



#### Keeping Tabs on our Labs:

- We have 1 Lab in foster care
- There are 0 Labs in kennel care
- 9 Labs are awaiting adoption
- 5 Labs are trying out a home

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## Ask the Vet: Allergies in Dogs

Many people are all too familiar with seasonal allergies, but did you know that allergies can be just as difficult for dogs, and can develop at any stage of a dog's life. We address this issue in our new column, "Ask the Vet." In this issue, Dr. Gary Brummel owner and proprietor of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Animal Hospital in Lebanon, PA gives us his insights from the vet's perspective.

What is an allergy? Essentially, it is an overreaction by the body to a foreign organism or irritant. Dr. Brummel says that, "Most often, the owner brings the animal in once the scratching becomes constant and redness and or crusting is seen. That is the time to get an evaluation done."

You've called your vet and have an appointment. Your vet will want to know the history of the problem. How long has it been going on, does it seem to happen at a specific time of the year (seasonal), have you changed shampoos, cleaners, flea and tick preparations lately? What type of food are you feeding and how long has the dog been on it? Did you recently change his diet? Has your animal recently been sick? Being prepared for your appointment, armed with as much information as possible will help your veterinarian in his examination. According to Dr. Brummel, allergies are a "rule-out disease." Which means your veterinarian must eliminate things to get to the root of the problem. Your vet will most likely conduct a visual exam or skin scrapings to check for any external parasites (fleas, ticks, mites, mange) or skin infections. If you suspect a seasonal allergy, your vet might suggest blood tests or skin tests to determine exactly what your animal is allergic to. In a blood test, the vet looks for certain cells that show up in reaction to certain irritants. In the skin test, antigens (the actual irritant) are injected subcutaneously (under the skin) and reactions (swelling at the area of injection) are measured. Once it is determined which irritant your animal is allergic

to the allergy can be treated with topical corticosteroids, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or low dose steroids. You can also go the route of hypo sensitization injections (allergy shots). These can be costly and time consuming. Each animal can respond differently to any treatment. You must make the decision to treat with information provided by your veterinarian and the research that you do on your own.

Food allergies pose another problem for our furry friends. "Allergic enteritis (food allergy) is ... commonly manifest in dogs by periodic vomiting, often only of bile or mucus. The stool usually is normal in volume and frequency, but its consistency varies from semi-formed to watery. The stool may be extremely odoriferous... Affected animals may be excessively thin, in spite of good appetite." \* Starting with a bland diet with as few ingredients as possible such as rice, lamb or chicken, cottage cheese, and then slowly adding foods to the diet will help determine which food source is causing the problem. Dr. Brummel says, "The food that causes the reaction is then avoided." A strictly controlled diet is essential in controlling food allergies. There are diets available, which your doctor can prescribe or you can be adventurous and make homemade preparations. There are many cookbooks on the subject, available at your local library or on the Internet. Always review the ingredient list with your veterinarian and get his or her opinion before starting any new feeding regime. "You must remember to include a vitamin/mineral supplement when opting to use homemade preparations," adds Dr. Brummel. Good advice for all of us!

Next issue: Alternative Allergy Therapies for Dogs.

\*The Merck Veterinary Manual, sixth edition

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## The Chuck Wagon: Tasty Treats for Your Fur Friend

This issue we're offering you ideas for low calorie snacks to tempt your fur-kid. Dog treats or biscuits, even the low fat variety, still tend to be more than a dog needs on top of their regular diet of dog food. Try substituting the following for traditional munchies to cut back on calories without sacrificing love!

Carrot or celery sticks, popped popcorn (no salt or butter), or ice cubes. For the more adventurous palette try grapes, apple chunks, peas or button mushrooms.

Remember, foods that have thick skins or a lot of fiber tend to produce excess gas, which can be as unpleasant for you as it is for your Lab. Foods to avoid include those with thicker skins such as, bell peppers, cucumbers, squash and corn-cobs. Also, remember that moderation is just as important for dogs as it is for humans so don't go overboard on any one treat.

