

# Introduction to Fostering

A Reference Guide for Foster Homes of BTRNC



**Boston Terrier Rescue of North Carolina  
A 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization**

**Revised October 2009**

# Boston Terrier Rescue of North Carolina

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## **SECTION I**

### **BTRNC MISSION STATEMENT.**

**Boston Terrier Rescue of North Carolina is dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating, and finding new adoptive homes for Boston Terriers surrendered by private owners and obtained from shelters, humane societies and animal welfare organizations.**

#### **Goals:**

- Rescue Boston Terriers from abuse/neglect situations, owner surrenders, animal shelters, humane societies and animal welfare organizations.
- Place rescued dogs in BTRNC designated foster homes or qualified foster homes of fellow rescue organizations as appropriate.
- Adopt dogs to approved permanent “forever” homes that meet the suitability/compatibility requirements set forth in the covenants of BTRNC.
- Reduce the return rate of dogs from adoptive families by ensuring that dogs are only placed in those homes that most closely align with the temperament and needs of the dog.
- Maintain a financial base from which dogs in the BTRNC program are provided rehabilitation services including behavior/temperament assessment, training, and veterinary care.
- Establish and maintain a relationship with shelters, humane societies and other rescue agencies wherein the exchange of information and communications allows for rapid identification and relocation of BTs, which will minimize the potential for any BT to be euthanized.

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## OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

(effective September 2009)

President/Board Chair	Betsy Myers - Greensboro, North Carolina <a href="mailto:betsystostons@aol.com">betsystostons@aol.com</a>
Vice-President	Currently Vacant
Secretary	Elaine Newell – Matthews, North Carolina <a href="mailto:grandmanewell@earthlink.net">grandmanewell@earthlink.net</a>
Treasurer	Kathy Quartana – Fuquay Varina, NC <a href="mailto:kquartana@yahoo.com">kquartana@yahoo.com</a>
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## Section II

### **INTRODUCTION TO FOSTERING.**

Welcome to the BTRNC Foster Program!

Fostering is a very exciting and rewarding, yet very demanding experience. Fostering can be frustrating, tiring, and sometimes even frightening. We always make a point to emphasize the positive aspects of fostering but it is helpful to know that there are going to be some difficult times ahead. BTRNC has prepared this guide for our foster families because we want you to be successful in your efforts! And if you have questions at any time, don't hesitate to ask for help.

Remember to be flexible and patient with your new fosters. They'll make mistakes and throw off the normal household routine at first. It will take them some time to learn the rules in your household and where they fit in. There will be times when they are as confused and frustrated as you are! It's ok to get frustrated but always remember the reason why we foster – to help the Boston Terriers who need us most!

### **WHAT DO I DO FIRST??**

It can be a little overwhelming when your new four-legged houseguest arrives but there are a few things we need you to do once you receive your foster.

- Gather all of your paperwork that came with your foster. This may be paperwork from the shelter the dog was pulled from, vet records that were turned over if the dog was surrendered by its owners, or you could have no paperwork at all! All medical records and microchip information needs to be sent to the Veterinary Care Coordinator (VCC) as soon as possible. All other paperwork not related to medical care should be sent to the Foster Coordinator.
- If the dog has health issues that need to be addressed, contact the VCC to determine what actions to take. All dogs in foster care should be spayed/neutered, up to date on their vaccinations, microchipped, and heartworm tested. It is the responsibility of the foster family to ensure that this is done as quickly as possible. Don't hesitate to contact the VCC or Foster Coordinator if you have questions about what actions you should take.
- Download a copy of the Foster Intake Questionnaire form from the BTRNC website (listed on the Volunteer page under the Current Members section). Fill out this form to the best of your knowledge, describing your foster dog as accurately as possible, and then email a copy of it to the Foster Coordinator. We will also need clear photos of the dog to post on the website – these can also be sent to the Foster Coordinator.

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## Section III

### **FOSTERING THE RESCUED BOSTON TERRIER.**

#### **a. Picking up your new foster.**

Whether a BTRNC representative is delivering your foster dog to your home or you are traveling to pick up your foster dog, you should have the following items on hand and ready to utilize:

- ✓ Fresh water and bowl.
- ✓ Harness and leash.
- ✓ Medium-sized wire crate w/ liner-Midwest Puppy Crate #17 is an ideal size.
- ✓ Kibble and/or dry dog treats.

