



September 2025



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hey everyone, I am sorry for the delay in getting the newsletter out this month. I going to blame a new computer, online Microsoft Office 365, my own confusion with both, and the stress and strain of the new school year. Oh, and I retired! I wasn't planning to retire until the end of this school year, but things change.

Next weekend, Sept. 20th-21st, is the PA Renn Faire at the Mt. Hope Estate and Winery on both Saturday and Sunday.

Our Fun Day is on Sunday, Sept. 21st at Diane Reba's lovely home.

See calendar of events at the end of the newsletter for more events and check your emails for details.

Board Members Info.PVIWC@gmail.com
Kathy Lewis, President naturelady58@gmail.com
Susan Montgomery, Vice President, Rescue, Web Page pviwcweb@gmail.com
Christina Buckner, Treasurer pvtreasurer@pviwc.org pviwcshowsecretary@gmail.com
Susan Wine, Secretary pvsecretary@pviwc.org
Carole Silverthorne Breeder Referral carolesilverthorne@comcast.net
Judy Chantelois
Joe Caballe
Linda King IWC Liason
Virginia Thackston Trophy Chair

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact Kathy Lewis.

A Hole

from **Wolfhound Poetry**, Philip Santilano

What's is a hole, nothing
it's whole is wholly not
it's really such a weird thing
for being actually nought

Hieronymus

(Dad's note: Oh dear me, another Dougal?)





PVIWC Fun Match

The PVIWC Fun Match is an event held to celebrate the Irish Wolfhound. The classes are just for fun, education, and include practice conformation classes as well as grooming tips and a Rally demo. The classes start at 11 am, and after the match there is a potluck lunch that all are invited to enjoy. [Sign up here for food items.](#)

The event will be held outdoors in a grassy field, so plan accordingly. We suggest sunblock, insect repellent, chairs, tents, x-pens and water for your hounds. This event is also a fundraiser for the club, so there will be a raffle, and club items for sale.

The event will be held at the lovely historic home of Diane Reba.

5519 Old National Pike

Frederick, MD

September 21, 2025 11am to 3pm

Fun Match Classes

All classes separated m/f

Puppies: 0-6, 6-9, 9-12, 12-15, 15-18, 18-24, Best Puppy

Adult, Best Adult

Veteran, Best Veteran

Best in Show

Fun Classes:

Biggest Foot, Longest Beard, Best Coat, Longest Tail, Best Head, Best Ear, Best Gait, Puppy Lure Coursing



This year, to encourage everyone to try something new, there is one cost for all classes. Donate whatever amount you wish to the club, and we will issue you a number for all the classes in the day. Come try something new!

Dog Meal Prep: How to Prepare Dog Food in Bulk

By Nandini Maharaj, Updated: May 23, 2025 **AKC**

Whether you're using commercially prepared dog food like kibble or making your own dog food at home, feeding high-quality ingredients can help improve your dog's health and longevity. To make things easier, you can consider dog meal prep by preparing portions of cooked food for the week.

After you've put some thought into choosing the right diet for your pet, it makes sense that you'd want the food to stay fresh for as long as possible. Food that isn't stored properly can lose its nutritional value or worse, make your dog sick.

Whether you pre-portion your dog's kibble rations or batch cook a week of meals, it's essential that what you're feeding your dog is still safe for them.

How Do I Store My Dog's Food?

The first step to ensuring your dog's food stays fresh is proper storage, especially if you're trying to meal prep. "Oxidation (a chemical reaction when food is exposed to oxygen) is what causes spoilage and loss of nutrition over time," explains Dr. Steph Sheen, DVM. "Storing food in an airtight container, away from direct sunlight limits exposure to air and UV light, which slows the oxidation process."

For maximum freshness for food being served, ideally your dog would consume each meal in full. Alternatively, if you allow free-feeding or grazing, you can leave kibble out at room temperature. Dr. Sheen recommends measuring out the daily amount "rather than topping up the bowl to avoid old food from staying at the bottom for too long." After eight hours, you should throw away any uneaten food and refrigerated food should be returned to the fridge sooner than that.

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Extreme heat or cold can “compromise the quality, safety, and palatability of food if it’s stored in a garage or shed,” explains Dr. Ruth Ann Lobos, DVM, a senior veterinarian at Purina. Some dog food manufacturers also use vitamins and antioxidants. These serve as natural preservatives to keep food from oxidizing and becoming rancid. To minimize exposure to moisture, air, and high temperatures, Dr. Lobos recommends following the FDA’s guidelines, which include:

- Store dog food and treats in their original bag or container, at room temperature
- Put the opened bag into a container, as opposed to emptying the bag
- Make sure the container you use is airtight, clean, and dry



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How Long Does Food Last?

“The expiration date on the bag refers to how long food stays fresh in an unopened bag,” Dr. Sheen explains. “Once you open the bag, air is introduced into the food and the oxidation process begins.” Her advice for making food last is to select a quantity that your dog can consume within about six to eight weeks. Be sure to avoid packaging that’s torn or damaged at the time of purchase.

Keeping food in its original bag helps prevent nutrients from leaching out of the food into the container, so it may be better to continue to scoop

their meals rather than keeping pre-portioned meals in individual containers. Another advantage of using the original packaging is having important information on hand including the brand, manufacturer, expiration date, lot number, and product code in case you have any questions or in the event of a product recall.

“Typically, the expiration date is 12 to 18 months, but it can vary based on the formula,” Dr. Lobos says. She suggests keeping a calendar of how long it takes your dog to finish a bag of food when deciding what size to purchase. You can always double check with the manufacturer if you’re unsure about the expiration date.

