



March 2007 Newsletter

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1. Tufts University Thyroid and Behavior Study: Offering Free Blood Testing to Dogs with Owner Directed Aggression

From Nicole Cottam, M.S. Behaviour Department,
Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine

We still need dogs for our double blind study looking at the effect of thyroid on OWNER DIRECTED aggression. To be included in the study dogs cannot already be on thyroid replacement therapy, and they must show owner directed aggression - growl, lip lift, snap or bite at least once a day. All costs for testing and treatment will be covered by the research grant, and can be co-coordinated through your own veterinarian. Dogs must live in the United States of America, however. To be included in the study the dog must meet our criteria for owner directed aggression and have been living in the home for at least 6 months. It is helpful if the dog also exhibits some of the signs, however mild, of hypothyroidism listed here:

Excessive shedding, patchy hair loss or "rat tail"

Dry skin or dull, dry haircoat

Recurrent infections (especially ear, skin and foot infections)

Tendency to gain weight

Heat seeking behavior

Increased sleep time

Hyperactivity

Slow learning

Seizures

Worried look, tragic facial expression or looking "old"

Reduced hearing, sight and scenting ability

Chronic gastrointestinal symptoms

Loss of muscle or bladder tone

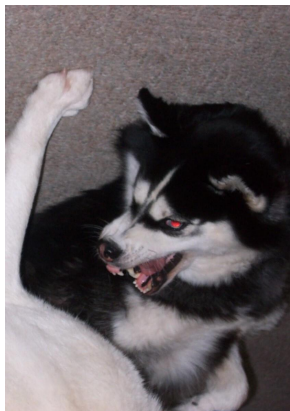
Head tilt

Change in character of bark

Exercise intolerance

Infertility, false pregnancy or weak, dying or stillborn puppies

Recurring eye infections



The dog should otherwise be in good health. However, if there are other behavior problems that might also relate to poor thyroid levels, we would be interested in following those as well.

If your dog meets these criteria and you would like to participate, you should contact Nicole Cottam at Nicole.Cottam@tufts.edu or call her at 508-839-5395 (Extension 84802). We will send you a form to fill out to see if your dog fits the behavioral criteria for the study. If your dog fits our criteria, pretest forms will be sent to you to fill out recording daily aggression (and any other behavior problems) for 2 weeks prior to

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starting medication. Information will also be sent to you and your veterinarian explaining how to collect and submit the blood to Dr. Dodds at Hemopet for CBC, biochemistry panel and full thyroid panel. (Intact bitches should be tested between 3 months after the end of one season and 3 months before she is next due in season). If your dog is hypothyroid or has suboptimal or borderline thyroid function, your veterinarian will receive either the thyroxine or placebo. Only our pharmacy will know which has been dispensed, however, should problems arise - these are not anticipated - the code can be broken so that your dog receives appropriate treatment. The dog will receive either the name brand thyroxine or placebo for 6 weeks. During that time you will continue to record any daily aggression (and other problems). At the end of the six weeks we will break the code. If the dog received placebo, then six weeks of thyroxine will be supplied, and a behavior treatment plan provided. If the dog received thyroxine and improved, we will inform your veterinarian and recommend the dog be maintained on thyroxine, we will also require a second blood sample to repeat the thyroid panel. Further behavioral suggestions will also be made. If the dog did not improve, you can wean it off the thyroxine, and a behavioral plan will be suggested to further address the problems. You will be contacted regularly by phone during the 6 weeks of the study to ensure that all is going well and to answer any questions. You can also contact us at any time. The forms take only a few minutes a day to complete, but must be completed daily, and you will need to make one or two visits to the vet for blood drawing. The three phone calls can be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time, and should take less than 5 minutes each unless you have a problem. All costs will be covered by the research grant. You will be required to sign a consent form before enrolling in the study. Your veterinarian will also be kept informed of your dog's status and results of the blood work will be sent to him/her. You should be prepared that your dog's behavior may not improve through the study period, especially if it receives placebo. We request that you change nothing in terms of the way the dog is handled or fed during the course of the study.

Thank you.

