



Tortellini 343977: What to Expect

Tortellini is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Tortellini is a super sweet, albeit nervous, little girl. She adores going for leisurely walks and hanging out with her trusted human friends. Tortellini came to Oregon Humane through our Humane Law Enforcement when their owner became overwhelmed with the large number of dogs in their care. When Tortellini first arrived at the shelter, she was very fearful and afraid of people, only coming out of her shell for snacks or when other social dogs were around. We were able to move her into a quieter space with dedicated staff and consistent hands on training. After some time she was finally comfortable enough to come out of her shell and show us her true personality. Due to her shy nature, Tortellini will do best in a low traffic home, away from busy streets and neighborhoods. We expect that Tortellini will be overwhelmed by everything they encounter at first. During the critical first months in a new home, their safety will depend on your good judgment and forethought. **A frightened dog will look for any occasion to bolt when startled: out of vehicles, out the front door, or slipping out of the leash. Keep a very tight grip of that leash!**

Tortellini has made big strides during her time at Oregon Humane, learning to walk on leash, take treats from people's hands, and explore new places. While Tortellini does enjoy spending time with her human friends, she hasn't quite learned that human affection is enjoyable and as such does not seek out physical touch. She much prefers to follow her people like a little duckling or hang out nearby. She absolutely loves food and will take it from your hands but does not want to be pet or picked up. If handler's push handling on Tortellini, such as petting before she's comfortable or trying to pick her up, she may try to move away, or growl & snap to communicate her discomfort. She will need patient owners who understand that she may never come around to being a physically affectionate dog. Because of this, she will do best in a home without children. Instead, we believe she will do best in an adult-only home. During a brief time in an adopted home, Tortellini also showed distressed behaviors when left alone in this new space, such as pacing, looking for an exit, and chewing on crate bars. A home with a schedule that allows for flexibility and the ability to stay home with her while she settles into her new routine could be helpful as she works through her anxiety.

During Tortellini's time at Oregon Humane, we've introduced her to a variety of dogs and observed that she much prefers coexisting with other social and gentle dogs. When dogs are rowdy or have a rough & tumble play style, Tortellini can easily get overwhelmed. But when the other dogs are of similar size and prefer hanging out over playing, she's happy to coexist. We believe Tortellini could enjoy living with another small social dog. In fact, having a confident doggie sibling to help boost her confidence and show her what it means to be a pet dog, could be beneficial. While a resident dog is not required for Tortellini, she will need to meet any resident dogs before adoption to ensure the dogs are compatible.

Here's how to help Tortellini settle in during your first months together:

Designate a "safe spot" in your home. You can use a crate or taller baby gates to confine them to a smaller area where they have access to water, bed, and toys. When you are unable to supervise the dog, leave them in their safe spot. Slowly work toward leaving them alone, unsecured, once they've had the chance to settle into your home and you know with certainty, they will be comfortable.

Be your dog's advocate. It's okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from letting their dog come up to say hi to your dog. Watch their body language and help your dog out of situations if they appear stressed. Explain that Tortellini is not comfortable with people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Tossing a treat on the ground is more effective for your dog to make positive associations with new people. Distance is calming.

Let them drag a leash attached to their collar for the first few weeks inside and outside the home. Fast movements are startling, and it will take time for them to be okay with you approaching and removing the leash. If you go slow at the beginning, you'll build a trusting relationship. Treats always help!

Allow for time to build trust. Always let Tortellini decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Tortellini decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and/or following your resident dog around.

Supervise your dog outside. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Tortellini out alone. They are small and could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! They do like to go for short walks and go outside to potty but need some time to build confidence to go on longer excursions in even the quietest of neighborhoods.

Limit introductions to new people. Take your time to get to know Tortellini before introducing them to someone new. They may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Treats and allowing Tortellini to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Tortellini at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

Use routine to get Tortellini comfortable in their new home. It will take a couple weeks for Tortellini to feel comfortable in their new home and with you. Having a predictable schedule will help them adjust to their new home.

Take Tortellini outside on leash. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Tortellini out alone. They are so small that they could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! Tortellini does like to go for walks and go outside to potty but needs some time to figure out the routine before being trusted off leash.

When you have people over, **it's okay to put Tortellini in another room.** If you'd like Tortellini to meet a guest, put them on a leash and give them time to adjust before allowing your guest to pet. Let it be Tortellini's choice to go to them for pets or hang back and watch. Crowding Tortellini or forcing them to interact can make fearful behavior worse.

Use treats and toys to build trust. Maintaining and continuing Tortellini's training will create a bond and a form of communication between two species who don't understand each other. The more positive experiences Tortellini has with his owners, the more valuable you will become in high distracting situations

Use an exercise pen to confine Tortellini to a small area when you are not home or able to supervise them (see picture). Give them a bed, water, favorite toy, and a potty pad. This "safe spot" will also be a great place to put them when you have visitors to your home, so they don't have to worry about interacting with everyone if they're not comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Tortellini responds best to positive reinforcement and reward-based training. They will need an understanding, calm owner who has the time and desire to work on helping them learn to live in a home. Tortellini will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

Visiting the Vet: Unless it's an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Start with positive visits just for treats. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if your dog already trusts you, your presence may help them feel more comfortable.

Behavioral Medication for your new dog

This dog has been prescribed one or more medications to help reduce anxiety and impulsivity during their time in the shelter. You may be provided with a supply of this dog's medication(s) along with specific dosing instructions at the time of adoption. We would recommend that you continue giving this medication for at least the first 6 months after adoption to help reduce stress that may be associated with this dog making a smooth transition into your home. In order to avoid any adverse side effects (including behavioral and systemic) please do not abruptly stop administering these medications or discontinue use without consulting your veterinarian. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate protocol to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a gradual weaning off process. Please do not substitute other supplements or medications (including your own prescriptions) without consulting a veterinary professional.

During this process, please watch for any signs of worsening fear or anxiety. If the dog appears to be getting worse during the weaning off process, contact your veterinarian as longer treatment or a different combination of medications may be needed. Remember that successful behavioral rehabilitation often relies on a combination of pharmaceutical therapy as well as various training modalities.

We're here to help!

We want Tortellini to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Tortellini, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-1145** or BMODTrainers@oregonhumane.org.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Reach out if you have questions or concerns, or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing! Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new dog!