



Precious: What to Expect

Precious is a sweet girl that needs a special home. For Precious, **it's all about going slow and building confidence**. She bonds closely with her person, but she worries about new unpredictable movements and situations. She needs to find a home with a patient, calm person who understands and can live with her sensitive nature. Precious needs a quiet, low-traffic home with a fully fenced yard. She would not like a busy apartment, a home with lots of hustle and bustle, or one with children. Everyone in the home must meet with Precious prior to adoption. Precious may like to go home with another small dog for her to play with. A pet meet is required prior to adoption. No cats, please, as they overwhelm Precious.

Precious is overwhelmed with fast movements and over handling. You'll need to build a solid, trusting relationship with her first. Using treats and play time will help. Once she warms up, you'll see her playful and silly side. If pushed, she will become anxious and start spinning and attempt to bite at her hind end. Her foster parent and the OHS behavior team has been working with Precious during her time in foster to help curb the behavior and reduce the frequency of its occurrence. It will be important to give Precious space when she becomes stressed and not put her in situations where the behavior could possibly escalate. During the critical first months, her safety will depend on your good judgement and forethought.

Precious has been in our foster program for several months. During her time in foster, her foster parents created a routine for Precious to help her settle and get familiar in her new surroundings. Precious becomes easily overstimulated and overwhelmed. When this occurs, she often spins and turns and bites at her hind end. Her foster parent has been working to redirect Precious' attention from doing the behavior using treats, toys, and play. She is currently on a medication for anti-anxiety, to help curb the behavior. Fast movements, noises, and unpredictability can all be triggers for the spinning and biting behaviors.

She originally came to OHS as a puppy and was adopted and then returned several years later. Precious was barking at a visitor coming to the house and when the owner went to clip the leash to Precious, she turned and had bitten her owner, resulting in broken skin and blood drawn. She does prefer men. Precious does alert bark when delivery people and outside visitors come to the door.

Steps to help Precious settle during you first months together:

Give her space when she becomes stressed or anxious. Precious has been known to get overwhelmed when she is stressed and anxious and will then start to spin and attempt to bite at her hind end. While the frequency of the behavior may be reduced over time if caught beforehand and is redirected with play or treats, it is important to give Precious space and move away from her quickly and do not attempt to pick her up. Give her a way out to her safe space.

Designate a “safe spot” in your home. You can use an exercise pen to confine Precious to a small area where she has access to water, bed and toys (see picture, pg. 2). If you're unable to supervise her, she should be confined to the x-pen area. Precious has been crated previously however displayed the spinning behavior whenever someone was near her crate so it was removed and replaced with blankets and bedding.

If you're having people over, put Precious in her "safe spot" in another room. Although Precious has had positive interactions with visitors while living in her foster home, we encourage you to take time to get to know Precious before introducing her to new people. She has been known to be uncomfortable with strangers in a previous home. If she is in a separate room, turn on some music to help drown out the commotion. She will slowly relax and not have to worry about interacting with all of the strangers.

Supervise her outside. Even though you have a fenced-in yard, please do not let her out alone, at least in the first couple weeks or months while she settles. She is small and could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! She may try to dart out your door or squeeze under the fence, especially if she is startled.

Use treats to build trust. Always let the dog decide if she wants to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As she grows more comfortable, you can pair treats with petting and begin handling their collars and practice clipping/unclipping the leash.

Don't take her to busy places where she will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., etc.). While she may want to greet other dogs and new people, in an unfamiliar environment that could be scary to her, it may trigger her spinning and biting her hind end.

Wait to go out for walks. Give her plenty time to bond with you before you start taking her for walks. Practice walking around your yard before taking walks around the block. Creating a route for her walks will help the dog feel more comfortable if she's already familiar with the route.

No dog parks! Playing in controlled settings - like play dates at home with dogs you know - will work better. It is best to go slow with introductions to other dogs. Don't try introducing her to strange dogs on a walk. She may bark and growl at them or pull away from you and then be very difficult to catch.

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

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

We're here to help!

We want Precious to be successful in her home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. One-on-One training consultations are also available. More information at oregonhumane.org/training.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any 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!



Precious's "safe spot" in her foster home.

Oregon Humane Society
Pet Behavior Help-Line
(503) 416-2983



Fostering an environment of respect, responsibility and compassion for all animals.

Behavioral Medication for your new dog – information sheet

This dog has been prescribed one or more medications to help reduce fear and anxiety during his/her 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 recommend that you continue giving this medication for at least the first 3-4 weeks after adoption to help reduce stress that may be associated with this dog making a smooth transition into your home. It is difficult to predict whether or not this dog will benefit from treatment over an even longer period of time – this is something that we ask you to discuss with this dog's new veterinarian when you take him/her in for your first exam.

The medications that your pet is taking were specifically chosen because of their effectiveness and also because of their low cost. It is recommended that these medications not be stopped abruptly as this may lead to a sudden worsening of anxiety or fear issues.

When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate weaning off protocol and to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a weaning off process.

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 may be needed.