

Teething Issues

Those gums and teeth are developing and boy! do they hurt. And boy! it feels good to chew on things. Putting things, all sorts of things, in your mouth when you are a puppy is fun and exciting. Everything has a taste and texture and it lots of fun to chew on.

Use redirection and No! with your puppy when it comes to chewing on undesirable objects. Also remember this –don't encourage your pup to do things as a puppy that you don't want to see him do as an adult.

For redirection, you can give rawhides (they come in all sorts and shapes and flavors) to your puppy. And give her many during the day so that she have something to work her gums and teeth on. You can also use stuffed animals and dog toys. (Understand that your dog will probably not distinguish between your children's stuffed animals and theirs—you might ask your kids to keep their beloved stuffed animals out of reach of the dog.) A key part of teething though is...***Do Not Allow Your Puppy To Chew On Your Fingers Or Any Other Body Part.***

For pups who insist otherwise, try using a technique called "***Curl A Lip***" to discourage the puppy from going for your fingers. When the pup takes your fingers in his mouth, quickly curl her lip under her tooth and press quickly and with firm pressure. Puppies don't like this sensation and if you try it on yourself, you'll see that the pressure on the inside of your lip isn't pleasant. The quick pressure on soft lip tissue and tooth will be a negative reinforcement for the pup. Then in a high, happy voice, say something like, "What happened?" This will put the negative on the finger and not on you. Another tactic is to spray ***Apple Bitter*** (a product sold at pet supply stores) on your hands before you play with your puppy. With Household Items and Cherished Belongings that you don't want the puppy to accidentally destroy: *An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*

Move your treasured items out of reach of the dog - much like you would childproof your house when a toddler is present.

Here's a funny story to go with the safeguarding your treasured items. A couple who had recently acquired an English Setter hosted a Thanksgiving dinner. They left their dog in the kitchen with the freshly baked turkey resting on the kitchen counter as they entertained their guests in the living room. Yes, the dog helped himself and ate the turkey before the couple could say, "Dinner served." Can you blame him?