



FOSTERING A BLIND DOG



SEE HOW EASY IT IS



Fostering a blind or sight impaired dog **isn't all that much different than caring for a sighted dog**. With just a **few special considerations**, you can make sure that your visually limited foster dog enjoys life. The dog's blindness is much harder on you than it is on him! **For dogs, eyesight ranks 3rd in importance** compared to smell & hearing, so a loss of eyesight doesn't mean a poor quality of life at all.

WHY DOES BLINDNESS DEVELOP?

There are **many eye disorders** that affect dogs, some causing blindness. Blindness in dogs can develop for many reasons - blindness may:

- **Be present from birth**
- **Be acquired later in life as the result of a traumatic injury or disease**
- **Simply be related to the ageing of a dog's senses**



WHAT CAUSES BLINDNESS SPECIFICALLY?

Some of the more common causes of blindness are below:

- Cataracts
- Glaucoma
- Sudden Acquired Retinal Degeneration Syndrome (SARDS)
- Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA)
- Retinal Detachment
- Corneal Ulcers
- Nervous System Diseases
- Cancer
- **Other Trauma:** Proptosis, punctures, and other eye injuries aside from ulcers can cause blindness.



WHAT IS ENUCLEATION?

Enucleation is the removal of the eye that leaves the eye muscles and remaining orbital contents intact. **The most common reasons for surgical removal of an eye include** eye cancers, trauma, uncontrollable infection, end-stage glaucoma **or any condition that causes ongoing, unmanageable eye pain in a blind eye.**

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SETTING UP A GOOD ENVIRONMENT FOR BLIND DOGS



Try to have something familiar to the dog (toy, blanket, bed, etc.) for comfort when going to a new place.

Having a "home base" is helpful as he learns to "map" out the house & yard. A bed, crate, or food bowl makes a good base and if he becomes confused, he can start out again at home base. When you're gone, leave a TV on or music playing softly near wherever he spends the most time when you're out, as the sound can be soothing for him.



If your dog uses a crate, use a bungee to hold the door in place. This way your dog doesn't need to worry that the door may only be partially open.

If you have other dogs at home, you can get a bell at any craft store that can be added to the collar of the other dog so your blind dog can easily tell where they are. Some blind dogs rely on their sighted fur siblings to lead them around.





If you have a small dog, avoid picking him up to "help" him get to food or other areas. He needs to learn on his own, and he'll actually become more confused when picked up and put down.

Start teaching the dog help words like Stop - Step up - Step down - Easy - Careful - Danger - Right - Left etc.



Hearing your voice is very soothing, so talk to you blind dog often. Let him know when you are walking out of a room etc. Even just some "silly chatter" is enjoyable to a blind dog.

Remember to speak to your dog when you are approaching to touch (especially while sleeping) to prevent startling him/her.



If you've always enjoyed moving your furniture around now would be a good time to pick your favorite layout and keep things in the same place for your blind dog. Keep floors clear!

Plastic place mats placed under the food and water bowls will help your dog "feel" when they are right up close to the bowls.



Socialization is so important especially for blind puppies and dogs. Take walks & visit places where your dog can socialize. When your dog is out, let people know that he is blind so they don't reach out to pet unexpectedly.

YARD / POOL

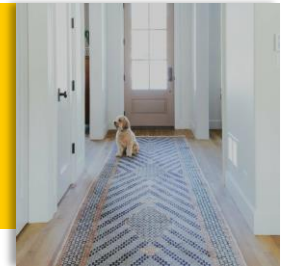
- Check the yard to look for low growing branches etc **that could poke the dog in the eye & trim them back.**
- **A wind chime** near the back door can be **helpful to your dog** in getting headed back to this door after going outside.
- **Door mats at all outside door entrances** are also very helpful.
- **NEVER** let the dog out alone near a pool

STAIRS

- Use a **baby gate screen to block stairs** so your foster dog doesn't go up or down alone
- Carpet sample squares are cheap; while your dog is learning the layout of the house, **put carpet squares in the doorways going into each room to make it easier to find the door openings.** Place a carpet mat at both top and bottom of stairs so the dog knows when it's at the top or bottom of the stairs. **Teach stairs by placing a "treat" on every step or two.** Stand in front of dog, holding collar or harness, and gently encourage (without pulling), practice until he's able to go up and down smoothly.



*A carpet "runner" down a hallway can make a great "runway" for playing ball indoors. A ball with a bell inside is great fun for a blind dog and your dog will know that **as long as he is on the "runway" it is safe to go full blast!** Latex toys also work great for fetch the squeaker is a plus for fun, but the latex toys **have a unique sound when they hit the ground**, and most bounce several times... giving dog **extra time** to find them.*



I SEE
with my
HEART



What is a HALO?

A harness **HALO** can slowly build up your blind dog's confidence to **allow him to navigate spaces without bumping his head.** This accessory is a simple and effective way to help your vision-impaired dog walk & play. The pet halo will bump into walls, furniture, and other pets before your dog does.