

Urination during Stress, Greetings or Excitement

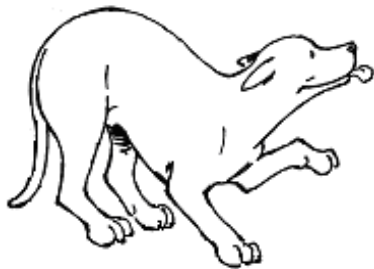


Does your dog “spring a leak” while greeting you?

First check with your veterinarian to make sure there is not a physical reason for this behaviour, such as an infection.

Urination During Greetings

Sometimes a physically healthy dog will urinate as a way to say hello. It seems to be more prevalent upon greeting after you have been away from the dog for a while. The urination behavior may indicate a dog that is a bit insecure, and it is often seen in puppies. The family comes home, their dog wiggles and worms around them. Often the dog’s body is somewhat lowered, dribbling urine as she continues this greeting behavior. She seems unaware of her leaks! Perhaps she will roll over onto her side or back. Unfortunately, when this happens the urine gets all over her as well as the floor, and perhaps you, too! She might avoid eye contact with her humans and might do some licking and groveling. Her lips might be drawn back. Her tail could be wagging low or tightly clamped. This type of urination does not occur only with family members. She might do this while greeting another dog. She might urinate when any human approaches her.



This type of urination is not necessarily associated with fear or abuse. The behavior may be outgrown as the dog matures & gains more self-assurance. It is not a lack of houstraining. It is not a physical problem. If you punish her, it will only make matters worse. She might be even more motivated to appease you – the very reason for the urinating behavior in the first place. Take a look into the past. Is she distrustful of people because of gruff voices or mannerisms? Have you been using compulsive training techniques? If so, consider using motivational methods.

Excitement Urination

Young, high-energy dogs may also dribble while engaged in an exciting activity such as greeting people. Usually, the dog seems not to notice, she continues with her greeting as if nothing is happening. Sometimes dogs like this will pause briefly to urinate. She might also simply lack control due to immature sphincter muscles.

What To Do

Whether caused by insecurity or excitement, until she improves, people should not move quickly around her. Ignore her during your first few minutes when you get home. Avoid towering over her, standing in front of her, staring at her or reaching over her head or shoulders. When you begin to greet her, do so little by little. First a glance, then avoid eye contact and simply speak to her. When you graduate to patting her, kneel beside her while avoiding eye contact, instead of towering over her. Pat her under her chin or on her chest. Take your time about moving on to bolder gestures. Another approach is to ask her to sit during low-key greetings. It is difficult to grovel and sit at the same time. Try to show her how relaxed you are, so that she can also relax. Breathe deeply, yawn, lower your eyes. In general, look bored! Take your dog to her toilet area before guests are due to arrive. If her bladder is empty, there is less chance of dribbling. Let her greet people outdoors rather than in the house. Does she like to retrieve? Carry a ball in your pocket, throw it as soon as you walk in the door, thus taking the edge off the greeting. Better yet, keep a container of balls by the door. Meanwhile, teaching her some tricks using reward-based methods will build her self-confidence and her confidence in you. And, remember: No Corrections!

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