How Can I Ensure Homemade Meals Are Safe for My Dog?

Preparing meals at home allows you to combine fresh ingredients that are easy for dogs to digest. Just make sure not to deviate from the recipe or engage in what’s known as “recipe drift,” which is when “pet owner substitutes chicken or fish for another ingredient, which totally changes the nutrient profile of the recipe,” Dr. Lobos explains.

Even something as small as using a different cooking oil or switching vegetables in the recipe can create an imbalance over time, according to Dr. Sheen. It’s better for your dog to use a whole new recipe rather than trying to substitute ingredients.

If you have a senior dog or a dog with medical conditions, homemade meals are still a great option. You can cook the food yourself or purchase pre-made meals. Keep in mind that many recipes found online don’t meet minimum nutritional requirements, Dr. Sheen explains. Simply adding a generic multivitamin isn’t sufficient to meet your dog’s needs.

What’s most important is using a recipe that is complete and balanced by a board-certified veterinary nutritionist, Dr. Sheen says. This often means needing to supplement your dog’s food with specific vitamins and minerals. In addition, make sure to follow the nutritionist’s recommendations to provide consistent, complete, and balanced nutrition.



AkilinaWinner via Getty Images

Is Batch Cooking a Good Option?

Seeing as cooking requires a lot of planning and preparation, preparing food in batches can help you save time. You'll need to consider the size of your dog, how much food they consume each week, and how much storage space you have in your kitchen or freezer. For a small dog, you can prepare a batch that lasts a few weeks and keep it frozen until ready for use. For a larger dog, you may need to cook more often or prepare more than one batch at a time.

"Once prepared, the food can be kept in the freezer for up to a year, especially if it's stored in a vacuum-sealed package," Dr. Sheen says. "Although it begins to lose some nutrition after six months." Keep batches frozen until you're ready to serve them. Once defrosted, food can last in the fridge for three to four days or slightly longer if kept in an airtight container or vacuum-sealed package.

This also depends on the ingredients you're using. Cooked meals might be a better option if your dog has a compromised immune system due to age or illness.

Homemade Dog Food Recipes: Choosing Balanced Ingredients

By Harriet Meyers, Updated: Feb 02, 2024 **AKC**



Are you considering switching your dog to a homemade diet? A good place to begin is by discussing it with your veterinarian and/or a veterinary nutritionist. You may think that sounds unnecessary when there are so many recipes for homecooked dog meals available on the internet. However, the experts say that many of those recipes were not reviewed by veterinary nutritionists to make sure they provide a nutritional, well-balanced diet for your dog. This is why some owners prefer to feed pre-made fresh food.

The American College of Veterinary Nutrition (ACVN) warns that your dog's unique nutritional requirements will depend on the age, size, health, and breed. Also, there are dogs for whom a homemade diet may not be appropriate or might even be damaging. "We generally don't recommend homemade diets for a dog less than one-year-old. If young dogs don't receive the appropriate amount of calcium and phosphorus, significant bone abnormalities may result," says Dr. Jerry Klein, AKC chief veterinarian. "Pregnant and lactating dogs also have unique dietary requirements that may not be addressed by a recipe found on the internet."



The ABCs of a Balanced Dog Food Diet

Understanding the basics of what makes a homecooked diet balanced for your dog will help when you discuss the options with an expert. Here are important ingredients for the canine diet.

Protein: According to the ACVN, dogs must have protein in their diets that contain 10 specific essential amino acids their bodies can't produce. This is necessary for the creation of glucose, which transforms into energy. Sources of protein include chicken and turkey, after removing bones, fat, and skin; beef and lamb; pork in limited amounts; salmon and some other fish such as whitefish, herring, walleye, flounder, and Arctic char.

Fats and fatty acids: The most concentrated sources of fats in a dog's diet come from animal fats and plant seed oils. A healthy diet supplies the fatty acids the dog's body doesn't manufacture. Fatty acids support the function and structure of cells, keep skin and coat healthy, and enhance the taste of the food. Sources of fatty acids include plant-based oils, including corn, soybean, canola, and flaxseed oil, as well as fish oil.

Carbohydrates: Dogs get some of their energy from carbohydrates, which include sugars, starches, and dietary fibers. Sources include rice, pasta, oatmeal, and quinoa.

Fiber: Dogs need fiber in their diet to keep their gastrointestinal (GI) system functioning and to help them from becoming overweight. Good sources of fiber for dogs include carrots, pumpkin, apples, dark leafy greens, brown rice, and flaxseed.

Vitamins: Vitamins are required for growth and maintenance. Vitamin deficiencies can cause a variety of health problems; however, they can also be dangerous in large quantities.

Vitamins dogs require include A (carrots, pumpkin), B vitamins (liver, green vegetables, whole grains), C (fruits and vegetables, organ meat), D (liver, fish, beef), E (leafy green vegetables, liver, bran, plant oils), K (fish, leafy green vegetables, fish), and choline (liver, fish, meats, egg yolks).

Minerals: There are 12 essential minerals for dogs:

- Calcium (tofu, green beans, broccoli, and cauliflower) and phosphorus (meat, eggs) for strong bones and teeth.
- Magnesium, potassium, sodium, and chloride (fruits, vegetables, whole grains) for nerve impulse transmission, muscle contraction, and cell signaling.
- Sulfur (meat, fish, molasses) for healthy skin, coat, and nails.
- Iron (red meats, poultry) for supporting red blood cells and the immune system.
- Iodine (dairy, kelp, seafood) for a healthy thyroid.
- Zinc (eggs, lamb, liver, brewer's yeast) for the immune system, healthy skin, and coat.
- Selenium (meat, vegetables, seafood, brown rice) to boost the immune system.
- Copper (whole grains, seeds, and seafood) for healthy bone growth.

