

# PUPPY BITING & MOUTHING



Puppies explore their world with their nose and mouth. Some puppy biting is perfectly normal and they do outgrow this stage. To set you both up for success, here are some tips to help you and your puppy navigate the bitey period.

## Schedule Naps

Puppies need 16 to 18 hours of sleep. Schedule 2 or 3 nap times for your puppy throughout the day. Put him in his play area or crate in a quiet space where you can turn down the lights and turn on background music - classical, reggae, talk radio or just white noise. If your puppy is getting bites, ask yourself "When did he nap last?"

## Get Your Puppy A Friend

Get a huge stuffed toy for your puppy to wrestle with. Puppies do need to wrestle and bite, so give him a toy that he can safely do this with. When your puppy is in a playful mood, redirect him to wrestle and bite his stuffed toy rather than your hands

## Don't Punish Biting

Don't react to biting by punishing or yelling at your puppy. Remember, he is just a baby who is trying to navigate an unfamiliar world. Reward the behaviors that you want and ignore or manage those that you don't want.

## Practice Petting

Puppies don't come pre-loaded with an understanding of what petting is all about. They learn from their littermates that touch means "Let's play!" Practice handling your puppy and petting while she is taking treats from your hand or licking a lickimat.

## Take Play Breaks

When play goes on too long or if your puppy gets over-excited, he will begin to use his mouth more aggressively. Don't work your puppy up into a frenzy. Take frequent breaks by switching gears to a calming activity like Find It, a small scatter feed, or re-engage your puppy in a chew toy to allow him to calm down.

## Food and Chew Toys

Check to see if your puppy is hungry. Make sure your puppy has enough chew toys with different textures - especially if he is teething. Teething lasts from about 4 to 6 months of age.

## Watch Body Language

Does he really want to be held or cuddled? Does he need to go potty? Does he just want to be left alone right now? Learn your puppy's body language signals and take cues from his subtle signals so that he does not need to resort to a growl or nip.

## Plenty Of Mental Enrichment

Make sure your puppy has plenty of access to things that will exercise his mind. Training; toys and objects that he can chew, sniff and shred; novel items and textures for exploring; sniffing on walks and in the yard. Keep your puppy's age and abilities in mind and choose safe activities.