Remember too, that if your dog has food allergies, as many do, check with your vet first before changing your fur-kids diet.



## If Dogs Could Write....

*Dear God,*  
How come people love to smell flowers, but seldom smell each other? Where are their priorities?

*Dear God,*  
When we get to Heaven, can we sit on your couch? Or is it the same old story?

*Dear God,*  
Is it true that in Heaven, dining room tables have on-ramps?

*Dear God,*  
More meatballs, less spaghetti, please.

*Dear God,*  
Is it true that dogs are not allowed in restaurants because we can't make up our minds what NOT to order? Or is it the carpets thing, again?

*Dear God,*  
We dogs can understand human verbal instructions, hand signals, whistles, horns, clickers, beepers, scent IDs, electromagnetic energy fields, and Frisbee flight paths. What do humans understand?

## If It's Free, It's for Me! Free or Nearly Free Things for Lab Lovers

This issue we're including things that may cost a little up front, but will ultimately save you money in the long run. As with most things in life, a little planning goes a long way when it comes to healthcare – including your dog's. If you've given your fur-kid a break from their monthly flea medication, now is the time to renew the practice of giving him his monthly dose. Ridding your home of a fleas is costly and time consuming, so it's a problem best prevented.

Ditto for heartworm. Dogs that go off their preventative must be re-tested before going back on the medication, which can cost almost as much as continuing the medication year round. If you are a year rounder for either medication, make sure you have a few doses on hand before summer gets started. You'll spend more time in the sun and less time in the vet's office.

## Donation Form: Help Us to Help the Labs

I want to help the Labs! I am able to give

\$10  \$20  \$30  \$50 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Contributions are tax deductible*

I would prefer my donation count toward

Bright Horizons Fund  General Fund

I would like to help! Please contact me about the following opportunities:

- Items (leashes, crates, etc.) I have to donate  
 Fostering a Lab  
 Sponsoring a Lab with a monthly donation  
 Volunteering with B.L.R.R.

Contact me at:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Checks made payable to **Brookline Labrador Retriever Rescue** should be sent to P.O. Box 638, Warrington, PA 18976

## Pleas for Paws

Spring is a time of transition for people and dogs alike. For many dogs it means the transition from a home to a shelter as the novelty of Holiday puppies begins to wear off, college students return home, and families begin to give up their pets rather than board them during their summer vacations.

It is Brookline's policy that any Lab coming to us from a shelter be fostered in an approved foster home for a minimum period of two weeks so that we can better match him or her with the best possible home. Unfortunately, foster homes are in very short supply and we are finding ourselves having to leave Labs behind in shelters to be put to sleep when their time runs out, for lack of foster space.

Please consider becoming a foster home for Brookline. We need your help. The Labs need your help. Contact us at [brooklinelabrescue@yahoo.com](mailto:brooklinelabrescue@yahoo.com) for more information.

## Upcoming Events

June 1st is the Dog Fair at Skippack Days in Skippack, PA. This event is free! Come and enjoy the day with us and many others!

Also look for us at the Hatboro Rescue Fair in Hatboro, PA in July, the Mt. Holly, NJ fair in September and in October at Peace Valley Park and at Peddler's Village (both in Bucks County).

We're getting around this year and we hope to see you wherever we are!

## Out & About: A Little Spring in Your Step

**Water, water everywhere!** April showers and May flowers are right around the corner. Along with watering all those spring bulbs, spring rain also fills lakes and ponds and makes those babbling brooks talk a little faster. Be aware that small puddles can grow into small ponds almost overnight as you're out enjoying the many nature spots our area offers. Use caution when walking through unfamiliar water bodies, shallow on one end could be very deep in the middle – hazardous for both you and pooch.