Water: We sometimes overlook this important ingredient of a healthy dog's diet, but there really is no dog food that contains enough water for your dog. Keep clean, fresh water out always.



Making the Transition

Consult a veterinarian: If you've decided to transition your dog to a homemade diet, your first step should be to consult a veterinarian or veterinary nutritionist. Those experts will consider your dog's age, size, and health history and help you identify a high-quality recipe that is tailored to meet your dog's specific nutritional needs.

Buying ingredients: When you buy ingredients for your dog's homemade meals, you need to pay as much attention to the source, expiration dates, and labels as you do when you buy food for yourself.

Making the switch gradually: Whenever you change your dog's food, whether to a homemade diet or a new commercial food, a gradual switch is best to avoid upsetting your dog's GI system. For at least five-to-seven days, gradually mix in more and more of the new food with the old food, as you allow your dog to adjust to the change.

Follow the recipe: Be sure to follow the recipe. Tufts Cummings Veterinary Medical Center Clinical Nutrition Service published a study to determine how well owners adhered to homecooked diet recipes a median of one year later. Only 13 percent were still feeding the original nutritionally balanced diet recipe.

Clear instructions: Instructions about preparation and quantities are important. The way you cook the ingredients – for example, steam, roast, or boil — can impact the nutrition of the diet. Substituting or adding ingredients can also cause nutritional deficiencies. A study reported in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association reported that a

lack of clear instructions in many recipes forces pet owners to make assumptions that can result in food that is nutritionally inadequate and can even be harmful if fed to your dog on a long-term basis.

Follow-up: Once you've made the transition, pay attention to any digestive changes your dog may have. If his stool softens, he vomits, or has diarrhea, check in with the veterinarian. Whenever you change your dog's diet, you also need to monitor his weight. It may take a while to determine the correct portions for his size, age, and energy level.

Resources for the Chef

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- Your best resource and first stop is your dog's veterinarian, who knows your dog and has a thorough understanding of his health history and current condition.
- A good resource to help find a veterinary nutritionist for a homemade diet consultation is the Diplomate directory at www.acvn.org. If there isn't a nutritionist in your area, you can consult with one remotely.
- An alternative option is to use the online consulting service called BalanceIT, a site operated by a veterinary nutritionist to formulate a basic, nutritionally balanced recipe.
- The American College of Veterinary Nutritionists has prepared an informative brochure, called "Your Dog's Nutritional Needs: A Science-Based Guide for Pet Owners"
- Answers to frequently asked questions are provided at the American College of Veterinary Nutrition's Website
- The Veterinary Medical Center Clinical Nutrition Service provides a list of common mistakes pet owners make when choosing and preparing homemade diets
- Another site that provides answers to your questions is: Ask the Nutritionist

- ChefPaw is the latest way to provide your pup with nutritious and delicious meals, giving you a more efficient way to prepare homemade dog food. Visit [ChefPaw.com](https://www.chefpaw.com) to learn more.

Essential Dog Food Ingredients for Healthy Dogs

By AKC Staff, Updated: Sep 17, 2024 **AKC**



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You are what you eat. We understand that to be fit and healthy, we need to eat quality food. The same rule goes for our dogs.

Although they may be less discriminating than we are in their choice of what they gobble up, it's a dog owner's responsibility to make sure our dogs get a nutritionally balanced diet tailored to meet their needs. "Using appropriate feeding practices is one of the most important components of maintaining companion animal health," reports the Merck Veterinary Manual.

Requirements of a Healthy Diet

Research has proven, and your veterinarian will tell you, that a healthy, well-balanced diet for your dog must include whole-food ingredients that provide the following: protein, fats and fatty acids, carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins, minerals, and water.

Whole Food Ingredients

Whole-food ingredients are minimally processed so they deliver the nutrients, vitamins, and fiber that pack the most value. The best diet for your dog is composed of whole-food ingredients – including fresh and raw meats, fruits, and vegetables — as opposed to powdered or synthetic ingredients.

Whole-Grains

The Clinical Nutrition Service at Tufts University's Cummings Veterinary Medicine School conducted extensive research on the impact of grains in a dog's diet. They concluded that "Whole grains, rather than being fillers, contribute valuable nutrients including vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, and fiber to diets while helping to keep the fat and calories lower than if animal products were used in their place."

"Studies have shown that there are nutrients present in grains that are essential for a complete and balanced diet," says Dr. Klein. "And the fiber that grains contribute to the diet helps keep the dog's gastrointestinal system functioning and healthy."

Safety Requirements for Quality Food

Making sure your dog's food has the necessary ingredients is important, but you also need to find out where those ingredients were sourced, how they were prepared and stored, and whether the final product was checked for safety.

One Size Does Not Fit All

The American College of Veterinary Nutrition advises that your dog's unique nutritional requirements will depend on age, size, health, and breed.

"Veterinarians recommend that you consider your dog's stage of life when choosing his diet," says Dr. Klein, Chief Veterinary Officer at the American Kennel Club. "A puppy has different nutritional needs than an adolescent, a pregnant or lactating female, or a senior dog."

