

4 Paws 4 Life Rescue!

DOG FOSTER HANDBOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE 4P4L DOG FOSTER PROGRAM

What is a Dog Foster Home?

A foster home is a temporary living situation for dogs and puppies in our program. Dogs may stay in foster while they are awaiting placement in a permanent home. We rely on our foster homes to care for underage puppies (less than 8 weeks old) and their nursing mom, other puppies and adult dogs over 8 weeks old or dogs with special needs, which can include medical conditions or behavioral issues. Foster families provide shelter, food, care, and love. The number of animals we can save depends entirely on the number of people we have to foster them. Under certain circumstances, food is also provided, when available.

Why Foster?

Most of all, fostering dogs saves lives! Many homeless dogs are not ready to be adopted. Finding a foster home for them may be the only way for them to get from a shelter, where they may be at risk of death, to their forever home. Being a dog foster family has rewards beyond saving a life. It can be a chance to have an animal companion without a lifetime commitment—puppies are wonderful, but do you really want a year of puppyhood?! After medical and behavior precautions are addressed, a foster dog can be a great companion for an existing pet. In some cases you can experience the special challenge of helping an animal recover from an illness or injury or the trauma of losing a beloved owner or home. You can also gain valuable handling knowledge and experience by training your foster dog or help them to overcome a behavioral issue. Or it may just be the pure fun of giving extra TLC to these four-legged canines that need our help. But above all, you get the satisfaction and joy of knowing that you have saved a life!

What Types of Dogs Need Foster Care?

Foster homes are needed for pregnant dogs, moms with newborns, and orphaned puppies less than 8 weeks old. Adult and senior dogs and dogs who are ill and needing medical care also need foster care. Basically, foster care is for all our dogs and puppies who need a little extra TLC while they wait for their forever homes! Some foster homes choose to specialize in fostering a specific type of dog—for example, only puppies—while others choose to foster any dog or puppy in need.

What are the Responsibilities of a Dog Foster Home?

Foster homes are asked to provide foster dogs with plenty of love, adequate food and water, shelter from the elements, and exercise. Administering medications or other medical care may also be necessary. In addition to providing the basics, foster parents may also be asked to follow a behavioral or training plan with their foster dog or puppy. Usually, foster parents are responsible for picking up their foster dog and transporting them to veterinary appointments and to adoption events.

Foster homes play a crucial role in saving and rehabilitating rescued animals. They are in a unique position to help abused or neglected animals learn how to love and trust again. Foster homes can help these animals become more “adoptable” by providing socialization and basic training. By teaching or re-teaching an animal how to live in a home setting, foster homes help increase the odds for a smooth and successful transition into a permanent adoptive home.

2. DOG FOSTER TEAM

As a dog foster parent, you have an entire team to support you. The following is an overview of the teams and their responsibilities. Please be aware that many on the Dog Foster team are volunteers who do this in addition to their responsibilities with work and family. We all want you to have a positive experience fostering for 4P4L, so please do not hesitate to contact one of us if you are experiencing any difficulty. Contact information for the team members can be found at <http://www.4p4l.org/contactus>

Dog Foster Coordinator

While you are fostering a dog, this is your primary contact for any questions/concerns, or if you are not sure who to contact for help. The coordinator will also assist you with scheduling spay/neuters, vaccinations, and other preventive care for your foster dog.

Dog Adoption Team

This team assists you with all activities related to the adoption of your foster dog. This includes information on pre-adoption, meet and greets, and making arrangements to finalize an adoption. All foster dog adoptions must be coordinated through this team. They will also arrange for foster dogs to attend an adoption site and/or with the “surrender” of your foster dog to the shelter at the end of their foster placement.

3. BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT

Requirements

Fostering is a tremendously rewarding experience but it does take some time and effort. The basic responsibilities are:

- Provide a safe, clean, caring environment
- Provide food, water, toys/enrichment, and shelter
- Provide exercise and socialization as appropriate
- Monitor any medical and/or behavioral problems
- Transport to/from any necessary vet appointments.
- Transport to/from offsite adoption events
- Taking pictures and creating bios for your foster dog, or assisting us with that process
- Responding to email inquiries on your foster dog

Those are the basics but here are some other things to consider before deciding if fostering a dog is right for you.

Do you own or rent? If you rent, does your landlord allow dogs? Are there any restrictions on the type of dogs (breed, size...)? If they require a pet deposit, have you already paid it? If you live in an apartment will a barking dog or whining puppy be a problem?

- Do you live alone? If not, is everyone on board with bringing in a new dog? Fostering is a family affair. Even if you do all the work, everyone will be affected by having this addition to your household. This is especially important if you have roommates. If you do decide to foster, everyone in the home needs to understand and follow the foster program guidelines to keep the dog safe.
- If you have other animals, how will they react to a new dog in the home?
 - Are they spayed or neutered? Most of the foster dogs will not yet have had surgery, so we want to ensure that they don't have contact with any "intact" dogs. Also, intact dogs may be more reactive to a new dog in the home.
 - Do any of them have any health issues that might make them more susceptible to disease or other medical concerns?
 - Have they been fully vaccinated for DHLPP, rabies, and Bordetella? The latter is for kennel cough and therefore not a routine vaccine. However, if you board your dog it was probably required. Please check your vet records to see if this specific vaccine has been done. If your dog(s) are not up to date on vaccines, you should wait a minimum of 5 days after your dog's vaccinations have been administered before taking in a foster dog. We also recommend that you follow your vet's recommendation.
 - Do you have the ability to segregate the foster dog from your resident animals? We recommend that you separate them for at least the first week. There are two reasons for this. First, we want to protect your resident animals from any undiagnosed medical condition. Second, from a behavior perspective, it is usually best to slowly introduce a new dog to the "pack."
- Do you have the time to devote to caring for a foster dog? Young puppies may need to be fed as often as every few hours. Adult dogs need the stimulation and exercise of a daily leashed walk. Dogs and puppies may also need to be transported to the vets for vaccines and other medical care.

Application Process

If you are reading this, you are likely already approved to foster dogs. But if not, and you are interested in becoming a foster parent for 4 Paws 4 Life Rescue, you need to complete and submit a foster care application. You can apply directly from our website www.4p4l.org/how-to-help/foster-a-dog. When your

application is received, someone from the Foster team will call you to review your application. If you are not contacted within 24 hours of submitting your application, please e-mail toni@4p4l.org. When your application is approved, you will receive a welcome letter and be invited to join our Foster Facebook Group online. We use this FB group to alert you to dogs needing foster and other information related to the foster program.

4. GETTING STARTED

This section describes the steps you need to take before bringing home a foster dog or puppy. This preparation will help ensure that your foster experience is a good one for you, your foster dog, and any other animals or people living in your home. These guidelines are designed to answer the most common questions and ease the transition for all concerned. You also have the entire 4P4L team for backup.

Preparing for Your Foster Dog

The following is a checklist of items you will need before bringing home a foster a dog or puppy:

- Food and water bowls
- Leash and in some cases a harness or drag lead
- Food and treats; Any high-quality dog or puppy food is fine. It's a good idea to have both dry and canned food available.
- Chew toys, appropriate to the size and age of your dog or puppy. If you provide rawhides, watch them the first time to ensure there is no problem with them.
- Crate or kennel (for keeping dogs safe and out of trouble while you're away and to help with house-training)
- Dog bed, blankets, or towels to provide your foster dog with a comfortable place to sleep
- Puppy pads, newspaper or old sheets, if you are fostering puppies
- Hand sanitizer; for example, Purell
- Bleach

Please review this entire handbook and any correspondence you receive from the 4P4L team. They contain critical information that you will need to know before beginning your foster experience.

