



Hello everybody! Hope everyone is doing well and staying warm. I know I am ready for spring and some warmer weather! I hope you enjoyed the newsletter on your pet's dental health. If you have any questions or would like to set up a tooth exam or dental cleaning, please let us know!

For the next couple of months we are going to discuss how to integrate new members of the family. This month we are going to talk about introducing new animals to your existing animal family.

### PLANNING AHEAD:

Planning is the most important thing you can do when thinking about introducing a new pet to your family. A few questions you should ask before bringing a new pet into your home are:

1. Do you have time to spend with the new animal and with properly integrating the animals?
2. Are you financially able to provide for another animal?

3. Is the new animal healthy and vaccinated before introducing it to your family?

4. Is your current animal open to meeting new animals?

Animals are a lifelong commitment; be sure you are willing and able to provide for your new pet it's entire life.



### DOG-DOG INTRODUCTIONS:

The first thing you should do to plan ahead is know how well your dog interacts with other dogs. If your dog does not play well with other dogs, then you will want to take more time to make the introduction. If your dog does get along with other dogs then your pet will probably do well with another dog, but you will still want to take it slow.

- ✓ Make sure both dogs are introduced in a neutral territory. Your animal could feel threatened by a newcomer in his own house.
- ✓ Make sure both dogs are on leashes and can be controlled easily. Never let 2 dogs interact without ADULT supervision.
- ✓ Make sure both dogs are neutered or spayed. This is very important. If one or the other is not altered, prepare yourself for a more difficult introduction. Most times 2 unaltered sexes cannot live in the same household. The ideal situation would be an altered dog of each sex, then both could be the dominant sex in the dog family. If

possible, due to hormones, you should wait about 2 weeks after altering to introduce the 2 dogs.

- ✓ Watch your reactions. Do not act nervous or anxious about the meeting; your dog can pick up on your emotions. Make it a positive meeting but do not bring treats. Dogs can get jealous over food. Do not overreact; let the dogs work it out within reason.
- ✓ Allow for ample introduction time. Some pets will bond right away, while others may take a couple introductions before bonding. Make sure at feeding time and play time the dogs are separated until they are comfortable with each other. Do not rush things; it's easier to go slow and get things right the first time than go too fast and make mistakes to correct later.



### DOG-CAT INTRODUCTIONS:

The first thing you should do, which goes along with planning, is to know how your dog or cat acts towards the other species. If they have never been introduced to the other species, the introduction will be more difficult and take more time.

- ✓ Make sure the dog is on a leash and can be controlled. This is very important because the dog could easily scare the cat or worse. Basic commands will be good to use here, like 'sit', 'stay' and 'lay down'.

- ✓ Only allow the dog and cat to interact while there is ADULT supervision until you know that it is safe. You can even separate them using a baby gate so they can still interact through the gate; just make sure the dog cannot jump the gate.
- ✓ Make sure the introduction is in a neutral area in or outside the house. This would be away from food bowls, beds, litter boxes or scratching posts and toys.
- ✓ Make sure after they are introduced the cat and dog have separate eating areas. It would be a good idea to put the cat's food & water bowls and litter box in an area not accessible to the dog.
- ✓ Make sure each pet has his or her individual play/attention time. This is especially important for the first animal of the house, so they do not become possessive.



### CAT-CAT INTRODUCTIONS:

- ✓ Let the cats get introduced before coming in contact with each other. The easiest way to do this is put the new cat in a carrier and let them meet or let them meet through a closed door. It is not a bad idea to do this a couple of times before actually introducing the cats. It is better to go slow and have it work than to rush things and have long-term problems.

- ✓ Spray Feliway® or have a Feliway® plug in the room before introducing the cats. Feliway® is a cat pheromone and should ease the stress the cats might be feeling.
- ✓ Make sure you add another litter box. You should have one litter box per cat, plus one. Make sure they are in attractive areas, areas that you would want to go to the bathroom. Also make sure they are in 2 different areas so they can be apart while they go to the bathroom.
- ✓ Make sure you add another food and water bowl so the first cat does not feel threatened by the new cat eating its food.
- ✓ Canned air or a spray bottle can be used if one or both cats become too aggressive.
- ✓ Be prepared for it to take some time, weeks, maybe months, before the cats tolerate each other. This is normal and to be expected; cats are finicky when it comes to change. But, it can be done and overall; cats like to have social interaction.



