



Mavis 355937: What to Expect

Mavis is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Mavis is a squiggly little squish of a pup with a serious appreciation for the finer things in life: laps, naps, cozy couches, and being adored. She came to Oregon Humane's Salem Campus through our Second Chance Program, but all the hustle and bustle of shelter life was a bit too much for this sweet girl. When overwhelmed, Mavis will try to avoid whatever is making her uncomfortable by backing away, attempting to flee, or freezing. We brought Mavis to our Portland Campus to join the Behavior Modification Program, where she could take a breather, settle in, and brush up on some important pet life skills. She's been learning how to walk on a leash and discovering that people are pretty fantastic; they give excellent pets, produce delicious treats, and make wonderfully snuggly cuddle companions. While Mavis is still timid when it comes to the big outside world, she has made fantastic progress and is learning to approach new experiences with curiosity. She'll thrive in a quiet, low-traffic home with patient and understanding adopters who are committed to continuing the positive-reinforcement-based training methods that have worked so well for her here at Oregon Humane.

During her time with us, Mavis has met several dogs in the shelter. She can become easily overwhelmed by overly rambunctious dogs and appears most comfortable around calmer dogs with appropriate social skills. Once she's settled in and feeling at ease, she loves to play chase and tag! 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 Mavis, she will need to meet any resident dogs before adoption to ensure the dogs are compatible.

We expect Mavis may feel overwhelmed by all the new sights, sounds, people, and experiences she encounters when she first comes home. 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!** Mavis is still figuring out how the world works, but she's making progress one step at a time. And once she's comfortable, this little squish will melt right into your lap.

Here's how to help Mavis 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 towards 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 Mavis 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 week or two 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 Mavis decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Mavis decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and following your resident dog around.

Supervise your dog outside. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Mavis 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.

Wait to take walks. Mavis will need time to bond with you before you start taking them for walks. Give them a couple of weeks to get to know you and their new home, then practice walking around your yard before trying a walk around the block. Mavis will do best walking alongside a confident canine companion. They're already doing a great job of checking in with their human at the other end of the leash – continue encouraging this behavior to help strengthen the bond by offering treats.

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

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

We expect that Mavis 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!**

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Mavis does very well at the vet, with patience they handle meeting new people well. The vet can still be a scary place. Bringing tasty treats like cheese and/or hot dogs can help make the experience more pleasant. Try using **Adaptil (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** or **Rescue Remedy by Bach Flower Essences**. These products may help dogs settle in new environments by easing the stress associated with change.

We're here to help!

We want Mavis to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Mavis, 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!