the cases called into the ASPCA-APCC. There are other animal poison control centers that receive calls, as well as unreported cases of xylitol-related illnesses and deaths.

### Xylitol Is Only Toxic for Certain Species

Although xylitol is safe for humans, the sweetener's effect varies by species. In people, rhesus monkeys, rats and horses, it causes little to no insulin release. However, it has the opposite effect on dogs, ferrets, rabbits, cows, goats and baboons. At the present time, xylitol's effect on cats is unknown. Fortunately, cats aren't typically attracted to sweet tastes.

Humans absorb xylitol slowly, and the sweetener when ingested orally is absorbed at from 50 to 95 percent. However, in dogs, xylitol is rapidly and fully absorbed within about 30 minutes. Just a small amount of xylitol can cause a dangerous insulin surge and a rapid drop in blood sugar.

The toxicity of xylitol in dogs is dose-dependent. The dose required to trigger [hypoglycemia](#) (low blood glucose) is approximately 0.1 grams/kg, while the amount needed to cause liver failure is about 0.5 grams/kg. Most gum and breath mints typically contain 0.22 to 1.0 gram of xylitol per piece of gum or mint.

This means just a single piece of gum or one mint may cause hypoglycemia in a 10-pound dog. For more detailed information and graphics on how much xylitol is dangerous to different sized dogs, as well as a comparison of xylitol versus chocolate toxicity in dogs, take a look at this [Preventive Vet](#) page.

### The List of Products Containing Xylitol Is Long and Getting Longer

[Xylitol poisoning](#) in dogs is reaching epidemic proportions according to some sources. The sweetener is being used in an ever growing list of products because it's as sweet as sucrose, but with only two-thirds the calories of sugar. It's less expensive than other sugar substitutes, tastes better and causes little if any insulin release in humans.

Just a few years ago, xylitol could be found in less than a hundred products in the U.S., primarily limited to sugar-free gums, candy and foods. Today it can be found in a wide range of health and beauty products, food products, over-the-counter drugs and supplements, and prescription medications.

Xylitol was originally found primarily in products not normally given to dogs. However, the sweetener is now being used in certain peanut and nut butters. As most dog guardians know, our pets love these creamy butters. Many people use a dab of peanut or nut butter to hide pills or supplements they give to their dog, or they fill a Kong with the gooey stuff as a special treat.

The nut butter brands containing xylitol are No Cow (formerly D's Naturals), Go Nuts, Krush Nutrition, Nuts 'N More and P28 Foods.<sup>3</sup> These are specialty nut butters sold primarily in nutrition stores and online, but the fact that xylitol is being used in these products is a heads-up for dog parents everywhere of the importance of reading ingredient labels.

It's probably just a matter of time before more mainstream peanut and nut butters also contain xylitol. Dr. Ahna Brutlag, associate director of veterinary services for [Pet Poison Helpline](#) explains the seriousness of the situation:

*"First, dogs fed straight peanut butter as a treat or fed treats baked with xylitol-*

**POISON ALERT..con't on p. 4**



# AMSCOPE

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## POISON ALERT...from p. 3

*containing peanut butter may certainly be at risk for harm. Second, a dog that nabs the entire jar of xylitol-containing peanut butter and happily gorges on his or her treasure without anyone knowing could quickly become extremely ill. If this occurred during the day while the owners were not home, it's possible the dog could die before people returned."*

You should be aware of any product in your home containing xylitol, and especially anything you might consider offering to your dog.

### Determining the Amount of Xylitol in a Product

Currently, product manufacturers aren't required to list the quantity of xylitol on package labels, and while some companies will reveal the amount in their products, many are reluctant to do so.

In some cases, you might be able to use the placement of xylitol on an ingredient list to estimate how much is in the product. In the U.S., ingredient lists for foods must be organized in descending order based on weight. The ingredient weighing the most is at the top of the list.

In most chewing gum ingredient lists, xylitol appears in fourth or fifth place, making it clinically insignificant. But if it appears as one of the first three ingredients, extreme caution should be taken. In fact, I recommend dog guardians avoid or very carefully secure any product that contains any amount of xylitol, no matter how small.

When it comes to medications and dietary supplements, U.S. regulations do not require manufacturers to list xylitol by name on package labels. This is because the sweetener is often categorized as an "inactive" or "other" ingredient, and such ingredients don't have to be listed in order by the amount contained in the product.

To confuse matters further, when xylitol is named in these products, it's often part of

an alphabetized list, which could lead pet owners to assume, perhaps in error, that there is a very small amount in the product. That's why it's best, in my opinion, to either avoid or very carefully store any product that contains xylitol in any amount. Preventive Vet has a comprehensive [list of products containing xylitol](#) here.

### Symptoms and Treatment of Xylitol Toxicosis

Symptoms of xylitol intoxication in dogs include vomiting, weakness, **lethargy**, loss of coordination, seizures and collapse. Hypoglycemia is usually evident within an hour or two after a dog ingests xylitol, but symptoms are occasionally delayed for several hours.

Treatment depends on how quickly it is given. **Vomiting is induced** in cases where

the xylitol has just been ingested. Once a dog develops hypoglycemia, intravenous (IV) dextrose must be administered until the animal can self-regulate his blood glucose concentrations, which typically takes from 12 to 48 hours.

In dogs who ingest enough xylitol to cause liver toxicity, **liver enzymes** must be closely monitored, as evidence of hepatic necrosis can show up one to two days after ingestion. Should the liver begin to fail, the dog will require IV fluids, dextrose, hepatoprotectants (substances to help support and repair the liver) and regular monitoring of blood clotting activity.

When xylitol exposure is caught early in a dog and treated effectively, the prognosis for a full recovery is excellent. The prognosis for dogs who develop hepatic failure is less optimistic.

**FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE:** The following information is given to help conduct AMSC business more efficiently. Please remember that the Secretary and the AMSCOPE editor should **BOTH** be notified of address changes, club officers and specialty results.

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