### **DOG/CAT-EXOTIC ANIMAL INTRODUCTIONS:**

The first thing you do, which goes along with the planning, is to feel out your pet. If your pet is a hunting dog or a fierce mouser, you will not want to introduce your dog or cat to a smaller exotic animal. Only if you think your pet won't hurt the smaller animal is it a good idea to even have them be introduced.

- ✓ Make sure the first couple introductions are done while the smaller animal is in its cage. This will prevent any accidents from happening and let you feel out your animal's reaction to the creature. If the cage is secure and you feel comfortable, the cage can be accessible to the cat or dog so they can get acquainted through the cage. It's a good idea to do this for a couple weeks before the actual introduction.
- ✓ Only if you feel confident about your cat or dog's behavior should you have the animals come into contact with each other. This should only be done under supervision.
- ✓ Age is a big factor in introducing. Usually baby animals interact better and bond quicker than older animals.



### BUNNY-BUNNY INTRODUCTIONS:

- ✓ Make sure you take this slow. If you go too fast the bunnies will get mad and not like each other after that.
- ✓ Make sure the first introduction is in a neutral area. A dog crate or play pen work well, only if the first bunny is not used to these places. This introduction should go on for about 20 minutes and really should happen once a day for about 1 week, or until you visibly see the bunnies interacting nicely.
- ✓ Ideally during this week you should have the new bunny in a cage beside your bunny. This allows them to become

familiar with each other and get to know each other in a non-threatening way.

- ✓ You should visibly see your bunnies bonding if they are going to. Some bunnies bond at first sight but some bunnies take a while to get used to each other and bond. It's rare but some bunnies don't bond at all.
- ✓ It is better to take it slow and have it work out then to rush things and have it not work out at all.

I just recently introduced a new bunny to my bunny, Har-e. I followed these guidelines and within 2 weeks by bunnies have bonded and become best friends.

### DR. TIDBIT BY DR. KELLEY OWEN:

The best plan for integrating a new pet of any species into the human and/or animal family is to plan ahead and keep a positive outlook. If you are nervous about bringing a new pet into the house, the existing pets, as well as the new one, will feel that and be more apprehensive. If you take a calm assertive attitude the animals will be more likely to integrate more easily. Also, plan ahead, ask yourself: do I have room for another pet? Can I separate the new one for a few days if need be? Is the new pet parasite and disease free? By planning ahead and developing a plan, everyone and the animals will make a smoother transition.

### ADOPTIONS:

We are very excited to announce that Charmin, now named Ivory, has gotten the perfect home! We want to thank the Straub family for opening their home to this sweetheart. Dana at the Canine Adoption Center took in 20 cats in one day, how sad!! We offered to help and took 5 of the cats. One of the

kitties got adopted already, special thanks to Linda Blake! ☺  
We have 2 pairs. One pair is a tabby & white brother and sister who are about 10 months old. The other is a black & white mom who is about 1 year old and a gray & white female baby who is about 6 months old. They are all felv/fiv tested, altered, vaccinated, de wormed and ready to go to their forever homes!

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

It's that time of year once again!! The famous Animal Friends Cash Bash is coming up and will be on April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Elk's Lodge, so mark your calendar!! Another fun Animal Friends event is the annual Egg Fetch at Marilla Park. It is on Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m at Marilla Park. Registration is at 12:30 so come early and bring your dog and Easter egg basket! The Animal Friends Vera Bradley Spring Bingo, which was scheduled for March 22nd is now canceled, but hopefully will be rescheduled soon. Sorry for any inconvenience.

## RECIPE:

Here is an easy yummy chicken cinnamon recipe for your pets!

### CINNAMON CHICKEN TREATS:

1 cup of flour  
1 cup of chicken broth  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of oatmeal  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cornstarch  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup oil  
1 T baking powder  
2 T cinnamon

Mix the ingredients together and cook for 20 minutes at 350°

**That is all we have for this month's newsletter. If you have any questions about introducing a new family member, please feel free to call us; we would be glad to help. If you are interested in adopting a pet please feel free to let us know. We would be really glad to help you with that! 😊**