Responding to Pleas

Every day, 365 days a year, 4P4L Rescue team reviews lists of dogs on the euthanizationlist at high-kill shelters. When they identify dogs or puppies that need a foster home, our team contacts active fosters. Our ability to save a dog often relies solely on our ability to find a foster within a very short time frame. Your quick response to a foster plea can literally mean the difference between life and death for these dogs.

When talking to the Foster Coordinator, it is important to let them know about any special considerations you might have:

- * Do you have dogs that haven't been spayed or neutered?
- * Are your dogs current on all vaccinations?
- * Do you have young children?
- * Can you keep the foster dog separate from your resident dogs?
- * Do you have any other fosters in your home at this time?

The Foster Coordinator will work with you to determine if a foster is a good match for you.

Picking Up Your Foster Dog

After the Foster Coordinator has confirmed a match for you, you are ready to pick them up and take them home. Usually this will be from the adoption event location.

We recommend that you bring a travel carrier or crate for transport. You might also want to bring some type of blanket or cover to protect your car seats from scratches or accidents, and paper towels or wipes for any clean-up needs. Adult dogs should have a collar. If the foster dog doesn't have one, ask the 4P4L Team to

provide one. Puppies don't need a collar but should be transported in a crate. **DO NOT EVER PUT UNLEASHED PUPPIES ON THE GROUND AT ANY PUBLIC LOCATION!!!**

When you pick up your foster dog, please make sure they are secured on a leash or in a crate before taking them to your car. Rescue dogs can be scared and disoriented by the changing environment and are often excellent escape artists. If the Placement team has told you that your dog is a flight risk, please follow these extra precautions:

- The dog must be in a halter type of collar at all times.
- The dog must be on a drag leash at ALL times, including inside the house. The dog must always be on a leash held by the foster when the dog is outside, including within a fenced yard or enclosed patio.
- The dog must be transported in a crate and not removed from the crate until the dog is safely indoors.

All roommates and family members must also understand and follow these instructions; and please make sure that the dog is microchipped.

Under no circumstances should you contact the previous owner. If you have questions about the dog's history, please contact the Foster Coordinator.

They will do a quick check-up of your dog or pup and vaccinate, deworm, or provide other medical care as needed. If you were given any AASC medical paperwork leave it with the APA! medical team. You are now ready to take your new foster dog home and start giving them some much needed wonderful foster TLC!

At Home With Your Foster Dog

When you get home, make sure your foster dog has a chance to relieve himself before going inside. Neither of you want to start out with any accidents! If you are fostering a puppy, make sure that you only put them down in a protected area like your back yard. Again, it's very important that they are not exposed to the "germs" out in the world. Show your foster dog his sleeping area, either the crate (strongly recommended) or a place with his own bedding. If you have other animals, you will need to ensure that you can keep your foster dog separate. If you want to introduce the foster dog to your resident dog(s) after the required 7-10 day quarantine, please consult with your foster coordinator first. If you are fostering puppies, you will need to confine them to a bathroom or any room where they will not have full access to the house. Very young, small puppies can be confined to a crate initially. Confining puppies not only helps protect your possessions, it also keeps them out of harm's way. Puppies have an uncanny knack for being able to get themselves into precarious situations!

If your foster was sent home with a harness and a drag lead, please leave those items on at all times. This is done with most dogs less than 25 pounds, with the exception of young puppies. The harness and drag lead are placed on them for their protection and to reduce the likelihood of an escape. If you feel your foster dog no longer needs the harness and drag lead, please contact your foster coordinator so they can consult with the our team. Do not remove the harness and lead until you have received approval.

Foster dogs should never be left unattended in a back yard. Although your yard may seem "escape proof," too often our foster dogs have managed to find a way out. This is also their time to begin bonding with people again, and being left alone outside could cause them increased anxiety. Fully vaccinated dogs should be taken on walks but always on a leash and NEVER to an off-leash park. At this point we don't know enough about the foster dog, or the other dogs at the park, to know how they will react. If your foster dog gets loose or lost, it is imperative that you contact the foster coordinator immediately.

