



## **DOGS GUARDING FOOD OR RESOURCES FROM PEOPLE**

During our everyday handling and feeding of the dogs at LHS we note if any of the dogs show any guarding behaviors. If the dogs have shown guarding, either in a previous home or at LHS, that will be disclosed to the adopter before finalizing the adoption process. Recent studies indicate that there is little reliable correlation between dogs that guard resources in a shelter environment and dogs that guard resources in a home environment.\*

If you notice signs of food guarding in your newly adopted dog; utilize the tips below to help teach him not to guard. The LHS Adoption Follow Up program is also available to help provide training assistance. Signs of food guarding might include: stiffening, gulping, growling, freezing, snapping or biting. It is advisable to separate your new dog from other animals and from children when they are eating until you are able to determine whether your new dog might have a tendency to guard food or other resources.

When your dog has something that you'd like to take away from him we recommend getting a higher value treat (piece of cheese, hot dog or other goodie), showing him the treat, then tossing it away from him. While he leaves to get your treat, you can then pick up the item that you wanted to take. Doing a "trade" in this fashion is safe, non-confrontational, does not allow him to practice any guarding behavior, and will help your dog feel more positive about the interaction and thus, less likely to guard in the future.

Another good interaction to practice is occasionally approaching your dog while he is eating, standing while dropping a couple treats (or extra dog food) into his food bowl and walking away. Doing this a couple times a week shows your dog that, although you may walk up to him while he's eating, your intention is to give him more food, not to take the food away. This will help your dog relax when you come near his food, and can even make him happy about it!

Food guarding behavior is a very natural behavior in the world of canines. It is important to respect this tendency in some dogs and follow the guidelines above. In addition, doing so will decrease the likelihood of his showing guarding tendencies in the future.

As with any behavioral concerns, please contact our Training & Behavior Department if you have any questions about your dog's behavior. Our adoption follow up and support is complimentary or low cost -- we want you and your newest family member to fully enjoy your life together.

\*<http://www.centerforshelterdogs.org/Home/ResearchandEducation/CSDResearch/ProblemBehavior.aspx>

[http://www.appliedanimalbehaviour.com/article/S0168-1591\(10\)00355-2/abstract](http://www.appliedanimalbehaviour.com/article/S0168-1591(10)00355-2/abstract)

<http://aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-adoption-programs-behavior-enrichment-research-data/food-guarding-very>

[http://aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcapro\\_food\\_guarding\\_1.pdf](http://aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcapro_food_guarding_1.pdf)