

Dog 101

Submissive Urination

What is submissive urination and why does it occur?

An example of submissive urination is when your dog urinates when he is excited, like greeting a visitor.

This can occur for many reasons from your dog being shy, anxious or timid to just getting overly excited. Behaviorally, this condition can occur:

- Because a dog perceives that he is in the presence of an intimidating person or animal, or someone he doesn't know. To the dog, this is an unfamiliar situation.
- The dog may feel threatened by someone or something although that person has not threatened them.
- The dog may have had a history of rough treatment or being punished after the fact.
- Sometimes it could signify an underlying medical issue.

What can be done about submissive urination?

First, we recommend you visit a veterinary clinic to rule out any medical reasons for the behavior. The doctor may suggest certain medication to help with the problem. If you and your veterinarian have ruled out illness, then work on behavior skills.

- Build your dog's confidence by teaching him commands and rewarding him for obeying. For this to be successful, everyone in the household must be consistent about teaching and reinforcing the house rules.
- Build your dog's confidence by sticking to a regular schedule for feeding, exercising, and playing times. Dogs are more secure when they know what to expect.
- Choose an alternative to getting angry; do not punish or scold the dog. Consider crate training, which helps prevent many problem behaviors.
- Catch him doing the right thing and reward him with treats or attention, rather than only noticing when he is doing the wrong thing, to build his confidence.
- Approach the dog with "non-dominant" or less intimidating postures, such as getting down on his level, petting him under the chin, and approaching him from the side.
- Gradually expose him to new people and situations and try to make sure all of his new experiences are positive and happy—use tiny pieces of treats or toys to reinforce the idea that unfamiliar people and things are good.
- If the dog is urinating out of excitement, keep greetings low-key, and ignore him until he is calm.
- Consider reaching out to us to join us for [Reserved Rover](#) class where you and your dog can gain valuable skills to help encourage confidence.