Special precautions need to be taken with puppies. Puppies should never be placed on the ground in a common area where other dogs have roamed. If they need to be taken out in public—for example to the medical clinic or an adoption event—they should be transported in a crate and only placed in a pen that has been sanitized. You should always have hand sanitizer handy and ask everyone (friends, family, neighbors, etc.) to use the sanitizer before petting or handling your puppies. If you live in an apartment and are fostering puppies, you will need to use puppy pee pads for their potty training as they cannot go outside on the ground.

Please provide only approved dog treats and no people food. In some cases, you may be asked to give your foster dog “people food,” for example yogurt or pumpkin, to help with diarrhea, but in general it’s best to stick to dog food. Pregnant and nursing dogs should be fed puppy food for the additional nutrition. For more information on puppy care, check out the Puppy Handbook on the resources page on our website at <http://www.4p4l.org/resouces-and-library>.

If your foster dog is dirty or has fleas and you wish to give him a bath, you can use a mild shampoo or detergent. Check with the foster coordinator before bathing puppies and also to see if your foster dog has been treated for fleas.

If you need to have your foster dog moved, even temporarily; please contact us so that we can find another foster home. Foster dogs can never be placed in the care of a neighbor, friend, pet sitter, roommate or even a potential adopter without the express permission of 4P4L. Foster dogs are NOT allowed to travel outside of the Denver area. If you plan to travel please contact the foster coordinator for an alternate foster home.

If you have a serious incident with your foster dog you should report this immediately to the foster coordinator. This includes any aggression towards humans or other animals; a bite or attempt to bite; reactivity or other significant behavior issue; and any escape of your foster dog.

5. BEHAVIOR ISSUES & TRAINING MY FOSTER DOG

It is common for a dog to experience some behavioral problems and need a period of adjustment when placed into a new environment. Foster homes are in a unique position to help increase the “adoptability” of their foster dogs by providing some basic training. This also provides you the opportunity to strengthen the bond with your foster dog and get him to trust people again. If you need help addressing behavior issues with your foster dog, please contact your foster coordinator.

Please immediately report to the Foster Coordinator if your foster dog bites you, a member of your household, or anyone else. Dog to dog, or any other animal bites should also be reported

The following is a list of common behavioral problems as well as suggestions for behavior modification.

Lack of House-Training

Chances are your foster dog will need at least a refresher course in house-training. Many rescued dogs have spent most of their lives outside and never learned the rules of living indoors. Other dogs may have once been house-trained, but may still have an accident or two, when transitioning into a new home.

The most important element of effective house-training is extensive supervision. Correcting a dog for eliminating in the house is only effective if the dog is caught in the act. For this reason, it is essential that the dog be under your supervision at all times. There will, of course, be times when you are unable to watch the dog constantly. During these times, you can confine the dog to a crate. The crate should be just large enough for the dog to be able to comfortably stand up, turn around, and lie down. Because a dog will try not to soil the area where he sleeps, he will usually not urinate or defecate in a crate. When the dog is allowed out of the crate, he should be taken outside immediately. If the dog eliminates outside, give him lots of praise. If the dog does not eliminate, it is important that you supervise the dog closely once you re-enter your home. If you catch the dog having an accident in the house, make a loud noise by either clapping or saying “at” in a firm (but not angry) voice. Take the dog straight outside and give him a chance to finish eliminating outside. If the dog does eliminate, give him lots of praise. If not place him back in the crate for 10-15 minutes and take outside again.

When house-training a dog, use common sense. Give the dog a chance to eliminate outside following meals and naps. Pay attention to the dog’s behavioral signals. If you observe the dog circling, sniffing the floor, or moving toward the door, take the dog outside.