#### **b. The first meeting and the ride home.**

- DON'T take your own dogs with you to pick up the foster dog – this will just add stress and distract you from learning any important information about your foster. You may also expose your dog to disease if the foster has an unknown medical history, or the dogs may not initially get along with each other.
- DON'T take young children with you to pick up your foster dog for the same reasons mentioned above. However, a reliable, mature older child, or a friend or spouse, can be a great source of support. And, it's fun to share this new experience with someone you love!
- DON'T make a big fuss; Relax and speak in a calm manner. Your foster dog is probably anxious and confused and you want to reassure him.
- If you are receiving the dog from an owner or a long-term caretaker, there will be the added emotional stress of the parting. Long, tearful good-byes only increase this stress, so try to make the departure somewhat brief.
- ALWAYS transport your foster dog in a carrier or enlist the help of a friend or family member when travelling. If you do not have one, ask to borrow one from the foster coordinator. Never transport an unfamiliar dog alone – you don't know how they'll behave and it isn't safe for either of you.
- Go straight home after picking up your foster. Don't run errands with the foster in the car. This can cause carsickness and increase stress. If you must stop to allow for a potty break, pull well off the road - preferably into a parking lot or

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onto a side street. If the dog is nervous or fearful enough to show signs of biting, wait until you get home for a bathroom break.

- NEVER LET THE DOG OFF LEASH. Some Boston's won't know what a leash is and won't know how to react to it, so keep the collar tight and use a harness if possible.
- Don't feed the dog while in the car. The stress of traveling may upset their stomachs and adding food (especially "people" food) to the mix will probably make things worse.

### c. Taking care of the necessities.

Your new foster dog may be coming from a shelter, another home, or straight off the streets. He'll probably arrive to your house anxious and nervous. He may also be sick or weakened by disease or poor nutrition. Give him time to rest, even if he seems energetic.

Dogs are very oriented to their surroundings so sudden changes in their living situations can be very upsetting. Give them time to adjust before introducing other pets or family members. For some dogs this could be a matter of hours, but other dogs may require several days. Consider also whether the dog should be quarantined from other pets at first to prevent the spread of disease or infection. Some dogs may need a full 10-day quarantine, while others with known medical histories may not - if you have any questions, contact the BTRNC Foster Coordinator.

**If you have any questions or concerns about your foster dog or the actions you are taking as a foster family, please contact:**

Roberta Henry      (252) 633-0987      [rhenry@fastmail.fm](mailto:rhenry@fastmail.fm)

OR

Laura Bader      (910) 938-2707      [lbader.edit@earthlink.net](mailto:lbader.edit@earthlink.net)

### **Emergency contact for a lost dog:**

Laura Bader      (910) 938-2707      [lbader.edit@earthlink.net](mailto:lbader.edit@earthlink.net)

### **(1) CHOW TIME.**

- Feed your foster dog small portions of the appropriate food and any medications given to you by the foster coordinator unless medical condition dictates otherwise.
- Give small amounts of water at first, until he is no longer thirsty, then allow him all the fresh water he desires.

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- Boston Terriers have been known to be "gassy." Feeding table foods can lead to gastrointestinal problems which can create excessive gas. This problem can usually be controlled through diet. Avoiding table foods and feeding higher quality dog foods free of by-products, corn, and fillers can often improve this problem.

(2) RAWHIDE. Rawhide is literally the outside of a cow; the skin. It provides dogs with a satisfying chewing experience and it's cheap and easy to find. So how can it be dangerous?

- There have been reports of arsenic contamination (arsenic can be used in rawhide as a preservative). There are also incidents of salmonella in rawhide. Most of these hides came from foreign countries. They may also contain other detrimental things such as antibiotics, lead or insecticides that could adversely affect the health of your dog.
- Dogs can easily choke on it when the original rawhide object is chewed down to a smaller piece.
- Frequent chewing on rawhide can cause gastric irritation that can result in vomiting and extreme discomfort.

There are other alternatives to give your dog a satisfying chewing experience such as nylabones, cornstarch bones, or heavy, well-made rope bones. As with any chewing device, your dog should be supervised to make sure he is safe while he's having fun.

