

**Helpless Hounds Dog Rescue
Tulsa, Oklahoma**

**Foster
Program
Handbook**

Welcome!

Welcome to the Helpless Hounds family! Helpless Hounds Dog Rescue is a 501(c)(3) animal rescue organization based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We specialize in rescuing hounds and hound mixes throughout the state.

Thank you so much for offering your home, heart, and time to a dog or puppy in need by volunteering to foster. Fosters are the heart and soul of our organization. We are 100% foster-based, meaning that we do not have a brick-and-mortar shelter. Without our fosters, we could not rescue any dogs. So again, thank you!

How does fostering work? It's simple! You give a homeless pet a place to stay in your home until they are ready for adoption. You also help us learn valuable information about the pet in your care, so we can work to find them the perfect forever home. All veterinary care as well as supplies (food, collar, leash, crate) are covered by the rescue. Fostering doesn't have to cost you a penny, but it's priceless to the dogs you help.

We've developed this manual as a resource for both new and experienced fosters. The goal is to provide you with information to help you care for your foster pets. It is not all-inclusive, and you should always feel free to contact us if you have questions or concerns.

Contact Information

Please always feel free to call, text or email us if you need anything. Keep in mind that all of us run this rescue as volunteers, and we all have full-time jobs outside of Helpless Hounds, so sometimes we are unable to respond as quickly as we would like. We check our messages often and will respond to you as soon as possible.

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Our office is located inside 918 Interiors. We are just off the Yale exit on I-244. Please note that we are on Admiral Blvd, not Admiral Place. We do not have regular office hours. Please contact us to arrange a time if you need to come to the office

Before You Foster

Prepare Your Home

Most puppies (and many dogs) like to chew! There is one Golden Rule of puppy-proofing: If you don't want your dog to chew it, keep it out of reach. Be mindful about choking hazards, unstable objects and furniture, electrical cords, poisons, and your prized possessions. Anything that can poison a human toddler can also poison a dog. The best way to keep a dog from getting into trouble is to offer plenty of safe chew toys and supervised playtime. Avoid games of tug-of-war with puppies and dogs.

If you rent your home, we require that you have your landlord's permission to foster a dog. We may ask for a written note from your landlord, or your landlord's contact information, to verify that a foster pet is allowed.

A fenced yard is preferred, but not required for lower-energy dogs if you are willing to walk your foster dog on a leash several times a day. If you do have a fenced yard, please do a thorough check of the fencing before allowing your foster dog to be loose. We may ask for photos or video of your fence line to verify that your yard is fully enclosed.

We require that our fosters live in Tulsa or within reasonable driving distance, in order to be able to get foster dogs to adoption events and vet visits.

Suggestions for Pet-Proofing

- Use childproof safety latches.
- Keep medications, cleaners, chemicals, and laundry supplies on high shelves. Be especially mindful of antifreeze, as its sweet taste attracts dogs and it only takes a very small amount to be fatal.
- Check for and block any small spaces, nooks, or holes inside cabinetry or behind washers & dryers.
- Keep foods out of reach. Even if the food isn't harmful, the wrapper could be.
- Keep toilet lids closed when not in use.
- Keep trash cans covered or inside a latched cabinet.
- Place dangling wires and cords from electronics and window blinds out of reach.

- Keep children's toys and knickknacks put away.
- Move houseplants out of reach. Some houseplants are poisonous to dogs, including aloe vera, ivy, pathos, and poinsettias.
- Put away all sewing and craft notions.
- Secure aquariums and cages of small animals.
- Make sure all floor-level heating and air vents have a cover.
- Keep laundry and shoes behind closed doors.

Prepare Your Family

Make sure that everyone living in your home is on-board with fostering. If any family member or roommate does not want to foster, we encourage you to get involved by volunteering with us in a different way.

Before fostering, make sure that you discuss with your children how to properly treat a dog. Always supervise your foster dog with your children.

Prepare Your Pets

Make sure that your personal pets are in the best possible health before you begin fostering. We require that all dogs and cats in the home are spayed/neutered as well as up-to-date on recommended vaccinations and heartworm prevention.

It is very important that you introduce your foster dog to your personal pets in a neutral area with all pets on leashes. Do NOT just bring your new foster pet inside your home without warning. Meeting outside works best. Always supervise your foster pet and personal pets when together.

Supplies

We will provide all basic supplies for your foster pet. Our supplies are limited and we rely heavily on donations, so if you are able to provide any of your own supplies, we always appreciate it! We will provide your foster dog with all necessary veterinary care and medical supplies.

