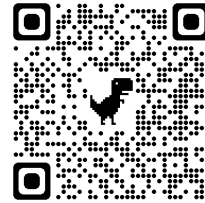




HOPE OF DELIVERANCE
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RESOURCE GUARDING



WHAT IS RESOURCE GUARDING?

It's a behavior in which a dog becomes defensive over something they perceive as valuable, such as food, toys, spaces, or even people. This can manifest in various ways, from mild signs like stiffening and growling to more severe reactions like snapping and biting. During the decompression phase, dogs may exhibit resource guarding, especially in multi-pet households. What's more, even well-trained dogs can regress to guarding behaviors under stress, illness, or new situations. Understanding this behavior and using consistent management and prevention strategies is crucial to ensure the safety and well-being of both your dog and the people around them.

SIGNS OF RESOURCE GUARDING

- **Subtle Signals:** Darting away, turning back when approached, or freezing
- **Obvious Signs:** Growling, snarling, snapping, or baring teeth
- **Body Language:** Stiff/tense posture, widened eyes, dilated pupils, raised hackles, or arched tail

WAYS WE ACCIDENTALLY REINFORCE THE BEHAVIOR

- Repeatedly and/or forcibly taking away items
- Punishing growling or other warning signs
- Rewarding the behavior with treats, attention, or toys to calm them down
- Inconsistent rules and boundaries
- Allowing multiple pets to compete for resources like food, toys, or attention
- Feeding your dog in busy, high-traffic areas of the home, or in the same space as other pets

PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

- Learn to recognize the signs listed above and identify which resources your dog is guarding.
- Control your dog's environment by feeding dogs in separate rooms or crates and by limiting access to high value items when you are not around to supervise.
- Manage your dog's exposure to visitors by putting them in a separate room or having them meet guests outside of the home prior to them entering.
- Create safe spaces for them to retreat to. We highly recommend a crate.
- Supervise play with other pets and remove high value toys that may trigger guarding.
- Use praise and treats to reward desired behavior.
- By trading, you can teach your dog that giving up an item leads to something better, like a treat or toy.
- Keep a consistent routine that involves set feeding time and exercise to reduce stress and anxiety.