How to Store Your Dog Food

Once you find the right food for your dog, you want to keep it fresh and safe. The Food and Drug Administration offers these suggestions:

- Store dry pet food in its original bag with the top tightly folded down.
- If you want to store dry pet food in another storage container, put the entire bag into the container.
- Keep pet food in a secure location where your pet can't get to it.
- Store dry food in a cool and dry place at a temperature less than 80 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Wash pet food bowls and scooping utensils with soap and hot water after each use.
- Throw out old or spoiled pet food by placing it in a securely tied plastic bag in a covered trash can.

Why Do Dogs Sigh?

By Gemma Johnstone, Published: Jun 12, 2025 **AKC**

There's nothing more comforting than hearing your dog let out a deep sigh as they curl up with you on the couch. However, sighing isn't just a sign of contentment. There are several physical and emotional reasons for sighing in dogs, including stress, frustration and attention seeking. That means we must look at the wider context to help us interpret what our dogs are communicating with this action.

Learning more about why dogs sigh and when sighing — or something that seems like sighing — could be a cause for concern can help us better understand our pets' physical and psychological well-being.

What Is Happening When a Dog Sighs?

Sighing in dogs, as with humans, involves taking a deep, sometimes audibly louder, inhalation — about twice the length of a normal breath — followed by a slow, pronounced exhale. Sometimes, the sigh will occur through the mouth, as it does with humans, but often, a dog will sigh through their nose, while their mouth is closed.

Why Might Dogs Sigh?

There are many reasons for sighing in dogs — some obvious, others more subtle. It can be an emotional or learned behavior, but it's also a natural body function which helps regulate the respiratory system (the organs and structures responsible for breathing). It's easy to misinterpret the reason for sighing in dogs, especially as we tend to attribute human emotions to dog behaviors.



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“As every behavior is a function of the environment, no matter the species, I recommend assessing the context of the situation with which the [all of the] body language, such as sighing, is occurring to infer the meaning,” Dr. Vanessa Spano, Senior Veterinarian and Board-Certified Veterinary Behaviorist at the Schwarzman Animal Medical Center, says. She explains that it is important to remain as objective as possible when analyzing dog body language to avoid making false assumptions about the sighing.

Natural Reflex

Sighing isn't just an action attached to emotions, it is a natural spontaneous reflex that happens for all mammals, including dogs, multiple

times every hour to help keep the lungs working properly. These occasional deep breaths stretch the lungs and prevent alveoli (the tiny air sacs in the lungs that facilitate gas exchanges with blood) from collapsing.

While all dogs will sigh to preserve lung function, this action can be subtle and isn't something you are as likely to spot as the more "dramatic" sighing associated with an emotional response.

Contentment or Relaxation

A dog that is comfortable or feeling relaxed can sigh, and it might be accompanied by an audible groan of pleasure. "For example, if the dog is curling up in his bed, and upon settling down he sighs, this likely indicates the dog would like to rest," Dr. Spano says. She also points out that sometimes your dog might not be specifically sighing, but rather taking deeper, slower breaths as a result of being in a relaxed, restful state.

Sighs of contentment are typically accompanied by soft body language, such as loose ears, a neutral tail position, a soft expression in the eyes, and a slightly open mouth.



JoeChristensen/E+

Boredom or Frustration

If your active dog is stuck inside on a rainy day, and they let out a sigh, it could be a sign that they need more stimulation. Additional mental enrichment, like puzzle toys, brain games or an indoor training session, could alleviate their boredom or frustration.

Attention Seeking

Dogs are smart and can learn to sigh to get your attention. If this behavior results in you petting or playing with your dog, it's something they might start offering more often.

Anxiety

"If the dog is in a chaotic environment and displaying other behavioral signs of anxiety, such as yawning or lip licking, a sigh is likely communicating that the dog is stressed," Dr. Spano says. Because deep breathing can help counteract feelings of stress, sighing could be a natural calming response from your dog's body.

Other signs of anxiety in dogs include a tucked tail, ears flat against the head, trembling, excessive panting, and a hunched posture. If these are accompanying sighing, removing your dog from the stressful situation makes sense. Using desensitization and counterconditioning training techniques can help change your dog's reaction to the situation from negative to positive over time.

Pain or Discomfort

Dr. Spano says that sighing isn't a typical sign of pain or discomfort in dogs. However, it is a possibility. For example, if you have a senior dog with arthritis, and they're taking some time to find a comfortable position, they may let out a sigh of relief when they find it.

Typically, there will be other signs that your dog is in pain. These can include limping, lethargy, restlessness, excessive panting, and changes in behavior such as withdrawal or aggression. Your dog may also vocalize their pain by whining and whimpering.



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When Is Sighing or a Similar Sound a Cause For Concern?

True sighing is not usually something to be concerned about, unless you suspect your dog is doing it because they're anxious or in pain. However, there are times when other vocalizations or breathing issues are incorrectly interpreted as sighing, and these can indicate an underlying health issue.

"Sighing is not a typical part of the canine behavioral repertoire," Dr. Spano says. She explains that it is more common for dogs to yawn, whine or whimper than to sigh.

"If your dog is yawning, and especially if there are other body language signs co-occurring like showing the whites of their eyes and lip licking, this also indicates stress and anxiety," Dr. Spano says.

Whimpers can indicate discomfort, depending on the context of the situation. "If, for example, you notice that your dog is holding her leg up on a walk, and then you touch that leg, and she vocalizes or whimpers, this likely indicates discomfort or pain," she says. "In this case, the dog should be assessed by a veterinarian."

Don't delay contacting your veterinarian if your dog is breathing heavily or gasping. Unlike an occasional reflexive sigh, labored breathing is when a dog is having difficulty getting air in and out of their body with most, if not every, breath and wheezing can be a sign of a blocked airway.