House-Training Don’ts:

- **Do not rub the dog’s nose in it!** This method of training has been proven ineffective by trainers and behaviorists. The only message a dog gets from this type of “training” is that you are angry and you are showing them where to mark next time. The dog will likely not learn to eliminate outside and may instead learn to fear you.
- **Do not correct the dog after the fact!** Again, this method of training has been proven ineffective. Punishing a dog for something she did much earlier will not yield the results you are looking for. Yes, the dog will behave submissively and perhaps look guilty, but this is because the dog knows you are angry by your body language, not because she knows that, earlier, she did something wrong. House-training is not a process that happens overnight. Be patient. Any progress you can make with your foster dog on house-training will make your life easier and help improve the dog’s chances for successful placement.

Chewing

Destructive chewing is a phase that all puppies go through. It usually starts around three months and can last until the dog is one year old. During this time, the dog’s adult teeth are coming in and chewing helps relieve the pain. Adult dogs may also have problems with chewing, but for different reasons. Adult dogs

usually chew on inappropriate things because they are anxious or bored, or because they have never been taught what is appropriate to chew on. The best solution for destructive chewing is providing your foster dog with something that is acceptable to chew on. Alternate chew toys daily and do not leave all toys out all the time. Dogs generally get bored of toys and find alternative things to chew. If you catch the dog chewing on something inappropriate, tell the dog “At” in a firm (but not angry) voice, and replace the item with something more appropriate. If the destructive chewing occurs when you are away, consider confining the dog to a crate. A crate will help keep both the dog and your home safe. It is also important to make sure that your foster dog is getting plenty of exercise. A tired dog will sleep, not chew!

Separation Anxiety

It is common for foster dogs to experience some separation anxiety when left alone. The severity of the anxiety can range from pacing and whining to much more destructive behavior. A dog may experience separation anxiety simply because he has a very dependent personality, or because she is reacting to a history of abuse or abandonment. Whatever the reason, separation anxiety can be difficult to deal with because you are not around when it happens. The most common sign that a dog may be suffering from separation anxiety is destructive behavior when left alone. A dog may scratch frantically at the door or make other attempts to get out of the house, or the dog may chew on things or engage in other destructive behaviors. If you have reason to suspect that your foster dog is suffering from separation anxiety when you are away, consider confining the dog to a crate. If used appropriately, the crate will help the dog feel safe and secure and hopefully relieve some of the anxiety. And, until the separation anxiety itself can be examined and dealt with, a crate will help keep both your home and your foster dog safe.

If you do have the time to work with your foster dog, there are several things you can try to help alleviate separation anxiety. Start out by leaving the dog in your home for very short intervals. Tell the dog to wait and then walk outside for a few minutes before returning. When you return to the house, praise the dog for waiting. Begin to gradually leave the dog for longer and longer periods of time. It is important that, when you leave, you remain calm and not make a big deal out of leaving. It is also important that you not be too excited when you return. You want to praise the dog, but calmly. You don't want your return to be such an exciting event that the dog anxiously anticipates the moment of your return. Perhaps the most effective treatment for separation anxiety is time. Be patient. As your foster dog spends more time with you, he will begin to feel more secure in knowing that when you leave, you always come back. Some destructive behavior that appears to be related to separation anxiety may, in fact, be the product of boredom. Try providing chew toys or other play items that will entertain your foster dog while you are away. There are several products on the market that work quite well. One of the more popular toys keeps dogs engaged by making them work for food or treats. Once the toy is filled with some kind of small food item, the dog must work by rolling and tipping the toy until a treat falls out. Most of these products allow you to adjust the level of difficulty, and can keep a dog entertained for significant periods of time. Don't forget to make sure that your foster dog gets plenty of exercise. A tired dog is much less likely to engage in behaviors associated with anxiety or boredom.

