



Sugar 357468: What to Expect

Sugar is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Sugar is as sweet as her name and would love to be your next cuddle companion. Sugar's history is a mystery to us, but during her time in the shelter, she found the environment overwhelming and terrifying. When uncomfortable Sugar is avoidant of people and handling, resistant to walking on leash, and if pressed further to interact will snap and attempt to bite to create safety with space. Sugar was moved into our Behavior Modification Program where the calm environment and consistent faces everyday could help her decompress and trust her daily caretakers. Once comfortable, Sugar is very affectionate and will jump right into your lap for pets and affection. She enjoys going on walks, but can be nervous about hands reaching for her to put on a leash.

Future adopters will need to be mindful of Sugar's handling sensitivities when it comes to grooming and veterinary care. It will be important to talk with your veterinary provider on how best to handle giving vaccines and exams as Sugar can find them invasive from strangers. A groomer with experience working with & handling sensitive dogs or taking on her grooming needs at home will help keep Sugar feeling calm and safe. It will be important for her future family to advocate for her space while on walks or when company is over, so Sugar doesn't feel overwhelmed or uncomfortable. Allowing Sugar to approach as she feels comfortable and telling your guests to play hard to get by ignoring Sugar until she solicits interaction, will allow her choice and control over the environment boosting her confidence.

Here's how to help Sugar 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 Sugar 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.

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

Patience will come in handy for you. Sugar 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. Sugar will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

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 Sugar decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Sugar 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 Sugar 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 Sugar before introducing them to someone new. They may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Treats and allowing Sugar to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Sugar at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

Don't take Sugar to busy places where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., Home Depot, etc.).

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.

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