What We Provide:

- Dog/Puppy Food
- Food Bowl
- Collar & Leash
- Helpless Hounds ID tag
- Crate
- Bed or crate pad
- Toys

Feeding

Most experts recommend feeding your dog twice a day. Puppies should be fed 3-4 times a day. We will provide you with dry food or a combination of dry and wet food. Very young puppies may go home with formula. For litters of puppies, we recommend feeding separately to ensure that every puppy gets equal opportunity to eat.

When weaning puppies, be sure to have dry food available at all times for them to try. Canned food mixed with warm water should be offered several times throughout the day; over several weeks, you should use less water and begin mixing dry food in with the wet food until they are eating just dry food.

Fresh water should be available at all times for your dog or puppy.

If your foster dog is underweight, overweight, or has special medical needs, we will work with you on creating a specialized feeding plan.

Grooming

Luckily, most hounds have short coats and quite manageable grooming needs. Please keep your pet clean, comfortable, and safe. Shampoos can be toxic to very young pets. For young puppies, you can use puppy shampoo or bathe with 1 drop of Dawn dish soap. Water should be kept warm and the puppy should be fully dried, as pups cannot fully regulate their own body temperature. If you notice fleas or ticks on your foster pet, please contact us so we can arrange treatment.

We will provide you with a collar, leash, and Helpless Hounds ID tag. We require that you keep the collar & ID tag on your pet at all times.

While the majority of hounds have short coats that are easy to maintain, most of them have long ears that are prone to getting dirty! Cleaning your foster dog's ears is easy. You should clean them as needed and before applying any medications that have been prescribed.

To clean your dog's ears:

1. Hold the ear flap upright and fill the ear canal with canine ear cleaning solution.
2. Gently massage at the base of the ear. This helps to loosen dirt in the ear canal.

3. Use cotton balls to wipe out debris. You can also use a cotton swab to clean the visible folds inside the ear. Do not use the swabs to clean deep into the ear canal. You should be able to see the swab tip at all times.
4. Repeat the above steps until you are no longer getting debris on the cotton balls.

Eye Care

It is also important to keep your foster dog's eyes clean. Wipe around the eye with a soft cloth, cotton ball or tissue paper moistened with water or mild saline solution as needed. Work from the eye corner outward, never across the eye.

Housing

We require that our foster dogs and puppies are housed primarily indoors. When taken outside, dogs must be leashed at all times unless in a fenced-in yard. Foster dogs should not be left outside unsupervised.

Dogs should NEVER be left outside chained, tethered, or "tied out" in the yard. Please do not take your foster dog to a dog park or any place where dogs are off-leash.

Young puppies must be kept off any public surfaces and grass until they are fully vaccinated. If you are fostering a litter of puppies, we recommend keeping them in a playpen, whelping box, or children's wading pool to help keep "clean up" under control.

If you have ever owned or fostered a dog with a contagious illness, such as parvovirus or ringworm, it is extremely important that you disclose this information to us prior to fostering. We want to make sure that your home is safe for new foster pets.

Socializing

One of the most important parts of your job as a foster parent is to show your foster pet(s) that humans are kind and loving. Some dogs will adjust quickly to you and your family, while others can take a while. Every dog will go through a period of "decompression," where they are getting used to their new surroundings. It is not uncommon for dogs to act unusual or have a few "accidents" in their new environment during this time.

Socialization is vital for all dogs, but is especially important for puppies.

- Try sitting on the floor with a timid puppy held against your chest, supported underneath and facing outwards, so it can't see how "big and scary" you are. Stroke it and speak gently. Continue this for about 30 seconds, then put the puppy down before it starts squirming. You want this to be a pleasant experience. Repeat often.
- Sometimes, holding a pair of animals together helps, as they seem to reassure each other.
- If your puppies are fearful and run away from you, try sitting on the floor and letting them come to you.
- It's never OK to hit or physically punish a naughty pet. If a puppy scratches or bites, it's simply because it doesn't understand. Try distracting it with something else.
- Discourage puppies from mouthing or biting your hands by distracting them with an appropriate toy. Never engage in hand play.
- Be patient with scared adult dogs. Be calm. Talk quietly. Move slowly. Sit low. Be gentle and approachable.

Veterinary Visits

Your foster pet will be up-to-date on vaccinations, deworming, heartworm prevention, and other veterinary care at the time that you assume care of it. During the time that you foster, you may be required to take your pet in to the veterinarian, or meet one of our volunteers so that they can take your pet in. We will work with you on finding the best day and time.

