



SIBLING RIVALRY

Why do my dogs quarrel?

All dogs squabble occasionally. Mostly, dogs who live together get into scraps over stuff they both want: Food, bones, toys, human attention, and sleeping spots. Like us, they also have individual preferences and moods, and might be having a grumpy day or a headache.

What should I do?

If the fights don't result in injuries (i.e. you are not at the vet's following each fight having one or both dogs sutured), you have a number of options. Fights usually happen as a result of a particular situation and if you can uncover the triggers through a little detective work, you can probably prevent most altercations.

Some of the most common problems:

Trigger: I'm going to put that new upstart in his place!

Remedy: Supervise your new dog closely for several days, especially when he interacts with your other dog. Praise your dogs for polite behavior.

Trigger: My sister is too close while I eat!

Remedy: Feed your dogs in separate bowls at opposite ends of a room, or in separate rooms.

Trigger: That is MY nyla bone/stuffed monkey/tennis ball/etc.

Remedy: Carefully manage access to objects your dogs might fight about: Bones, toys, beds, etc. (and make sure you have two of everything).

Trigger: When mom is not around, I find my sibling hard to take...

Remedy: Keep your dogs in separate rooms whenever you are not available to supervise.

Don't be afraid to give your dogs a break from each other. Put them in different rooms for a while or give them downtime in their crates.

When to get help.

If the dogs seem stressed in each other's presence (won't eat, pant, avoid each other).

If the fights happen more often or get more serious.

If you can't break up the fight with noise.

If the fights cause injury to either dog.

Call us for help.

Training Tip: Never try to break up a dog fight by reaching in and grabbing a dog's collar. It is too easy to get bitten. Instead try using a noise. Shout or bang pans together. If that doesn't work, try water. If you are repeatedly breaking up fights with water, you need a training plan.