



Taco Bella 357410: What to Expect

Taco Bella is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Taco Bella is a sweet Great Dane mix who wants nothing more than to be showered in love and affection. It's true what they say, every Dane thinks they're a lap dog and Taco Bella is no different. The shelter environment started as overwhelming, but moving into the Behavior Modification program has given Taco Bella a soft, quiet, and calm place to wait for her forever home. All she wants is to be with her people following them around, putting her paws up for big gentle hugs, and climbing into your lap for snuggles. She would thrive in a calm, quiet, and low traffic home where her family can continue using the same positive reinforcement based training methods we've been successful using here at Oregon Humane. She would do well in a calm neighborhood away from the hustle and bustle of a busy downtown neighborhood.

We've had the opportunity to introduce Taco Bella to multiple different dogs during her time with us and she's shown us she is a very timid dog who is not comfortable with rough and rowdy dogs or those who rush up to her. She will cower to the ground, attempt to flee, and/or hide behind her owners. When around other confident social respectful dogs, she gains some confidence and will follow them around to sniff, but is still too nervous to engage in play, preferring to get attention from her human friends. Due to this we feel she is not a candidate for the uncontrolled environments of dogs parks or doggie daycare, but would do well with known confident and social dogs in familiar spaces like a securely fenced backyard or SniffSpot. Due to her fear and discomfort with dogs, she would do well in the home as the only dog or one with a gentle confident role model she can learn from. A pet meets is required before adoption to ensure personality compatibility.

Here's how to help Taco Bella 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 Taco Bella is not comfortable with strange people or dogs and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Distance is calming.

Use routine to get Taco Bella comfortable in their new home. It will take a couple weeks for Taco Bella 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. Taco Bella 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. Taco Bella will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

Let them drag a leash attached to their collar 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 Taco Bella decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Taco Bella 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 Taco Bella out alone. They do like to go for calm walks and go outside to potty but need some time to build confidence to go on longer excursions.

If you're having people over, put Taco Bella on leash so they learn to not dart out the front door or jump all over people. Once everyone is sitting down and calm you can drop the leash and allow your dog to decide if they want to go say hi to your guests, ensure your guests ask Taco Bella to sit before being pet so they're rewarded for keeping 4 feet on the floor.

"Puppy proof" your home and practice tether training to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Taco Bella on leash, attached to you or tethered to a large piece of furniture as you go about your daily routine. This will help with potty training, bonding, and creating boundaries within the home. Let Taco Bella drag the leash around the house or yard from time to time to simulate "freedom", but do not let them off leash until they can 100% be trusted not to get into things they shouldn't. This could take up to a few weeks. Crate them when you cannot watch them. This will ensure their puppy curiosity doesn't get them into any trouble. You will have long lasting success if you follow this method.

Skip the dog park. Don't take Taco Bella to busy places where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people or other dogs (such as Saturday Market, dog parks, coffee shops, etc.). Taco Bella has shown us they don't have an interest in being around other dogs/people. Taking leashed hikes to the river, playing in the backyard, or to places not frequented by many other dogs will allow for exercise, but keep Taco Bella calm and engaged with you.

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