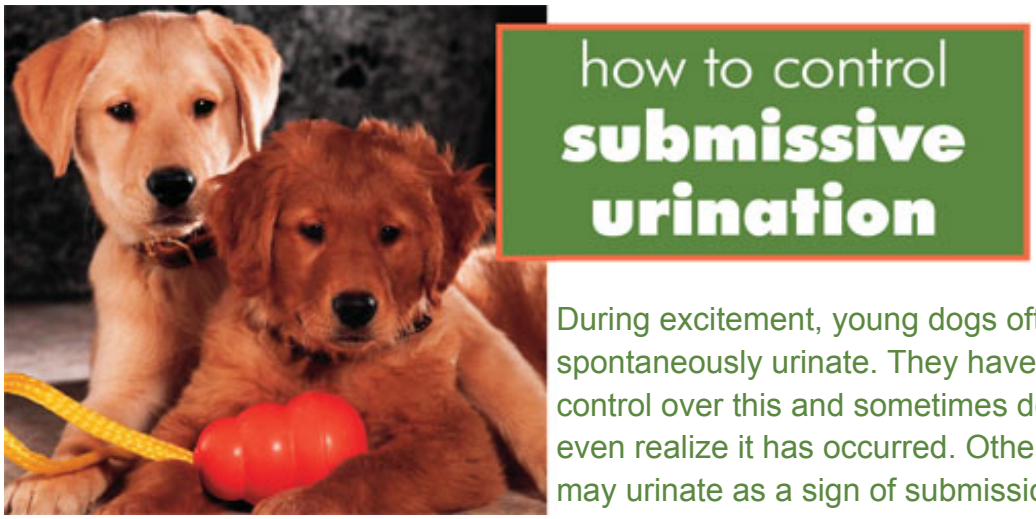
Submissive Urination: How to control it

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



During excitement, young dogs often spontaneously urinate. They have no control over this and sometimes do not even realize it has occurred. Other dogs may urinate as a sign of submission in the presence of another animal (or person) that they consider dominant.

Submissive urination is sometimes seen in puppies or young dogs that have been abused. However, many puppies that have submissive urination are perfectly normal and from good backgrounds. These types of urination problems seem to be caused by either a lack of neuromuscular control over the bladder or by previous treatment that frightened or intimidated the puppy.

Owners should try to determine what actions or events cause the involuntary urination to occur. For some, this will be easy. Excitement or sudden movement toward the puppy may cause her to urinate. For others, it might be something as simple as direct eye contact. Many puppies urinate when you bend over them, so instead, kneel down to their level. Whatever the cause, do your best to eliminate these situations or actions. Most puppies will outgrow this behavior by six months to a year of age, especially if we let them mature through this stage of their life in a gentle and calm environment. Be patient. When an accident occurs, do not make a fuss. Clean it up and forget it.

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*