

LEASH BITING

The dog you are adopting is smart, playful, and high energy! During their time at the MD SPCA they passed their behavior evaluations and medical exam. They do get overexcited or frustrated at times and begin to bite the leash while on walks. Leash biting is a common behavior that can occur in a shelter environment, often when dogs have had an extended stay at a shelter without access to the regular enrichment, attention, training and exercise they would normally get in a home environment. They may seek attention by practicing these behaviors out of frustration. This dog will benefit from additional training and management in a home environment. Here are some tips for dealing with leash biting behavior:

WHY YOUR DOG CHEWS THEIR LEASH

Some dogs chew on the leash to get attention. When your dog is walking calmly on a loose leash, no one pays attention to them, but when they act out, the focus shifts directly to them. For many dogs, negative attention is better than no attention at all.

Other dogs are over-aroused, and the easiest way to release tension is to bite on the leash. In the shelter environment, dogs frequently grab and chew on the leash, often when first taken out of the kennel. The more intense the situation and the more wound up a dog is, the more likely that leash biting will occur. There are also dogs who simply prefer to carry something in their mouths. For these dogs, the leash serves as a sort of pacifier.

It's possible that your dog's leash biting behaviors will dissipate in a home environment. However, be prepared to work on her leash walking with the following tips:

- You can try simply managing the behavior by walking your dog on a harness with a back clip and clipping the leash to the back. For some dogs, it's as easy as out of sight – out of mind!
- Another simple management option can be using a chain leash. For some dogs, the feeling of metal on their teeth is unpleasant – putting a stop to the behavior.
- Take the fun out of the pull by giving your dog a drag line or a second leash to wear on walks in addition to her regular leash. When she mouths and pulls at the leash, grab the drag line/second leash and let go of the leash. If your dog pulls on the drag line/second leash, grab the original leash and let go of the drag line/second leash. Each time you let go, the game of tug is stopped.
- For particularly mouthy dogs, offer a toy to carry on walks; this is a simple solution for a dog who chews the leash primarily because she enjoys carrying something in her mouth.
- Be sure to bring treats with you on your walk and reward your dog for walking nicely throughout the walk. Any time they drop the leash or even look at the leash without going for it, wait for 2 –3 seconds and give them a really yummy little treat. Positive rewards encourage appropriate behaviors!
- A good cue to teach your leash biter is 'Drop it!' when they bite the leash. Video: [Teach Dog To Drop It](#)

As frustrating as it may be to play tug of war with your dog every time you want to go for a walk, understanding your dog's needs and encouraging positive behavior will make your walks much more enjoyable and safe.

