

Expressing a Dog's Bladder

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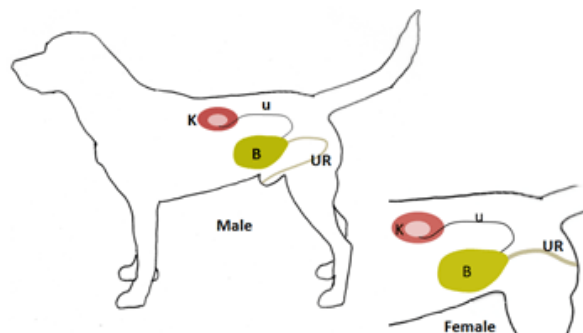
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First, there is no substitute for good veterinarian care. This information is for informational purposes only and should not be used in place of consultation with your veterinarian.

A dog can lose their ability of bladder control temporarily or permanently due to injuries, illnesses or aging. A pet owner can learn to express their dog's bladder in the home environment. First you should get a demonstration at a vet's clinic. The best way is for the vet or vet tech to put their hands over yours and guide you to the location of the bladder and to show you the appropriate amount of pressure to apply. They will also have experience as to whether or not your dog is a good candidate for the procedure based on the cause of the condition, the breed, the gender, size and the temperament of your dog. There are different methods to express the bladder based on those traits and conditions. A dog may be expressed while standing up, lying down, held in your arms or over a toilet. You may use one hand, two hands or just fingers. You may decide to express your dog inside or outside. Your vet's clinic is the place to learn the techniques needed, for your dog, in order to achieve the best results. Trial and error is another aspect of this process.

Location of the Bladder

The bladder is like a balloon that is not quite round and not quite oval shaped and about the size of a lime. The size and shape depend on how much urine it is holding. It is located in the abdomen directly under the dog's hind legs. In the male, the bladder is above the middle of the dog's penis. In a female, it is a little more towards the dog's rear end. The bladder is not exactly in the same place every time. It depends on how full it is and what is in the GI tract. The following diagram shows location in male and female: K=Kidney, B=Bladder, U=Ureters, UR=Urethra



Keep these tips in mind:

Use steady even pressure (not a pulsing type of action).

There may be a delayed reaction until the urine comes out - hold pressure three to six seconds before repositioning hands

Sometimes waiting ten to twenty seconds and pressing again gives the bladder time to reform and more urine will be released

Use a command or same wording every time you do it. This will help with cooperation or learned response-just like puppy potty training

Keep to the routine. Figure out a place to do it and a pattern. Dogs are happier with routines.

It is important to remain calm while you express. Tense and anxious makes for a tense and anxious dog who may tense up its stomach muscles making it harder to express. You may gently massage your dog's stomach. Remember to breathe.

Remember! You can learn to do this with patience and practice.

How to Express

If you are able to support your dog in the standing position, place your hands on each side of your dog's abdomen with your thumbs pointing up towards the spine. Use your fingers to locate the bladder. Search for what feels like a full balloon that is limed shaped. Remember what you actually feel and where depends on how full the bladder is. To express the bladder itself, you can use your finger tips or your fingers curled up. Slowly apply steady pressure until you get a steady stream of urine. Keep applying pressure until the urine slows to a dribble or stops and you can almost feel your fingers from each hand touching each other. Wait up to thirty seconds to let the bladder reform and reshape which it will do, and then try again to express again to get the remaining urine out. Getting the last of the urine out will help reduce the chance of your dog developing a urinary tract infection.

Remember that your vet clinic may instruct you to express your dog in a different position with a different hand position. YOUR dog will determine the specifics.

How Often to Express

Many vets recommend not going more than eight hours without expressing in order not to stretch out the bladder too much or allow the urine to remain in the bladder too long which can lead to urinary tract infection. The usual recommendation is to express at least every six hours. Each dog is different in bladder capability to hold urine.

Urinary Tract Infection

Urinary tract infection can be more common in a dog that has lost control of its bladder.

If

Your dog is hard to express or dribbling urine often
Their urine is dark in color or has a strong odor
There is blood in the urine or blood coming out of the genitals
Your dog is licking their genital area more than normal
Your dog cries or seems to be in pain when you express

Then your dog may have a urinary tract infection(UTI) and you either need to take a urine sample in or take your dog to the vet for treatment. UTI can turn serious quickly in a dog and you will want to get treatment quickly.

Learning to express your dog's bladder at home can mean that your dog will be able to continue to give you years of joy and time together. Every dog is different. Every owner is different. Every situation is different. Learning this skill can give you options in deciding what is best and possible for you and your dog.

Bibliography

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