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**HELPING YOUR INTERNATIONAL FOSTER DOG**

Thank you for agreeing to foster one of our incoming international dogs. Many rescuers are involved in saving these dogs, getting them into good enough condition to fly to the U.S., then bringing them here to begin their new lives. You’re playing an extremely important part by helping them adjust to all the changes they face before they are ready to meet their new forever family and have the new life they deserve.

This document has been put together to offer suggestions and tips as you help your foster dog transition to its new life as smoothly as possible.

**Consider what your dog has been through in the past few months:**

Most likely, your dog was rescued directly off the streets, pulled from a slaughterhouse or meat market, or from a shelter. While on the streets, he had to forage for food and most probably had to fight off other dogs in order to get it. He may have been raised by a breeder and spent his entire life in a kennel with few socialization opportunities. He may have been a pet who was snatched from his owner and thrown into a police pound or slaughterhouse. His medical needs may have been ignored for months, possibly even years.

Once rescued, he may have been taken to a foster home or, more likely, placed in a shelter, environment where he was safe but housed with a large group of dogs, and his major medical needs evaluated and treated.

Many were shaved due to skin problems or because they were extremely matted from their former lives. Most will be in need of bathing and grooming.

Most of the dogs have been spayed or neutered, vaccinated, given heartworm and other treatment and had major medical issues dealt with. They were poked and prodded many times in order to get them into condition for travel.

The day they were flown to the U.S. or Canada, they were taken to an airport, loaded into crates and put on an airplane in an environmentally controlled cargo area. They had no food, but did have some water accessible through a drip (like a rabbit cage bottle).

Over fifteen hours later, they landed in the U.S. or Canada, tired and confused but ready for their new lives.

**Getting off the plane and ready for an overnight stay:**

After the escort and dogs cleared customs (which can take at least an hour), they were taken to the oversized baggage area where they were met by volunteers. The dogs in their crates were wheeled

on carts to the outside (usually to the GBR van). They were then taken out of their crates for the first time and walked around to potty and stretch their legs, get a drink of water and have some food. Crates were cleaned if any of the dogs soiled their crates (which does happen) then the dogs were loaded back into their crates (again) and put into a car or van and driven for an overnight stay with the volunteers. Here they get some exercise, attention, food and water.

Imagine being in a dark belly of an airplane for 15 hours in a crate, being shuffled several times before you could get out. Then you are subjected to new voices in a new language, different air, different food and water, different weather, a massive time change, etc. **We can guarantee you that these dogs are exhausted, confused and stressed.**

**The next day:**

Early the next morning, the dogs are fed, watered, and exercised and then put back into their crates for the several hour drive to Portland where they are thoroughly examined by our veterinarians. This obviously involves more poking and prodding.

They then meet you. They must be thinking "where am I and who are these people?" *Remember everything is NEW to your foster dog: you, your house, your car, other pets, smells, routines, your yard, etc. Please be patient as he learns, becomes comfortable, and begins to trust that he is safe.*

**AT YOUR HOME**

**Taking your dog home:**

Carefully unload your dog. Help the dog onto the ground. They have been in crates and kennels for a long time and may need help getting their hind legs strengthened again. Make sure he has a secure collar with his tags on it as soon as possible.

**Introducing your dog to other animals in your home:**

Introduce your foster dog to your resident dog slowly. We recommend allowing the dogs to meet outside, on leash and then taking them both on a short walk to get used to each other. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR NEW DOG UNATTENDED IN YOUR FENCED YARD!** We prefer that you keep your foster dog on leash (except in the house) for at least a week, preferably longer, until you are sure you don't have an escape artist on your hands - t**his includes in your yard.**

If you have cats, be sure to introduce the dog *on leash* to the cats in a large room where the cat(s) feel safe and can get to a high area easily. Keep your new dog on leash while the cats are in the room so they can get used to him/her and you can see if there is any reaction on the part of your foster dog to the cats. You should keep your foster dog on leash in the house for several days until you are sure there are no issues between him and your cat(s). Let him drag the leash around, giving you easy access to grab the leash if needed.

Your resident pets will need lots of love and reinforcement during the "breaking in" period to know that they are still number one in your lives. You will obviously want to give your foster dog lots of attention, but please give your resident pets even more. You don't want to create a jealousy issue.

**A word about toys:**

**PICK UP ALL DOG/CAT TOYS AND KEEP THEM AWAY FROM ALL PETS FOR AT LEAST A WEEK TO MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT HAVE A "RESOURCE GUARDING" ISSUE.**

**Feeding:**

Do not overfeed or overwater your foster dog even if it acts like it's starving. If you overfeed or give free access to water, you're going to run the risk of seeing both of them return to you on your living room carpet in short order!

