



Biting in Young Puppies

Puppy biting is entirely normal behavior! We do need to teach our puppies that bite inhibition is important though, especially as they age. When your young pup bites hard, try to quickly substitute an appropriate toy in your pup's mouth. You can say **No bite!** softly while substituting. Remember they are just learning, and try not to be angry. Use **Bitter Apple** spray on your hands and arms to reinforce the idea that mouthing/biting skin is not worth it. If your pup is a nipping crazy shark, the best tactic is to withdraw your attention for a few minutes. Let puppy rest with some toys. It takes about 2 weeks of this kind of work with everyone who plays with your pup to see results.

Make sure your pup has access to chewing items. Bully sticks, hard chews, vegetable based "rawhide" chews are all good choices. Observe your puppy while they are chewing to make sure s/he is not swallowing pieces that are too big. Puppies have to learn to chew properly sized pieces. Remove a chew item if it gets too small. We don't want puppy to choke on it. Puppy can find relaxation, and relief from the pain of losing and growing teeth by chewing.

Remember your puppy is just a tiny baby mentally, even if they weigh 25 pounds at 8 weeks. They need lots of rest time. Play gently with your puppies, but let them rest after 20-30 minutes of activity. Just like children, they might get over-stimulated when tired, and that's when you might start to see behaviors you do not like, like chasing the kids, biting too much, or barking at nothing. Program puppy naps into your schedule frequently! Puppy might need to sleep 18-20 hours a day...!

If you are experiencing mouthing from an older puppy, look at what starts the behavior. If rough housing starts it, stop rough housing. Walk away, or put a door between you and your adolescent if they continue the inappropriate behavior. Give her/him a minute or two, then try presenting a toy or chew so she/he refocuses. Try **Bitter Apple** spray on your hands, arms, pant legs, slippers to keep the mouthing from happening. If you feel the mouthiness is out of control, please call the Behavior Line (831) 264-5422.