(3) HOUSE TRAINING. Treat your new foster as if he is not housetrained. Take him out first thing in the morning, after each meal, and every 2-3 hours in between. Try to watch for signs that he may need to go out and help him learn a word (such as "Outside?" or "Potty?") to help him tell you when he needs to go. **DO NOT PUNISH ACCIDENTS!** Be observant- many dogs are coprophagic (eat their own poop and the poop of other animals), so watch him. If he stops eating, call the foster coordinator immediately. Visually check stool for consistency, blood, and tapeworms. Bloody, wormy, or runny stool is can be serious and needs to be addressed.

- If you see him 'in the act', try to distract him and get him outside.
- If you miss an accident, simply clean it up using a product such as Nature's Miracle or Petzyme. White vinegar can also be useful on urine stains.
- Keeping a log of feeding/playtime/potting helps you get his schedule straight.

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- When out for a 'potty break', minimize playtime until after he does his business - then play with him. If he is not pooping, a brisk trot/jog followed by a nice sniff seems to do the trick.
- Dogs new to the leash may feel nervous about going to the bathroom on the leash. Just be patient.
- If he fails to 'produce' when you think he must need to, return him to his crate for 15 minutes, then straight outside for another try. Repeat as needed.

(4) CRATE TRAINING. The crate is your most important tool. It provides a safe haven for the dog and a well-deserved break for you. The crate should not be used for punishment.

If your foster dog is not crate-trained, get ready for what could be a tough few nights! Imagine sleeping in a comfortable bed with your human one night and being relegated to a box the next. No wonder your foster isn't a happy camper. This training takes time and tests your patience, but believe me, it is for the best- family and animal.

- Crate him in a medium-sized wire crate; Midwest Puppy Crate #17 is an ideal size, when you are not directly supervising him.
- Use newspaper in his crate until you know he is reliably crate trained, and then use a soft blanket or towel. Make certain that he is OK in the crate before leaving him for any length of time.
- Place the crate in a part of the house that is quiet and infrequently visited by family members and household pets, **but** do not entirely segregate the dog from the family. You don't want the dog to feel alone or abandoned.
- If your foster dog's behaviors' are known, place a toy in the crate. If your foster dog's behaviors are unknown, don't include a toy at this time. Exception: KONG- it is indestructible.
- If the dog is not content in his crate, try covering the crate with a light sheet to reduce the outside stimulation and make him feel more secure. Play the TV or radio low on soothing channel- 70s music works great! Or use a nightlight so the dog isn't in scary pitch-black surroundings.

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### **d. Introducing the new foster to your family.**

#### (1) Pets.

When introducing your foster dog to your pets, do so on neutral territory. Take your dogs, 1 at a time, out to meet the foster. Use the front yard, as it is usually the most neutral area of your homestead. Have the dogs on their leashes and let them begin the smell fest! Provide positive control of the situation so that leashes and personalities do not get tangled. But remember, these dogs have to get acquainted so let them sniff and posture a bit. Your pets may not be thrilled to have a foster buddy, so take care when introducing them. Be especially careful when introducing cats, birds, rodents and other non-dog pets.

Dogs of the same sex are more likely than opposite-sex pairs to experience aggression, but it can happen between any two dogs. Two dogs might get along fine but be disrupted by the presence of a third dog. You have heard the saying, "2 is company and 3 is a crowd". This is often true in the dog world, as well.

Be aware that when dogs are introduced to one another is not unlike people meeting for the first time. This is relationship building and it doesn't happen in moments. Forming bonds takes time whether it is between dogs, humans or dogs and humans. It takes patience and vigilance. Sometimes there can be a sudden eruption of tension you didn't even recognize was there. Sound familiar? If there are aggression issues, separate the dogs, kennel the foster, and spend time with your own.

Be observant without being overly fussy or disruptive to the normal social functioning. Group dynamics can change quickly once the authority figure (you) leaves the room!  
**KEEP CHILDREN AWAY WHEN INTRODUCING DOGS TO OTHER PETS.**

#### (2) Human Family Members.

If your foster is being quarantined from other pets due to health concerns, it is likely safe to use this period to introduce the new dog to your family members. Let the dog approach the human rather than the other way around. Let him meet the adults first, and then the other family members. Children and adults that are uncomfortable with dogs might want to wait to meet the dog until they are both a bit more 'settled'.

