

LOST DOGS

LOST & FOUND ! - RESCUE CARE

Congratulations on finding your lost companion! ☺

Your dog deserves a big hug for being a survivor and a thorough medical exam.

1. DON'T GIVE A DOG UNLIMITED AMOUNTS OF FOOD OR WATER

It's common for people to offer large amounts of food and water to a lost or stray dog that's just been caught and looks thin or emaciated. Though the gesture is meant as an act of kindness, it could put the animal in further distress and have serious health consequences. Dogs that have been out on their own for some time are usually emotionally and physically stressed (sometimes severely) and cannot handle ANY abrupt changes.

2. IMMEDIATELY – TAKE YOUR DOG TO A VETERINARIAN or 24 HR CLINIC

Let a veterinarian evaluate the dog's condition in a professional environment.

Vital information to tell a “new” doctor that you might see in an emergency situation:

- Number of days the dog was lost.
- Dog's weight before it was lost - significant weight loss needs special attention.
- Current status of vaccinations, especially rabies.
- Pre-existing medical conditions and/or medications.
- If you gave the dog food or water, tell the doctor how much was consumed.

The dog should have a complete physical exam and be thoroughly checked for ticks, scratches, and puncture wounds. Blood, urine and stool sample tests will help detect intestinal parasites, bacterial diseases and infections. Stools should be tested a second time at a later date. Lost dogs are often dehydrated and many need an IV to replace body fluids and replenish their system. They must sometimes drink stagnant or polluted water and eat decayed food from trashcans or the remains of wild animals in order to survive. Scavenging can result in the ingestion of pieces of plastic, foil or other foreign objects. Entire body systems can be severely weakened. If a dog's health is fragile, ask if non-critical booster vaccines can be delayed and if you need to avoid flea and tick products until its system is back to normal.

3. AT HOME

Monitor your pet's health and immediately advise the vet of *any* changes. Dogs are eager to please, even when ill, but they need time to recuperate and lots of rest. Try to keep it calm and quiet, and avoid stressful situations. Be patient - just because you're ready to return to a normal routine, doesn't mean your dog is. Lost dogs have to deal with many issues, but finding enough to eat is a major problem for most. Some may become food-protective. Until you determine that this is not an issue, it's a good idea to feed the dog in a separate room or at a different time from other household pets.

4. PHONE CALLS AND “LOST” NOTICES

ASAP – Make calls to everyone on your contact list to say “Thank You!”

ASAP - Remove all fliers and signs. Some people ignore posts that look old while others *continue* to watch, worry, or look for a missing pet. Pulling down posts sends a clear message that your dog has been found and the search is over. It's also a respectful “thank you” to residents whose neighborhoods were visually impacted by your fliers and signs. The next lost dog and searcher will benefit if you maintained a good relationship with the public. Also, go on the Internet and delete any posts you made to websites for lost pets.