What to Know About Hygromas in Dogs

By Nandini Maharaj, Published: Mar 26, 2025 **AKC**

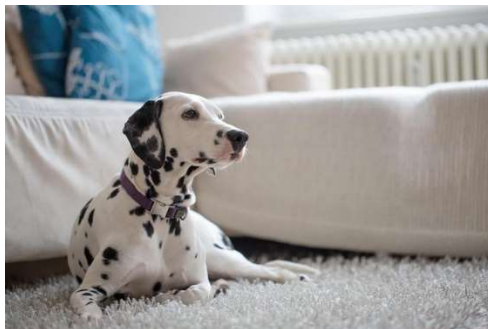
Some dogs have a habit of plopping down on the floor, hitting their elbows in the process. This wear and tear on their joints can cause the tissue under the skin to swell and fill with fluid, known as a hygroma. Hygromas often form over a pressure point like the elbow or hip.

In the early stages, hygromas are treatable but can become infected or grow to a size that causes your dog pain and discomfort. Accordingly, it's best to consult your veterinarian about an appropriate course of action. Here's what you need to know about hygromas in dogs including the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of this condition.

What Is a Hygroma?

"A hygroma is a fluid-filled swelling that develops over pressure points or bony areas," says Dr. Kelly Hood, DVM, in-house veterinary expert at Pet Portraits and consultant for California Dog Kitchen. They can form on the hip or ankle and are commonly seen on a dog's elbows. Hygromas may not be noticeable at first, starting out as small lumps under the skin.

Any dog can develop a hygroma. However, some breeds are more likely than others to develop these noncancerous growths. Hygromas can grow up to two inches in diameter and may affect one or both elbows. The size and severity of hygromas depend on the amount of trauma caused when a dog lies down on the ground.



alvarez via Getty Images

“Hygromas aren’t usually painful unless they become infected,” she says. A sign of infection is a clear fluid or colored discharge, which can prompt your dog to lick the area. In addition, hygromas can grow and cause the skin to thicken and harden. If your dog seems uncomfortable or reluctant to lie down, or the area feels warm and swollen, she recommends bringing your dog in to see a veterinarian.

What Causes Hygromas, and Which Dogs Are at Risk?

Hygromas are caused “by repeated pressure or trauma to bony areas,” Dr. Hood says. Among those at risk of developing hygromas include senior dogs, dogs with a sedentary lifestyle, and dogs who tend to lie on hard surfaces like hardwood or tile for extended periods. Over time, these hard surfaces can exert stress on your dog’s joints, leading to inflammation.

“This can trigger the body to form a fluid-filled sac as protection, kind of like a blister,” she says. It’s the body’s way of trying to protect the inflamed area. If your dog continues lying on hard surfaces, the hygroma can get bigger. “A prolonged irritation can lead to complications like infections, abscesses, or ulcerations, which can be painful,” she adds. Granulomas (i.e., masses of inflamed tissue with sand-like deposits) and tissue erosion may also occur.

Another risk factor for hygroma is the dog’s size. “Larger breeds, such as Great Danes, Labradors, German Shepherds, and Mastiffs, are more prone to developing hygromas,” she says. Their heavier body weight can cause them to hit the ground with greater force, putting pressure on bony areas where hygromas tend to form. Spending long periods lying on hard surfaces can increase the chance of hygromas developing and becoming infected.

How Do You Diagnose and Treat Hygromas?

While many hygromas may go away uneventfully, the sight of one can be alarming to dog owners. Consulting a veterinarian can help determine if the hygroma is getting larger or becoming infected. Typically, hygromas

are diagnosed through a physical examination. In addition, the vet will ask when you first noticed the swelling and if there have been any changes in your dog's behavior or sleep habits. "In some cases, we may do a biopsy or fluid aspiration to rule out infection or other conditions," Dr. Hood adds.



Cavan Images/Getty Images Plus

For hygromas that are small and without complications like infection, your veterinarian will recommend using soft bedding and protective padding to prevent further trauma to your dog's joints. You can purchase a dog bed made with memory foam or use foam tiles to cover the floor where your dog sleeps. Padded surfaces help cushion the joint and keep the hygroma from growing or developing a lesion.

"If the hygroma is large or infected, treatment may involve drainage, laser therapy, or, [as a last resort,] surgical removal," she says. Infected hygromas can be treated with antibiotics. Chronic or severe cases may require drainage, flushing, surgical removal, or skin grafting. Given the risk of a recurrent infection, it's important to care for the wound after surgery, keeping it clean and using padding to avoid further injury.

What Can You Do to Prevent Hygromas?

Hygromas are less likely to develop in the first place if you can reduce the pressure on bony areas. "Protective padding can help prevent hygromas," Dr. Hood says. "Ensure your dog has a soft bed or surface they can lie on and limit time on hard surfaces." It's also important to keep your dog at a healthy weight, so there's less force on their joints when they lie down.

Keep in mind that, if your dog does require surgery, this may not address the underlying cause of hygroma. Plus, it doesn't prevent new growths from developing. Therefore, keeping your dog in good shape and using protective padding can go a long way toward preventing hygroma and keeping it from recurring. Catching hygromas early can help you avoid invasive and expensive treatments and longer recovery times for your dog.

If your dog is a senior, has mobility issues, or is recovering from surgery, she recommends creating a cushioned resting area and monitoring your dog. Make sure they change position regularly to relieve stress on their joints. Lastly, "be sure your vet checks all joints for signs of arthritis or other degenerative joint disease, so there is no other underlying issue that may affect the mobility of the joint or create a painful condition," she adds.