- Avoid roughhousing-type games, especially with children. Do not allow games that involve hand biting, chasing and chewing on objects other than designated dog toys. A dog will not know the difference between a junk shoe and new shoe.
- In the case of very timid, scared dogs- use treats as an offering of friendship and trust building.

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- Never reach over a dog's head to pet him and do not approach from the rear.
- Use the SLOW and LOW approach where the human approaches in a stooped position with arm out and hand extended, palm up.
- Never leave children with a foster dog unsupervised. Do not let the children walk the foster unless they are mature and supervised. Do not let children feed the dog or interfere with the foster's feeding.

IF YOU, ANOTHER PERSON OR ANIMAL IS BITTEN BY A FOSTER DOG, YOU MUST CONTACT THE FOSTER COORDINATOR IMMEDIATELY.

### (3) Introductory period.

Don't fuss over the new dog. These first few days, he'll need plenty of 'down time' to process all the changes in his life. Spend some quiet time with him, talking and petting, but also let him have a lot of private time. Over stimulation will confuse and frustrate him. Like children, Boston Terriers will generally want as much attention as they can get, but he needs to understand that he is not the center of the household. Part of 'fitting in' to a household is recognizing that sometimes you'll be there and sometimes you won't, and being with him exclusively these first few days can make this a painful lesson when you go back to your normal routine.

During this introductory period, it is important to not give your foster dog too much physical or mental freedom. He needs to feel that his new home has a definite structure and routine. This is particularly important if he has come from a shelter or outside pen. Do not grant the foster dog the full household privileges, such as couches, bed, etc. Those things should come with time.  
Too much freedom = stress and confusion

### (4) Settling in.

After the introductory or quarantine period, you'll want to begin full integration of the foster dog into your home life. By this time, the dog should feel fairly comfortable with your daily schedule and the parts of the house to which he has had access. You will also be more familiar with him and how he reacts to certain situations.

So, now you are on your own. Well, not really. Although we couldn't possibly address every situation or contingency in this portfolio, we are here 24/7 to provide assistance. If your foster dog requires additional obedience training or has behavioral issues that you are unable to control, please contact and work closely with the foster coordinator. Most importantly,

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- ✓ HAVE FUN! Enjoy yourself and make fostering a positive part of your rescue experience.
- ✓ Include your family.
- ✓ Bask in the glow of knowing that because of you and your family, this delightful, animated and endearing Boston Terrier has the chance at a new life; the chance to live a long and happy life being part of a wonderful new forever family.

### **Section IV**

#### **HEALTH ISSUES.**

##### **a. Initial Assessment.**

After interacting with your new foster dog, ensure that you wash your hands when returning to your own dogs. If your foster is sneezing, coughing, or otherwise appears ill, contact your foster coordinator immediately.

- If the foster appears to be infested with fleas and/or ticks, give him a veterinary approved preventive such as frontline or revolution that will kill any fleas within 30 minutes. Remember that bathing the dog 24 hours before or after administering a flea/tick preventive will likely render it ineffective.
- Avoid bathing the foster, but if he is filthy and has a bad odor or is itching, bathe him in warm water and mild dog shampoo quietly and with as little fuss as possible. Avoid getting water in his ears – it can lead to ear infections. If he has had surgery (neuter or other) he cannot be bathed for 10 days. You might try a dry shampoo.
- If your foster is being quarantined, walk him on a harness outside the area that your dogs frequent. Pick up any feces immediately unless the rescue has had a negative fecal result.

If your foster is not quarantined and you have no reason to suspect that the foster has any condition that could be transmitted to your other dogs, you may let the foster go into the yard for a few minutes under supervision. Keep the foster under close supervision, don't assume that because your fence holds your dogs, it will hold this one!

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### **b. Grooming.**

Grooming your Boston Terrier is an easy task.

(1) Nails. Nails should be kept trim and not so long as to catch your eye when you look at the feet. Long nails can be sharp and scratch someone unintentionally. Before you start cutting, make sure you can identify the "quick" in each nail. This is a blood vessel that runs through the center of each nail and grows rather close to the end. It will bleed if accidentally cut. It may be helpful to keep a clotting agent such as styptic pencil on hand.

