



Submissive and Excitement Urination

Submissive Urination

Submissive urination occurs when a dog feels threatened. It may occur when he's being punished or verbally scolded, or when he's approached by someone or something he perceives to be threatening to him. It's important to remember that this response is based on the dog's perception of a threat, not the person's actual intention. Submissive urination may resolve as your dog gains confidence, but you can help build his confidence by teaching him new tricks and skills. You should also gradually expose him to new people and new situations and try to make sure all of his new experiences are positive and happy.

Your dog may be submissively urinating if:

- Urination occurs when he's being scolded
- Urination occurs when he's being greeted
- Urination occurs when someone approaches him
- He is a somewhat shy, anxious, or timid dog
- He has a history of rough treatment or punishment
- The urination is accompanied by submissive body language, such as crouching or rolling over to expose his belly

What to do if your dog has a submissive urination problem:

- Take your dog to the vet to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Keep greetings low key.
- Encourage and reward confident body language from him.
- Give him an alternative to behaving submissively. For example, if he knows a few tricks, have him "sit" or "shake" as you approach, and reward him.
- Avoid approaching him with body language that may be perceived as threatening or invasive. For example:
 - Avoid direct eye contact. Look at his back, forehead, or feet instead.
 - Get down on his level by bending at the knees rather than leaning over from the waist and ask others to approach him in the same way.
 - Pet him under the chin or on the chest rather than on top of the head.
 - As you approach, present the side of your body to him, rather than your full front, and avert your gaze.
- Don't punish or scold him. This will only make the problem worse.
- Until the problem resolves, you might want to protect your carpet by placing a plastic drop cloth or an absorbent material in the entryway where accidents are most likely to occur.

Excitement Urination

Excitement urination occurs most often during greetings and playtime and is not accompanied by submissive body language. Excitement urination usually resolves on its own as a dog matures, as long as it isn't made worse by punishment or inadvertent reinforcement.

Your dog may have an excitement urination problem if:

- Urination occurs when your dog is excited (during greetings or during playtime).
- Your dog is less than 1 year old.

What to do if your dog has an excitement urination problem:

- Take your dog to the veterinarian to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Keep greetings low key.
- Don't punish or scold him.
- To avoid accidents, play and greet outdoors until the problem is resolved.
- Until the problem resolves, you might want to protect your carpet by placing a plastic drop cloth or an absorbent material in the entryway where accidents are most likely to occur.
- Ignore him until he's calm.

Get Help

If you can't tell if your dog is fearful, excited, or just not housetrained, or if you have any additional questions, please contact Homeward Pet Adoption Center's Animal Behavior Manager or consult another professional for advice.