

Puppy biting

All puppies have needle-sharp teeth for a reason – so they hurt when they bite you! Pups need to learn how to control their biting, through signals, not punishment.

It comes as a great surprise to many puppy owners that their little darling arrived with a full set of sharp pointed teeth that the average shark would be proud of! Worse, the puppy likes to flex them on you! This information is designed for puppies under the age of 18 weeks - which still have their puppy teeth. If you have a dog over this age that is mouthing or biting please call Alpha Pet Behaviour for advice.

Pups have sharp teeth so they can discover what is alive and what is not! This is normal and should not be treated as aggression. However, it's not acceptable for dogs to bite people - and puppies need to learn how to moderate their biting before they lose their puppy teeth at around 18 weeks' of age.

Ouch!

Your puppy needs to know that biting hurts! This means that each and every time your puppy mouths your hands or clothes, you MUST:

- **Yelp loudly or give a loud "Ouch".**
- **Immediately turn away, and ignore your pup.**
- **Ignore your pup for about 20 seconds, then resume interacting.**
- **Repeat the "Ouch!" and turn away EVERY time you feel his teeth.**

Biting will not stop immediately. Instead, it should become less and less hard over 3-4 weeks. At this point, your pup should realise that he cannot put any pressure on you at all, and then you can yelp even if he puts his mouth on you gently - finally teaching him that he cannot initiate biting.

No rough games

IMPORTANT! Do not play rough and tumble games with your puppy, or play any game where the pup grabs your clothes, skin or hair. (Dad, listen!!!) This is giving your puppy permission to bite!

Extra help

If you have kids, or a very excitable puppy that becomes more excited and snappy when you shout and turn away, you may need extra help.

- **Look at your puppy's diet. This can have a huge impact on behaviour – ask your trainer or vet.**
- Take all the fun out of the behaviour! This means no laughing, squealing or shouting.
- As soon as your dog puts his mouth on you, even in play, say "Wrong" or "Quit it" in a normal voice, then immediately put him in the kitchen or behind a door or baby gate. If your puppy gets excited by being picked up, simply say "Wrong" then get up and leave the room yourself, shutting the door behind you. Children can do this very effectively.
- This social isolation should only last about 3 minutes, then pup can rejoin the family.
- **Be consistent!** It will take lots of repetitions before your puppy understands that biting results in the loss of fun.