We suggest a high quality, grain-free kibble. Research has shown that young dogs, including puppies, do not benefit from any “special” age-related food. Kibble for “all life stages” is perfectly fine.

**FEED THE FOSTER DOG SEPARATELY FROM THE RESIDENT DOG** for a few days until you are sure there is no food aggression from either dog.

**Going potty:**

Take your foster dog out frequently. Many of these dogs have never lived in homes or it’s been a while so it’s kind of like bringing a new puppy home. We suggest you try taking him out hourly while you are home so he gets the idea. Some of these dogs have never been on grass and will seek concrete at first. ***Be patient***. He will figure it out, especially if there is a resident dog to "drop" hints.

We strongly suggest keeping all poop picked up right away 1) to prevent spread of any parasites that might be present, and 2) to discourage any poop eating (which unfortunately some dogs do).

Some of these dogs are not reliably housetrained, and it may take several days (or even longer) to get to the point of being well housetrained. Use positive reinforcement and*patience.* ***Puppies especially will need to be taken out more often and watched carefully.***

You may want to crate your foster dog at night to help reinforce housetraining.

**Stiffness:**

Remember, your foster dog may have been in confined areas on and off for perhaps several months. Many of these dogs will need time to build up their rear leg muscles. This means they may have a hard time climbing steps (some may have never even experienced stairs!), getting in and out of cars, etc. Do NOT assume your dog is arthritic or has severe hip issues. It simply takes time to build these muscles up again. Obviously, our vets will have examined each dog for obvious muscular/skeletal issues at the initial exam, and we will let you know if there is something you need to do for them. If, at any time, you feel your dog may benefit from a ramp, please let your intake manager know as GBR has a few ramps that can be loaned out.

Please do not over-exercise your dog at first. Give him time to build up strength gradually. Even puppies need to be watched, as growth plates need time to develop naturally. It is often recommended that dogs under the age of one year *not* be exercised strenuously, including such activities as jumping in agility sports or Frisbee catching.

**Other possible medical issues:**

Due to their previous environment, some of these dogs arrive with skin/ear issues that you will need to treat for a few days. The initial veterinarian will tell you what to do and will give you medication (if required). Many have dental issues with worn teeth that may, or may not, require treatment. Golden Bond, obviously, will pay for any required medical treatment for your rescue dog that **we deem necessary**.

Be sure to get the approval of your medical coordinator/intake manager for any vet visits (unless it is truly a life/death emergency situation).

The prevalence of heartworm in some of the Far East countries (like Taiwan and South Korea) is epidemic (as it is in parts of the U.S.). It is important that your dog be given a monthly heartworm/flea/parasite preventative. Your dog will have been given one dose on the first morning. You will be provided with additional monthly preventatives while you are fostering the dog.

**Sleeping:**

These dogs are exhausted. They will be restless, jetlagged, and understandably unsettled their first night (and often longer). Your dog may be delivered to you with a crate, and you may prefer to crate him at night or even during the day when you are gone. Since some dogs seem to feel more secure in a crate, you may want to leave the crate open during the day so he can go in and out as he wishes. While you're sleeping, you might want to tether him to your bed or be in your closed room with a dog bed available. Let them be secure being near you and not alone in another part of your house.

You may need to take the dog out in the night for the first few days. Be on the lookout for signs. Remember that puppies will need to taken out more often.

**The first few days:**

Please keep your foster dog quiet for the first two weeks. This is not the time to take the dog in the car to Home Depot, or invite all your friends and relatives over to meet your new foster dog. Please let them get used to you, their new surroundings and any resident pets that you have. Remember, foster dogs are not allowed to be taken to dog parks or allowed off leash except in your secure yard or home.

Keeping your expectations low is a good idea. Many of these dogs haven’t lived in homes or had training so you’ll frequently experience them jumping up on you (the rescuers in Asia seem to like it when the dogs stand up and “hug” you – something we try to discourage), being mouthy, counter surfing and eating inappropriate things. Baby gates are a handy tool for keeping the dogs confined to small areas in the beginning.

**FOLLOW-UP**

We are here to help you at any time. Since we have brought in over 450 of these wonderful dogs, we know what kinds of issues (medical and/or behavioral) that can come about. Your Intake Manager will be your go-to person for all medical issues during the foster period. Be sure to discuss medical issues with this person as soon as you become concerned about any medical problems. If you have any questions, including behavioral ones, we have a good support system in place with various volunteers who can help.

**Thank you for fostering a GBR international dog!!**