(2) Ears. The ears should be kept clean with a cotton ball and special ear cleaner or powder made for dogs. To clean the ears squeeze a small amount of cleaning solution either directly into the ear or onto a cotton ball, depending on the product's directions. If directly into the ear, gently massage the ear to work the solution around before allowing your dog to shake his head. This shaking should eject all of the solution plus any dirt or debris from the ear canal. Gently wipe around the inside of the ear with a cotton ball. Use a clean cotton ball for each ear. Avoid going very deeply into the ear canal.

Look for any signs of infection or ear-mite infestation. If your dog shakes his head or scratches at his ears frequently, this can indicate a problem and should be checked by your vet.

### **c. Brachycephalic.**

This term refers to dogs with short muzzles such as Boston terriers and Pugs. A short muzzle can cause snoring and snorting and may result in the dog panting more than normal when exercising. Boston Terriers can overheat very quickly because of their short muzzle.

Occasionally, your Boston Terrier might go into a "snorting fit". Where it looks as though they are having extremely hard time breathing. They will stiffen up, breathe hard, snort and sometimes expel snot or anything else that was in their throat. These periods usually last for several minutes and are normal. During this time, just talk calmly to your Boston and slowly pet them in reassurance. If your dog experiences snorting fits frequently and/or they last for a longer than mentioned periods, you should consult your veterinarian.

### **d. Weight Gain.**

Many Boston Terriers are short and stout and are therefore prone to weight gain. As with humans, the best way to minimize unhealthy weight gain is to control your dog's caloric intake and make sure he gets the right amount of exercise. Controlling calories can be done in several ways. Giving less food is always effective. Feeding dry, rather than canned food, can also help, because dry food usually has fewer calories. The ideal

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diet for all dogs is a low-fat, high fiber one. Most pets get the right amount of fat, protein and nutrients from their regular food; therefore, treats should be just that--treats! Only occasionally should you vary from your pet's regular diet. And don't forget that exercise is an important component of healthy living. Daily walks, fetch play in the backyard, and other types of exercise are important to stay healthy and keep weight down.

### **Section V**

#### **BTRNC VETERINARY EXPENSE/SUPPLY PROTOCOL.**

BTRNC has 3 tiers of veterinary of services and supplies:

- a. Foster home pays.
- b. BTRNC direct pays.
- c. Prior approval must be obtained from BTRNC before services/supplies obtained.

Exception: Prior authorization must be obtained from BTRNC in all cases where general anesthesia is to be used.

#### **a. Foster home shall provide/pay costs for:**

- Veterinary approved heartworm preventive.
- Veterinary approved/issued flea and tick prevention.
- Over the counter dog shampoo.
- Boarding or kenneling of dog at vet office/kennel for reasons other than associated with an approved surgery/procedure. Example: boarding dog during family vacation.
- Bordetella vaccine when used in association with routine boarding/kenneling.

#### **b. BTRNC shall direct pay cost of:**

- Routine examination, if needed, upon placement of dog in foster home.
- Spay/Neuter
- Vaccinations required by law and those routinely administered for the general health and wellbeing of the dog such as parvo, distemper and rabies.
- ELISA Heartworm test.
- Heartworm treatment for hw+ dogs.
- Nemex (or equivalent)
- Droncit (only if observed tape worms)

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- Eye ointments or drops for eye infections/conditions.
- Ear ointment or drops for ear infections/conditions.
- Medication deemed necessary by veterinarian as a result of diagnostic tests that come back positive.
- Fecal test and treatment when symptoms imply parasitic activity.
- Bordetella vaccine when required by veterinarian for extended post procedure boarding.

c. FOSTER SHALL REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FROM BTRNC PRIOR TO SERVICES BEING OBTAINED if reimbursement is sought from BTRNC:

- Pre-operative blood-work. (Most commonly associated with senior dogs)
- Specially formulated shampoos required for the treatment of skin disorders.
- Nail trimming.
- Non-surgical procedures including teeth cleaning.
- X-rays.
- Any surgery other than altering.
- Pain medications to be used following surgery/procedures.