Grab and Hold Your Dog's Attention With the 'Watch Me' Cue

By Stephanie Gibeault, MSc, CPDT

Updated: Mar 14, 2024 **AKC**



Getting a dog's attention, particularly when they're new to training, is the first step to teaching any behavior. If your dog isn't looking at you, chances are they aren't listening to you either. But how do you get your dog to look at you when you want, especially when you are dealing with distractions nearby? Simply teach your pup a cue that tells them to look at you. "Watch me," "look," or "look at me" can all work well as verbal cues to catch a dog's attention.

Why You Should Teach a “Watch Me” Cue

A “watch me” cue allows you to control your dog’s focus, which is essential during training sessions. Influencing where your dog is looking will increase your success, particularly with lure-and-reward training (where you lure a given behavior with a treat or toy) or teaching hand signals. A dog that isn’t looking simply won’t see what you’re doing. But one who watches you is waiting to see what you’ll ask for next.

Getting your dog’s attention is also valuable in everyday life. For example, it’s common to give your dog instructions, like to lie down on a mat when visitors come in the door or sit before you get dinner. Getting your dog’s focus first, especially when there are exciting things competing for their attention, can greatly increase obedience. A “watch me” cue is also useful to redirect your dog away from distractions. If you want to pass another dog on a walk, asking your dog to look at you, instead of the other dog, will make it easier to walk on by.

Finally, not all dogs are comfortable with eye contact. Staring can be seen as threatening. Teaching your dog to look at your eyes can help relieve any stress associated with mutual gazing. Some dogs, on the other hand, love to stare into their owner’s eyes. It’s how they show affection. In fact, looking into their owners’ eyes releases oxytocin, the love hormone. The same thing happens to you when you stare into your dog’s eyes. So, encouraging mutual eye contact is a great way to build your bond with your dog.



Broholmerliebe/Shutterstock

How to Teach a “Watch Me” Cue

The easiest way to teach a “watch me” cue is to lure the behavior from your dog. If you make it obvious where you want your dog to look, it won’t take long for them to catch on. Start these exercises in a quiet environment so you’re easily the most interesting thing in the room. The following steps will help you lure your dog’s eye contact:

1. Hold a treat in front of your dog’s nose.
2. Slowly bring the treat up between your eyes. Your dog should watch the treat and be staring at your forehead.
3. Mark your dog’s behavior with a clicker, a marker word like “yes,” or praise, then give your dog the treat.
4. Repeat the above steps but reward your dog with a treat from your other hand instead.
5. Repeat steps one to three with an empty hand, but still reward your dog with a treat when they make eye contact. It can help if you stink up your fingers first by rubbing them with a treat. You’ve now taught a hand signal for “watch me.”
6. When your dog is reliably following the hand signal, start saying your verbal cue like “watch me” or “look” before you move your hand.

Adding Distractions

Now you’re ready to build a single distraction into your training. You will give your dog a choice of where to look — at you or at the treat. You want your dog to realize that the way to get the food is not to stare at it, but to pay attention to you instead. Follow these steps:

1. Hold a treat to your dog’s nose then slowly move your hand out to the side of your body so your arm is straight. Your dog can now either stare at the treat or look at your eyes. Chances are the treat will win. Wait.

2. Eventually, your dog will look at you to see what's up. As soon as your dog looks towards your face, mark the moment and give them the treat.
3. After several repetitions, your dog should begin to understand the correct choice. Now wait for direct eye contact before marking and rewarding.
4. When your dog is reliably choosing to look at you instead of the treat, add your verbal cue like "Watch Me" before you place the treat out to the side.

If your dog isn't food-motivated, use a toy instead and reward them with a fun game like tug-of-war or fetch. Remember that some dogs are uncomfortable with eye contact and will take longer to pick this up than others. Be patient and stay calm. If you notice your dog is deliberately looking away from you, be aware that they are likely not ignoring you. Rather, that's dog-speak for "please calm down." Take a break and try again when you can stay relaxed and upbeat with your dog.



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Tips to Encourage Your Dog to Look at You

When your dog has mastered "watch me" in a quiet environment, start training in more and more distracting locations. If your dog fails to look at you, you've moved too far, too fast. Take a step back and practice some more. Eventually, your dog should find looking at you as rewarding as looking at anything else. Particularly if you've taught them that the way to good stuff is through you.

Be the source of your dog's rewards and they will want to look at you to see when the next good thing is coming. In other words, ask your dog to sit before you give a chew bone or ask for a down before going for a walk. If they know that they'll be rewarded by listening to you, your dog will naturally pay more attention to you.

Don't forget not to take eye contact for granted. Any time your dog is choosing to look at you instead of something else exciting, reward that with praise, a treat, or even a cuddle. Let your dog know you're somebody worth attending to and their eyes will always be on you.

From the desk of Toni Underhill

LONG POST WARNING.

A reminder to ALWAYS advocate for your animals.

On April 8 we woke at 4am to hear Faraday panting and coughing and unable to lie down. Knowing our breed (Irish Wolfhounds) as we do we instantly suspected pneumonia. Greg left with Faraday, armed with the printed protocol for IWs and pneumonia. I rang ahead to convey our concerns to the emergency clinic and to discuss the pneumonia protocol. I also emailed a copy of it to them and made sure the auxiliary staff knew it had to be shown to the treating vet. The emergency facility nearest to us is over 45mins away - but it is available from 6pm to 8am. At 8am it switches over to an animal specialist service that also provided emergency care. This is important in relation to what I am about to share here.