Warning Signs in Puppies

- Diarrhea that lasts more than one day, or continuous diarrhea coupled with lethargy
- Vomiting and diarrhea for more than 6 hours
- Vomiting more than once in an hour
- Not eating for more than 12-24 hours
- Lethargy without fever for more than 12 hours OR lethargy with fever
- Sneezing, coughing, and/or goopy eyes
- Areas of crusty skin and/or hair loss
- Lameness paired with discomfort or pain

Warning Signs in Adult Dogs

- Not drinking water for more than 24 hours
- Diarrhea that lasts more than 1-2 days
- Vomiting more than 2-3 times in an hour
- Not eating for more than 72 hours
- Lethargy without fever for more than a day OR lethargy with fever
- Sneezing, coughing, and/or goopy eyes
- Lameness paired with discomfort or pain

Other Reasons to See a Vet

- Bleeding of any kind (from the nose/mouth/urine/stool)
- Any trauma, such as being hit by a car/dropped/stepped on
- Seizures
- Difficulty breathing

If you notice any of these symptoms, please contact us right away so we can arrange veterinary care for your foster pet. The sooner your pet gets checked by a vet, the more likely they are to recover well.

Protecting Your Pets

Some of our rescue dogs come out of high-traffic shelters and pounds, where diseases can be common. We will let you know if your foster animal is coming from an environment like this. We strongly recommend that you keep your foster pet separate from your personal pets for at least the first 2 weeks, especially with high-risk foster dogs coming from shelters. We also recommend that you disinfect the environment before allowing your personal pets into areas that foster pets have been in.

To keep yourself and your pets safe:

- Wash hands before and after handling animals.
- Use protection when cleaning up bodily fluids.
- Disinfect with a 10% fresh bleach/water solution. All areas and materials should be disinfected before being used for your personal pets or new foster pets.
- Be aware that pets can be sick without showing symptoms. Use the same precautions whether an animal looks sick or healthy.

Deworming

It is common for a dog to be freshly dewormed when you begin taking care of them. If you see worms in your dog's stool and they have been recently dewormed, don't panic! These are most likely just dead worms exiting the digestive tract.

Dogs with a large amount of worms may experience diarrhea, vomiting, and lack of appetite for a few days. If this is severe or not improving after 2-3 days, please let us know.

How to Medicate a Dog

Occasionally, you may be required to medicate your foster dog. If you're giving a pill, hiding the pill in peanut butter, cheese, a cube of hot dog, or a spoonful of canned dog food often works best. For best results, give the dog a bit of food without the medicine in it. Quickly follow that with a bit of food containing the medicine, then praise the dog. Do not mix medications directly into the dog's food, as most dogs will not eat it.

If giving a liquid medication, slide the corner of the lips back and put the dropper into the cheek pouch. Slowly release the medication so the dog swallows in a natural manner. Faster is not better. If you stay happy and relaxed, the dog will too.

Surgery

We require that all of our dogs are spayed or neutered before being adopted out. Your foster dog may have an appointment to get fixed or have a different surgery while he/she is in your care, so it's important to understand before- and after-surgery care.

- Give your dog access to food and water as you normally would on the day before surgery. At midnight on the day of surgery, begin withholding food and water.
- We will arrange to either pick your dog up for surgery or ask you to drop your dog off at the vet at a specified time.
- Your foster dog should be kept as still and quiet as possible after surgery. It should be kept away from other pets and active children. To avoid injury, keep your dog in a warm, quiet place the first evening. It is not unusual for your foster dog to be very sleepy after surgery.
- If your female foster dog was in heat when she was spayed, the heat scent will persist for several days after spaying. It is very important that she is protected from the attentions of any male animals during this time. Severe injury can result if an attempt is made at breeding.
- Offer your foster dog a normal amount of food and water for their first meal after surgery. Some dogs may have a decreased appetite for 1-3 days, and this is normal. If the dog vomits after eating, take the food away and wait until the next morning to try to feed again.
- Keep the surgical incision clean and dry for 2 weeks. Check the incision daily and watch for excessive swelling, blood, pus, redness, pain, or anything

unusual. For some surgeries, your dog will have sutures or staples that will need to be removed later. Do not allow the dog to lick or chew at the incision. If licking or chewing becomes a problem, we recommend a cone or special collar to prevent access. Please contact us if you need one.

