



Resource Guarding

Does your new dog have a history of guarding food or other resources? This means he may try to protect his items with growling or snapping.

There is no guarantee that your dog will never guard again, but there are ways you can reduce the chances of it occurring.

Causes of Resource Guarding

Food and other resource guarding can be the result of stress and limited resources.

What to Do

Resource guarding may not go away on its own, and if not managed well, may get worse. Some guarding, when worked with, can decrease in intensity, but may not disappear entirely.

- Identify items that may illicit this guarding response and keep them out of reach.
- Always trade up when you need to retrieve something from your dog. If he has a toy or food item he may guard, bring a few extra-tasty treats to toss to the side so he drops the item to eat the treats. This creates an association with your dog that you are not there to take things away from him, but to bring him extra good things.
- If you have seen your dog guarding in specific situations, you can then manage those situations, such as confining your dog when giving him a bone, or feeding him and then not disturbing him until the resource is gone.
- If your dog is showing resource aggression towards other dogs, this is a normal behavior and something that cannot be trained out and is best managed. Separate the dogs at feeding time or when giving treats/bones/toys; otherwise, avoid giving out these items if that is not possible.

What Not to Do

- Do not punish your dog for guarding during or after the incident. Punishment will only make him more likely to guard that item again. Dogs do not understand punishment and can make things worse, potentially leading to aggression.

When to Get Help

- Because guarding can be scary and potentially dangerous, and because behavior problems can increase if managed incorrectly, you may want to get professional, in-home help from an animal behavior specialist.
- All SPCA of Northern Nevada Alumni receive **15% off training services** through Canine Rehabilitation Center and Sanctuary.