Crate Training:

4P4L strongly recommends using a crate for your foster dog. A crate is a great way to keep both your foster dog and your home safe. If you decide to use a crate, make sure that the crate is always a positive place for your foster dog. Never use a crate for punishment. When introducing a dog to a crate, use a happy tone of voice and tell the dog to “kennel up.” When the dog enters the crate, give her lots of praise and perhaps a treat reward. If you have a difficult time getting the dog to enter the crate or if the dog seems afraid, try leaving the crate door open and placing the dog's food and water bowls just inside the door. Any time your foster dog shows any sign of curiosity in the crate, praise and reward him. You will notice the dog going to the crate and looking at you for assurance and praise. Allow the dog to wander into the crate and eat at his leisure. Once the dog seems more comfortable with the crate, you can try confining the dog to the crate for short intervals.

Never confine a puppy to a crate for longer than four hours at a time, or an adult dog for longer than eight hours at a time. Remember, the dog will not want to soil his crate, so forcing the dog to stay in the crate longer than he can comfortably “hold it” is inappropriate.

6. MEDICAL CARE

Because most foster dogs are rescued from shelter environments, it's difficult for 4P4L to ensure that they will always be healthy. A dog that appears healthy at the time of placement into a foster home could easily begin to show signs of illness several days later. For this reason, it is very important that foster dogs are kept separate from your own animals and that you keep your own dogs up-to-date on vaccinations.

It is important that all items and areas used by a sick foster animal be cleaned thoroughly. You can use a 10% bleach solution to reliably kill most viruses and bacteria. Items to be cleaned should be thoroughly wetted with the bleach solution and allowed to stand for several minutes before rinsing. Foster homes that have recently fostered a dog or puppy with Parvo or another extremely contagious disease may be asked to wait several months before fostering another unvaccinated dog or puppy. If you are an active foster, please let the foster coordinator know if you have had a sick animal in your home.

Urgent Medical Care

Our foster coordinator can answer many of your routine medical questions, however, if your foster dog becomes ill or injured it's best to contact the medical coordinator directly at tina4p4l@yahoo.com. Please copy the appropriate foster coordinator. This email box is checked regularly throughout the day. If it is an emergency, call the medical team at (303)921-7586.

Be sure to include all the following information in your message, especially your phone number!

- Your name and phone number
- Name of your foster dog
- Is she eating/drinking normally? If not, how long without food/water?
- Any vomiting, diarrhea, coughing or sneezing? If so, how long has this been going on?
- Any eye or nose discharge? If so, what color is it?
- Any lethargy?

Symptoms of an Emergency

- Not moving, unable to stand up
- Bleeding
- Not eating for more than two feedings (unweaned puppy)
- Not eating for more than 24 hours (older dog)
- Not breathing or open mouth breathing
- Drooling profusely
- Tremors or convulsions
- Appears drunk or unstable when walking, or loses balance when walking
- Constant vomiting or diarrhea

If you aren't sure if it's an emergency, contact us.

Routine Medical Care

The Medical Coordinator schedules all routine and preventive medical care. However, if you have not been contacted by the team and you know that a vaccine or other medical need is due, please contact them.

4P4L vaccinates for DHLPP (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvo Virus), rabies and all dogs over 6 months old are heartworm tested. In addition, dogs who require flea/tick treatment are treated at intake. Dogs and puppies are dewormed.

The 4P4L medical coordinator provides all medical care to our foster dogs. **4P4L WILL NOT reimburse foster parents for any medical expenses incurred without PREAPPROVAL by 4P4L.**

Some other helpful information about the medical clinic:

- Do not bring in animals without an appointment unless it is a life or death emergency. If you have an urgent medical problem, contact the medical coordinator via e-mail or phone. They will let you know if you need to bring your foster dog into the clinic. If you do not receive a timely response, please contact the Dog Foster Mentors, or anyone else on the Dog Foster Team, for assistance.
- The last scheduled appointment is at 6:30 p.m.
- The clinic closes at 7:00 p.m.
- If possible, please bring your foster dog into the clinic in a crate. PUPPIES UNDER THE AGE OF 4 MOS., OR WHO HAVE NOT BEEN FULLY VACCINATED, MUST BE IN A CRATE. Unfortunately, until they have been seen by the medical staff it is impossible to know if your foster dog has a contagious disease like Distemper or Parvo. Even "well" puppies should be in crates to isolate them from exposure to potential contaminants in the environment. If your dog is too big to easily manage in a crate, it is okay to bring them on a leash. However, if you suspect that they may be contagious, please contact the medical coordinator regarding any safety precautions you need to take to prevent the spread of disease.

Spay/Neuter Surgery

Puppies are spayed or neutered at 8 weeks of age unless they are underweight (less than 2 pounds), malnourished, ill, or are generally just not healthy enough for surgery. Older dogs are spayed or neutered as soon as they are medically ready. Nursing moms can be spayed after their pups have been weaned and the mom's milk has dried up. If the pups are weaned by 6 weeks of age, the moms can often be spayed when their pups have surgery at 8 weeks of age. *Because of the limited number of surgery slots, it is vital that you keep your scheduled appointment.* If your dog is ill, or you are unable to keep the appointment, please let the Medical Coordinator and/or Foster Coordinator know as soon as possible.

Post-Operative Care

Your foster dog will probably be pretty groggy when he/she gets home. Some animals are very groggy, some are less so—size, weight, age, sex, etc. can all contribute to how "drunk" they will act. This will include large pupils, stumbling, whining, disorientation, fear, hallucinations, etc. This is all completely normal, and should wear off a couple of hours after taking them home.

Your foster dog will receive absorbable sutures so there is no need to remove them. The stitches are buried underneath the skin so you won't see them on the outside, and the outside of the skin is sealed with a little tissue glue. If the glue peels off, don't worry; it is mostly cosmetic and not actually holding anything together.

It's okay for your foster dog to do a little licking of the incision after surgery, though it is important to discourage it. Too much licking can cause infection, and chewing on the incision can tear the stitches out. If they are licking excessively, you can either:

- If you need an e-collar, please ask your foster coordinator.
- For male dogs you could put a pair of boxers or underwear on and attach it with a small strip of duct tape on the fur on their back (just use a little, and don't put it on the belly or areas that don't have fur).

Check on the incision regularly, if it is very swollen, has a lot of discharge, or is bleeding contact the medical coordinator.

If the incision gets dirty, clean it with hydrogen peroxide and a cotton ball or clean rag. Don't use Neosporin (it usually makes them want to lick), bandages, or any other cleaners on the incision.

Your foster dog will receive injectable pain medication for surgery. You should also receive additional pain meds (usually Tramadol). These pain meds should be given according to the instructions and should be given whether or not your foster dog shows signs of discomfort—animals are, by instinct, very good at hiding pain. Do NOT use any other pain medications; for example, Aspirin, Tylenol, Novox, Rimadyl, Deramaxx, or Metacam would be toxic if given in conjunction with the pain medication they received in surgery.

No swimming or bathing for the first 5-7 days after surgery unless directed otherwise by a vet.

As a general rule, you should restrict activity for adult males, adult females, and female puppies for the first 5-7 days; no running, jumping, or too much playing. Male puppies can have normal activity.

7. GETTING MY FOSTER DOG ADOPTED

4P4L takes full responsibility for finding permanent adoptive homes for our foster dogs; however, it as a collaborative process with the foster parent. Foster homes are encouraged to let others know that their foster dogs are available for adoption, but any person interested in adopting a foster dog needs to go through the 4P4L adoption procedures. 4P4L shows our dogs and puppies at adoption venues 2 – 4 days a week. Foster parents will be asked to bring their foster dogs to these adoption events. Adoptions are handled on a case-by-case basis and every effort is made to match animals with homes that meet their specific needs.