Heartworm Treatment

Some dogs enter our rescue infected with heartworms. This disease is caused by a parasitic worm that infects the heart and lungs of dogs. Without treatment, heartworm infection can be fatal. Unfortunately, treatment is costly and complications are possible, but most dogs make a full recovery without problems. Heartworms are NOT contagious to you or your pets; they are spread by mosquitoes.

Heartworm treatment consists of a series of deep intramuscular injections of medicine to kill the heartworms. Prior to the injections, the dog will be prescribed an oral antibiotic for a specified period of time. It is extremely important that you give this antibiotic as directed.

When it is time for your dog to receive the injections, it will typically stay at the vet for a full day or overnight. You can expect your dog to have some soreness after treatment. The vet may prescribe pain medications or steroids to be given after treatment.

It is vitally important that you keep your foster dog as calm and quiet as possible for the first 8 weeks after injections. As the heartworms die, they break up and parts of the worms can become lodged in the lungs. Keeping your dog still and quiet greatly decreases the chance of that happening.

For the first 8 weeks, bathroom breaks should be on the leash only. No walks (not even just around the block), no jogging, vigorous playing, chasing balls, or swimming.

Any problem that occurs during the 8 weeks after treatment must be evaluated immediately. **Things to watch out for include excessive coughing, fever, lethargy, and pale or blue/gray gums.** We will let you know when to start your foster dog on heartworm prevention.

Demodex (Mange)

Demodex is a non-contagious skin infection that is relatively common in dogs that are immunocompromised or neglected, so your foster dog may have mange. Often, once a dog is well-fed and properly cared for, the mange improves or goes away completely. Occasionally, special baths/dips or medications may be required.

Kennel Cough (Bordetella)

Kennel cough is a catch-all term for a group of highly contagious infectious diseases that cause a cough and bronchitis. Kennel cough is rampant in shelters and pounds, so if your foster dog is coming from one of these environments, you'll need to watch out for it.

Kennel cough can be spread through the air or through direct contact with infected dogs or contaminated supplies. Signs of kennel cough vary, but most cases start with a dry, hacking cough. As the infection progresses, signs may include watery eyes, nasal discharge, lethargy, and lack of appetite. Most dogs begin to show signs of infection within 3-7 days after exposure. Signs can last days or weeks.

Treatment is usually symptomatic. Sometimes, antibiotics or cough suppressants are prescribed. If you suspect kennel cough in your foster dog, please let us know.

If Your Foster Dog Has Kennel Cough:

- Give all medications exactly as directed.
- Make sure your dog is eating and drinking well.
- Isolate your dog from other animals until it is well. Keep the dog inside except for bathroom breaks.
- **A dog can catch kennel cough even if they have had a Bordetella vaccine.** Do not assume that your dogs are immune even if they've been vaccinated.

Vomiting & Diarrhea

If your foster dog has diarrhea without vomiting, continue to feed its regular diet and offer free access to fresh water. Avoid treats and snacks until the problem has resolved.

If your foster dog is vomiting, withhold food and water for 24 hours, or 12 hours for puppies. After this period of time, offer small amounts of water. Continue offering small amounts of water as long as your pet is not vomiting. Once your puppy or dog has kept water down for 12 hours, offer small amounts of bland food.

If diarrhea and/or vomiting continues despite these measures, please call us right away.

Returning Your Foster Dog

If something happens and you are no longer able to care for your foster dog, please let us know with as much notice as possible so we can make other arrangements. We will arrange a drop-off time and location. Please return all foster supplies and unopened dog food at the time of returning your animal.

We understand that returning your foster animal is often the hardest part of the process, and it's OK to feel emotional! All of us here at Helpless Hounds have fostered as well and understand what you're going through. We are happy to provide updates on your previous foster dogs as we get them; just ask!

The Question That We Get Asked a Lot... Can I Adopt My Foster Dog?

YES!

Generally, if you meet our foster requirements, you will also meet our adoption requirements. If you fall in love with your foster pet and find that you just can't part with him/her, let us know. You will still be required to fill out an adoption application and pay the adoption fee. In some cases, if you know you want to adopt your foster dog but the dog is not yet medically cleared to be adopted, you can sign a Foster-to-Adopt Contract.

Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering

More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty
other-products-body-language-large



Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



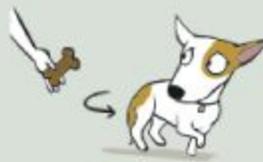
Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



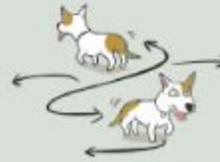
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing

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The Art and Science of Animal Behavior

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