

TEETHING/MOUTHING

Puppy Mouthing

<https://positively.com/dog-behavior/puppy-knowledge/teething-mouthing/>

Why do puppies mouth and bite? Puppies like to explore the world with their mouths, which makes everything (including your skin) a potential chew toy. Providing a safe environment to prevent inappropriate chewing on household items and teaching your puppy bite inhibition from an early age will help prevent unwanted behaviors as she grows.

How to Stop Puppies from Mouthing and Nipping:

- Teach your puppy that mouthing or nipping a person's skin or clothes at any time stops play and attention immediately.
- When your puppy nips, get up and walk out of the room for a short time.
- Come back in and resume play and attention.
- If your puppy mouths again, play stops again. If she keeps her teeth to herself, the game and attention continues.
- Give your puppy appropriate toys to keep her entertained and redirect mouthing onto something appropriate.
- Puppies love to seek, grab, play, and pull. This play is great bonding and will also help break the mouthing habit.
- By using a rubber toy stuffed with puppy-appropriate food, you are turning a mouthing puppy into a dog that is playing with you *through* the toy.
- Expect a second chewing phase around the 6-9 month adolescence period.



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Why is this important to teach my puppy?

Play is really important for your puppy, so you want to be able to play with your puppy. But there have to be boundaries.

- What you do not want is to have a puppy that has a habit of mouthing that carries on into adulthood.
- A mouthing puppy is much more manageable than a mouthy adult dog. Those habits are difficult to break in adulthood, and the bites can be much more painful!
- This is not an easy habit to break in all puppies. It is important to find what motivates your puppy, whether it is praise, toys, treats, or a combination.
- Once you find the right motivator, you may find your puppy is happy to redirect his mouthing elsewhere.

What Not to Do:

- Avoid playing roughly with your puppy. Encouraging mouthing and rough housing at a young age will quickly leave you with an adult dog with a major mouthing problem.
- Do not just tell your puppy "no" when she is mouthing on you. Even negative attention is still attention and will not successfully discourage the mouthing. Get up and walk away instead.