Most Labs enjoy the thrill of fetching a stick out of a lake (or at least swimming around with one), but swimming is tiring and it doesn't take much for an out of shape housebound dog to reach the point of overexertion. Although most dogs are excellent swimmers, they can drown. Exposure to chilly waters combined with lots of aerobic activity can spell disaster. Be wise – even though your dog has the enthusiasm to keep up the game all day long, call a halt after a few rounds to give your fur-friend a break. Build up his fitness



## Success Stories: Why we do what we do

**Fiji** is bestowing lots of hugs and kisses on her new family, but maybe not on the cat - yet.....

**Brandy** had a rough go at the beginning due to health problems, but they were soon remedied and she is now a fully participating member of her new family!

**Bouncer** with all his energy saves it up for when Dad comes home to play! "How nice it is to have a Dad that comes home just to play with you!" he says.

**Snuggles** couldn't be happier in his new home! Three boys to play with – Yipee! Now that he and his fur-brother have their pack order all worked out it will be the beginning of a beautiful friendship!

**Mocha** is one very loved and spoiled puppy! Soon to be off to "school" and making friends in the neighborhood! A real chocolate looker she is! **Sable** might be able to give Mocha a few tips about what school is all about, but as for family lovin' no one beats hers! She was a foster that came to stay forever!

**ZuZu** has turned all her frowns into big Labby smiles! She is thrilled to finally be with a family that can help her be the dog she knew she could be!

**Onyx** loves her new home! After coming to us from a shelter and producing 13 puppies (all successfully adopted!) Onyx can relax and soak up all the attention she's getting from her new people! Way to go Onyx!

**Sammy** is king of the house! That mom is sure a soft touch and those boys are tons of fun!

**Max** turned his foster home into a full time situation with one of our volunteers adopting him – way to go Max!

Congratulations to all our adoptees and their new families!

over a period of weeks and soon, the only tired pup will be you!

**Close encounters of the natural kind**, are also common this time of year. Wild animals are coming out of their holes, increasing the likelihood of a run-in with a dog out for a spring sniff and stroll. The result can be quite pungent and in the case of skunks – downright stinky! There are many remedies for getting rid of these odors, both commercial and homemade. One vet we know recommends the following for

de-skunking, however we've found that it works well for just about anything rotten as well.

### De-Skunk Solution

1 qt. 1% hydrogen peroxide (check the label for 1%)

¼ c. baking soda

1 t. liquid soap

Mix together and shampoo dog. Repeat if necessary.

Use solution immediately. Do not store.

As always, check with your vet before using any soap or cleaning product.

**Brookline Labrador Retriever  
Rescue, Inc.**

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*Saving Labs in Pennsylvania,  
New Jersey , Delaware and  
parts of Maryland*

Don't toss out this  
newsletter! Recycle  
it by posting it  
where others can  
see it!

## Our Mission

Brookline Labrador Retriever Rescue (Brookline) is a non-profit 100% volunteer organization funded entirely by donations and nominal adoption fees. At Brookline Lab Rescue we maintain a list of available Labs. This list is updated on a regular basis and is made up of dogs being given up by their owners (but still living with the owners) and dogs who are in foster care. We do our best to evaluate each dog and to give potential adopters detailed and accurate information regarding each dog.

Dogs being surrendered by their original families stay with them until an adoption can be arranged. If the dog is scheduled to be destroyed at a shelter, we arrange to place the dog in a foster home with one of our volunteers. If a foster home is not available, then we place the dog in a kennel near one of our volunteers until a foster home can be arranged. All shelter dogs are fostered for a minimum period by a volunteer before being placed for adoption.

We evaluate both the dog and the prospective adopting home to ensure a good fit for everyone. All dogs are vet checked and their shots updated before they are adopted. We operate mostly in Pennsylvania and parts of New Jersey. If you're not sure if you are in our coverage area, please check the map on our Web-page.

For further information about the adoption process, to download forms or inquire about becoming a Brookline Volunteer visit our web-site at

**[www.dogsaver.org/brookline](http://www.dogsaver.org/brookline).**