Faraday was seen on arrival by the emergency vet in attendance. Let's call him Dr Tim. Dr Tim did an examination and determined that he was oxygenating well since his gums were normal colour, he did not have a temperature and was not having trouble breathing and was not coughing. He determined instead that Faraday had an upset tummy and the things that made us suspect pneumonia could all be the same for tummy upset (umm not from my point of view but whatever). He was given some anti

nausea wafers, some pro/prebiotic and discharged. I was not in attendance since I was home with our other two hounds. Greg rang to tell me the results and that they were on their way home. I was surprised but very happy to be proven wrong.

As soon as they got home I could tell Faraday was NOT right. His panting had worsened. Faraday pants the whole time he is at the vet because he is so anxious, but I know my hounds and this was not his normal panting. We put our trust in the fact that the vet would know better than us, and I would monitor him. Greg left to go to work. The time was now around 8am. Over the next hour Faraday did not get any better, but instead was clearly getting worse. His neck extended in the position that wolfhounds do when having difficulty breathing, he would not settle and he could not put his head down for more than a second. Any attempt to lie on his side resulted in unproductive coughing. Greg and I were in constant communication and we decided he needed to go back to what would now be the specialist centre since it was after 8am.

I rang them and was told the emergency team had gone but the specialist team were there and could take us in. We arrived back around 11am - Greg met me there from his work. Faraday was examined immediately. The specialist vet - we'll call her Dr Mary - listened to all we said, though not entirely convinced of our concerns regarding pneumonia she could see he was not right and suggested a barrage of tests and xrays. All of which we agreed to. She found no evidence of an upset tummy. We had to leave him in their care and Dr Mary said she would ring us with the results around 2pm. In the meantime I sent them another email reiterating the seriousness of this illness in IW's and once again adding the pneumonia protocol for wolfhounds. I implored them to please take this seriously and commence antibiotic treatment asap.

(There's a lot more to this in relation to the diagnosis, but this story is already long enough).

Suffice it to say Dr Mary did take our concerns seriously and did not brush us off. She rang me back at 2pm with the news that Faraday DID indeed have pneumonia. For those who don't know pneumonia can kill any dog, but is harder still for deep chested dogs like IWs - so time is of the essence. Faraday was immediately started on the pneumonia protocol. We had already lost many valuable hours in his treatment regime. I was devastated and angry, but my anger had to be put on hold. Faraday was our only concern. Faraday spent 4 days in hospital - Greg would visit in the mornings and I would visit for a couple of hours in the afternoon. Faraday was not eating and it was incredibly hard to see him in so much discomfort. Thanks to the diligent care of Dr Mary and another vet (Dr Jess) who took over the last two days, Faraday came home 4 days after this started. He made huge improvements once home and is well on his way to a full recovery.

Dr Mary told me that among his workup tests his CRP (blood test) level was 95... it should be 10 or under. This is a simple blood test and relatively inexpensive and points to the fact that there IS inflammation. Though it does not point specifically to pneumonia it points to absolutely requiring further investigation. Dr Tim SHOULD have done that blood test or at the very least offered it to us. We were presenting with a hound that we, as the owners, suspected of having a life threatening illness, we weren't there for a broken nail.

The moral of my post is please never feel afraid to speak up. If we had not spoken up, if we had relied on Dr Tim's diagnosis, if we had not taken him back and pushed hard to explain our concerns, Faraday would be dead. That is a simple fact. I don't care if I end up looking a fool - I would rather be proven wrong and look a fool, than never forgive myself for not advocating for my hounds. I am NOT a vet, I do not claim to know all a vet knows but I DO know my hounds. I don't get up at 4am on a whim to rush nearly an hour away to the emergency vet.

This post is not about vet bashing so please let's not make it that. I have nothing but respect and admiration for any individual strong enough to

work in the veterinary field - it is surely not for the faint of heart. This extends to all workers, be it vet, nurse, admin etc.

This post is intended as a reminder only - YOU know your animal best. They cannot speak for themselves so you have to be their voice. Their bodies do however speak, but the diagnostician needs to be listening to hear what's being said.

PS: Those who know me personally would know that I have already addressed this issue most ardently with the emergency service. They have responded to me satisfactorily ... here is a small excerpt from our correspondence...

"We also acknowledge your expectation that your concerns be taken seriously, and that shared decision-making should include discussion of your preferences for diagnostics, especially in a case where a life-threatening condition was feared. This will be a training piece included in our next department meeting to ensure that our whole team are across this expectation moving forward."

**I have deliberately not named any of the vet's by their real names. Mistakes do happen, we were lucky this time that it did not cost the life of our boy, but so long as moving forward this can help lead the way to improvement for others then we consider this a win. Yes Faraday was misdiagnosed, but that misdiagnosis did not cause the pneumonia.

2025 Specialty Show

Hello Fellow PVIWC Club Members and Supporters,

I hope this message finds you and your hounds doing well. Our 2025 Irish Wolfhound Specialty Dog Show was a success! For those of you that supported your Club, THANK YOU! For those of you that may not know what a Specialty Dog Show is all about, I encourage you to join us for two days to see and watch a dog show only for Irish Wolfhounds.

As a valued member of the Potomac Valley Irish Wolfhound Club, you and your family have opportunities to join the Club in the events throughout the year as well as help at the dog show. Plan to join us March 29-30, 2026. PLEASE READ: The Club could use you! We are an independent specialty show. Most of the same people have carried the specialty for years, and age and health are taking their toll. No Skills Required: If you can read, write, have a great speaking voice, or if you are the quiet type, the Club can use you. If you want to sell raffle tickets, the Club can use you. We need you as a Club member.