As soon as you take possession of your foster dog or puppy, we want to begin the process of getting him or her to their forever home. If the puppies are very young newborns or under 8 weeks—that step may just be getting, and keeping, them healthy and happy! Of course it never hurts to start getting the word out to family, friends, and neighbors, about the fabulous puppies you are raising!

However, at about 7 weeks the adoption process begins in earnest. If your foster dog did not come to you with a name, the first step is naming your foster dog. We need to get a name as soon as possible so we can get them in our system and up on our web site. With older dogs, we like to get a name within a day or two; with very young pups, it may take a little longer to pick a name. In either case, we need to have a name by the time they turn 6 weeks. If your foster dog already has a name, we ask that you continue to use that name. They are already being tracked in our system by that name and keeping it consistent will help avoid confusion down the road.

We understand that at times, our volunteers may want to adopt a pet from our rescue. We think that's great!

We are happy to offer a discounted adoption fee for active volunteers after 12 months of service with 4 Paws 4 Life Rescue. If you qualify, please contact your coordinator for more information.

Marketing

We are very fortunate to have volunteers help us market our dogs using social media. You can send bio information, photos, and videos directly to suzie@4p4l.org. Your foster dog will then be posted on our Facebook page and we'll update our website. We'll also post them every on Craig's List, as well as Petfinder and any other adoption networks available to us. Please make sure that this has been done within a few days of your foster dog coming into the program (or by the age of 6 weeks for puppies). The sooner we can get your foster dog posted, the sooner they have a chance of getting into a forever home. For young puppies, we want to make sure that we have done this by the time they turn 6 weeks old so we can post them as soon as they turn 7 weeks old. After your dog is 7 weeks old, please check the 4P4L website at <http://www.4p4l.org/adopt> to ensure that your foster dog is posted as an available dog.

When Can My Foster Dog Be Adopted?

At six weeks, your puppies will get their first shots and deworming, at eight weeks they will get be spayed or neutered, and then they are ready for adoption. Older dogs are vaccinated when they come into the program but their surgery and availability for adoption will depend on their medical condition. Foster dogs who are healthy and have been "fixed" can start attending our adoption events.

When the spay/neuter is finished, we generally expect foster dogs to enter our off-site adoption program. It's important to understand that pups are highly adoptable until about 10-12 weeks of age and then their average length of stay in the adoption program dramatically increases. We want to give them every opportunity to get a good home while they are most adoptable and that involves adoption sites.

We know that letting go of your foster pup can be difficult, but in most cases puppies find their forever home very quickly once they start going out to adoption sites. We understand you want to find the perfect homes for your foster dogs but by keeping them out of the adoption program while they are young, you are actually causing them to lose opportunities to find that perfect home.

What Are My Responsibilities in the Adoption Process?

Phone and E-Mail Inquiries

So now that your dog is posted and inquiries are coming in, what's next? Most of the inquiries about your foster dog will come through the 4P4L Adopt email. This team receives all adoption inquiries and routes them to the appropriate place.

We do ask that everyone respond to phone calls or e-mail inquiries about your foster dog as quickly as possible. Since you know them best, we think it's important that potential adopters hear about the dog directly from you. In most cases, the Adopt Line will forward you the e-mail as well as their response to the potential adopter. So it is very important that you monitor your e-mail frequently. *We do ask that you respond to all inquiries (phone or e-mail) within 24 hours and schedule the meet 'n' greet within 48 hours.*

The Adoption

If you are taking your dog to an adoption site every week, please understand that if the adoption is approved an adopter will be able to take your foster dog home immediately. We understand that it is difficult not knowing whether your foster dog will come home with you at the end of the day. However, we hope you can be happy knowing they found their forever home! Due to privacy concerns, we cannot give you an adopter's personal information after the fact.

We know that tears will likely flow, but we hope you also feel tremendous joy in the role that you have played in getting your foster dog to his new forever home! Thank you for helping us save another life!