

## Prevent Resource Guarding with Give-and-Take Games!

You can help prevent resource guarding when you teach your puppy or dog the give-and-take game. NOTE: Do not do this if your dog already guards objects or food or if your dog lunges and aggressively tries to grab treats out of your hand.

- 1. Start by offering him a toy that he likes** (but is not extremely valuable to him). When he opens his mouth, say "Take it!" When he does, tell him he's a good boy, then offer him a treat.
- 2. When he opens his mouth to take the treat and drops the toy**, say "Give," (or "Trade," or "Share") and let him nibble at the treat while you pick up the toy. The nibbling part is important. If you let him eat the treat and then try to pick up the toy he will race you for it, which may actually encourage resource guarding.
- 3. While he is nibbling, slowly and calmly pick up the toy.** Let him finish eating the treat, then offer him the toy again and say "Take It!" as he puts his mouth around it.

**Practice several times a day**, a few repetitions at a time. This game will teach your dog the very useful behavior of "Give" on cue. He will also learn that if he gives something up for you, odds are good that he'll get it back again, or something even better.

**Advanced:** Once your dog has the idea, you can practice this with lots of toys and other items. When you have practiced it at home, try practicing it other places too. Do at least 10 practices (with 2-4 repetitions) in 20 locations with a variety of objects.

**Tip:** Always make sure the reward for the give is something your dog likes even more than the thing he is giving you. Always give your dog the item back during practices.

**Tip:** In real life, if you ask your dog to "give" you something he values, make sure he is generously rewarded. Try giving 5 or 6 treats in a row while you praise, for example, "What a fabulous dog you are!"