The Animal Behavior Clinic, Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine

<http://www.tufts.edu/vet/behavior/>

2. AKC Considering Allowing Mixed Breeds to Play in Performance Events



If you parent a mixed breed dog or if you think mixed breed dogs should be allowed to play in performance events here is your chance to vote. The American Kennel Club, AKC, is considering allowing spayed and neutered mixed breeds to compete in AKC sponsored dog events. Use the link below to vote. This is your chance to welcome more people into the AKC world of dog sports. In our area most agility trials are AKC events.

http://www.akc.org/mixedbreed_survey/

3. Beautiful Border Collie in Need of Active Home



I am a spayed female purebred BC. I am around 5 years old and I am still very active, but I am also easygoing. I walk very nicely on leash and I know basic cues like sit and down and coming when I am called. I love to play with other dogs and toys. I have been playing with the daycare dogs at my foster home and sharing toys with the other dogs. I am also quite speedy and agile. I jump over a baby gate with ease and I keep up with all the other dogs while we are running. I enjoy riding in the car, every morning and afternoon, while taking my foster kids to school. I have done very well with my foster kids, age 6 and 10. I even went to their dance school and enjoyed petting and attention from a group of their friends. I also went to

obedience class with my foster Mom and even performed as a demo dog. I have a good appetite. I am HW negative and up to date on all my shots. I would really enjoy a forever home with an active family who will

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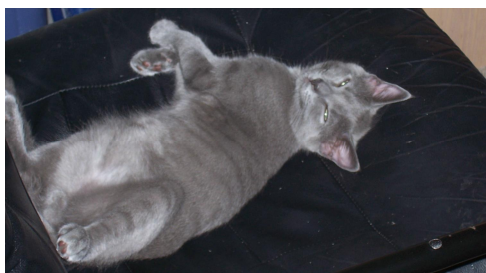
take me lots of places and let me play with other dogs. Please call my foster Mom Amy at 727-244-4415 or email her at questions@barkparkdogdaycare.com if you think you would be the perfect family for me. Thanks and I hope I get to meet you soon!

4. Cat Nip Controversy by Jacqueline Munera

Many people aren't even aware that there is such a thing as a catnip controversy, but apparently there is. I recently learned that some animal shelters are considering a ban on catnip use for the shelter cats because it is over stimulating. I know my cats love their occasional scratching post sprinkle, so I decided to check into this issue a bit more deeply.

Catnip is a member of the prolific mint family believed to have been imported to North America with the early European colonists. Originally utilized in humans for digestive disorders, insomnia, and as an antispasmodic, catnip gained popularity as a cat toy filler during the 1970s. Prior to this, catnip had a surge in popularity during the 1960s as marijuana replacement due to its hallucinogenic and intoxicating effects. Obviously cats must experience at least some of these feelings, and enjoy them, because they keep coming back for more!

In actuality, the response to catnip is genetically and hormonally influenced. Most cats six to eight weeks old do not respond to catnip and some cats react only mildly until three months of age. So if your kitten isn't actively attacking that catnip laced post, don't despair, just wait a couple of weeks and problem solved!



If your adult cat gives his catnip the cold shoulder, there may be a quality control issue. Some companies put their product with stems, stalks and even straw. You may not notice the difference, but believe me, your cat does. The best option is a high quality, organic leaf and bud product grown without pesticides or herbicides.

Now that you've found the perfect brand of catnip, what is the best way to utilize this fun auxiliary training tool? Catnip generally induces scratching so sprinkling a bit on the scratching post is an ideal way to start kitty scratching his post instead of your favorite sofa. Hide a few catnip laced cat toys throughout the house to give kitty an entertaining toy hunt while you are out at work all day. Or how about setting up a cat nipped kitty bed next to your computer to entice your cat to sit on it instead of repeatedly walking across your keyboard while waving a tail in your face?

Catnip is apparently a safe, fun way to encourage your cat to scratch appropriately, and keep kitty entertained at the same time. Be afraid of scratched carpets, not catnip and call Courteous Canine for all of your feline behavior questions! 813-949-1465 or info@courteouscanine.com

If you have ideas for newsletter content or pictures you would like to contribute please email Info@CourteousCanine.com

Happy Clicker Training,

The Staff of Courteous Canine, Inc.