Do you already know your schedule for March 2026, and know you can't make it? That is okay, you can still help by financially Sponsoring ribbons, trophies, prizes, or make a General Show Fund Donation for 2026. How? Easy, simply make a check out payable to PVIWC Treasurer (memo note "General Show Funds", or ribbons, etc,) and send to: PVIWC Treasurer, 1348 Sycamore Ave, Annapolis, MD 21403. You may also pay via PayPal using the email pviwctreasury@gmail.com. Please add a note breaking down the amounts of the payment – dues, trophies, ribbons, General Show Fund, rescue, etc. If you have questions about your Club Membership dues or if you think you have already paid, please send an inquiry to: pviwctreasury@gmail.com or to the Club's Secretary, Susan Wine at sulowine@aol.com

Remember, PVIWC welcomes volunteers for the following positions:

Set up (Friday or Saturday requirement) / Catalog sales / Armbands / Stewards / Grounds / Breakdown (needed Monday afternoon)

and Judges Hospitality (responsible for judges' transportation, taking them out to dinner, escorting

them to the ring, and so on)

SAVE the DATE:

PVIWC 2026 Specialty Show

Sunday and Monday, March 29-30, 2026

Interested in volunteering? Please contact Tammy at elkhorniws@gmail.com

 **VOLUNTEER CALL-OUT!** 

OBEDIENCE & RALLY TRIALS



Sunday, March 29, 2026

- ✓ VOLUNTEER FOR 3 HOURS
- ✓ LIGHT STEWARDING DUTIES
- ✓ MEAL MAY BE PROVIDED
- ✓ MUST ARRIVE 30 MINUTES BEFORE JUDGING

We need RELIABLE VOLUNTEERS to help support our 2026 Obedience and Rally Trials.

Note: Volunteers may not be entered in Obedience or Rally on this date due to stewarding responsibilities.

TASKS INCLUDE:

- Issuing armbands to competitors
- Checking ring equipment, judges' bag, and catalog
- Supporting ring flow & accident cleanup
- Reporting issues to Show Chair or Secretary
- Escorting the judge to lunch

Your help keeps the event running smoothly — we couldn't do it without you!

SIGN UP OR LEARN MORE:

elkhorniws@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Would It Be Too Much



from **Wolfhound Poetry, Philip Santilano**

Would a biscuit really be too much
for the hours I spend following you
for the muddy paw prints left in dew
from my clobber paw's so gentle touch

Would a bite of sandwich be amiss
as you eat you lunch when we have none
just our hunger pangs watching the sun
as it drags towards the evening's mist

Would you really not give us a taste
of the chicken frying in the pan
or that delicious smelling rich cheese flan
not sharing it with us would be waste

All these treats denied us makes me feel
the world's out of kilter, just unfair

do you really think we subsist on air
it's no wonder we are forced to steal

Rafferty

(Dad's note: Steal they certainly do, but it's not for the want of food!)



PVIWC List of Meeting & Events 2025

March 30 & 31	<i>Specialty Harford County Equestrian Center, Bel Air, MD (Meeting Following Judging), Harford County Equestrian Ctr, 608 N Tollgate Rd, Bel Air, MD 21014</i>
April 6	'Paint Your Pet' Fundraiser, Checkerspot Brewery, Baltimore, 3PM
April 11 & 12	Dills Celtic Festival, Dills Tavern, 237 N Baltimore St, Dillsburg, PA 17019
April 19& 20	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Carolinas Specialty</i>
April 26	Southern MD Celtic Festival, Jefferson Patterson Park, 10515 Mackall Rd, St Leonard, MD 20685
May 2 & 3	Annapolis Irish Festival, Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds, 1450 Generals Hwy, Crownsville, MD
May 3 & 4	Faerie Festival Marshy Point Rocky Point Park, 2200 Rocky Point Rd, Essex, MD 21221
May 18	Show Wrap Up Meeting
May 25 - 29	<i>IWCA National Specialty Cache County Fairgrounds, Logan, UT</i>
June 14 & 15	Carroll County Celtic Festival, Carroll County Ag Center, 706 Agriculture Ctr Dr, Westminster, MD 21157
June 8	Regular Meeting – Brian Boru Irish Rest. 489 Ritchie Hwy #103, Severna Park, MD
June 21	Penn Mar Irish Festival, Pheasant Run Greenhouse 10241 Brillheart Rd, Glen Rock, PA 17327
June 27 - 29	Celtic Fling <i>(with a concert on Friday night)</i> Mt Hope Winery, 2775 Lebanon Rd, Manheim, PA 17545
August 10	Regular Meeting
August	Oakenmist Ren Faire Howard County Fairgrounds
August 30 & 31	Virginia Scottish Games, 5089 Old Tavern Rd, The Plains, VA 20198
September 27-28 21	Fun Day
September 20-21	PA Renn Faire Shamrocks and Shenanigans Weekend , Mt Hope Winery, 2775 Lebanon Rd, Manheim, PA 17545
October 5 & 6	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Delaware Valley Specialty</i>
October 19	Regular Meeting
November 7 - 9	Maryland Irish Festival, 2200 York Rd, Timonium, MD 21093
November 16	Regular Meeting
December 14	Holiday Party Montgomery's, 800 River Rd, Sykesville, MD 21784
December ~16	Druid Hill Winter Solstice 5Miler, 1 Safari Place, Baltimore, MD 21217
December	Military Bowl Parade, Annapolis, MD

Dates, Time, or location to be determined and subject to change on some events.

Need Volunteers to Host