



# Help for Your New Arrival \*

## The First Few Days

Your new family member has arrived. You are excited and want to show him off. **Wait !!!!!**

Although he may not show it outwardly, he is stressed. In the last month or so he has been uprooted from his home, spent time in a shelter or even running the streets. He thought he found his home when he felt the love of his foster family. Now he has lost that too. He is upset and frightened.

Don't add any more to his plate! Let him relax, give him some space. These first few days are important in developing the relationship you will have with this dog for the rest of his life. Give him time to learn to trust you before adding a lot of new experiences. You have years to explore the world together. He can get to know the neighbors next week.

All dogs will go through an adjustment period. The timeframe involved will vary from one dog to another. You may experience behaviors that did not happen in the foster home and it's important to realize that dogs do react differently in different situations or environments. Our volunteers are available after adoption to offer suggestions or recommendations to help you.

## Some common things you may experience during this adjustment process include:

- An accident in the house as a means of marking territory.
- Even dogs who are housetrained may have accidents during their adjustment period.
- Going to the door the volunteer left from, waiting there to see if they are coming back.
- Wanting to go outside to check to see if the volunteer is outside.
- Crying at night, especially the first night.
- Not eating or not eating all the food in his dish.

## Feeding:

Many Cockers gain weight easily because they will eat as much food as you give them. For health reasons, it is important not to overfeed. We recommend feeding the average adult Cocker 1 cup of dog food a day. Younger or more active dogs may need to be fed more. Smaller Cockers may need to be fed a little less. Your dog has been fed the finest dry food available while in rescue. It is important that you continue with a quality diet. It is unlikely that you will be able to buy your dog food in your local grocery store. Most likely you will need to buy your food from an independent retailer. Poor diet is one of the major causes of allergies and ear infections in Cockers. If you choose to save on food, you will make up the cost in vet bills.

When reading dog food labels, the items that you do not want to see are by-products, corn, wheat or soy. We have found that cockers do not do well with these items and removing them from the diet improved their ears and coat and general health. This includes the treats you give your cocker, also.

We recommend adding fresh items to their diet such as scrambled eggs, cottage cheese and yogurt. But remember, when you add these items, be sure to lower the amount of their regular dog food so you are not over-feeding them.

We also recommend that you add a high quality cold pressed salmon oil to your cocker's diet to assure that they are getting the appropriate amount of essential fatty acids. If you have questions regarding which oils are best, please email [jam@jamdweck.com](mailto:jam@jamdweck.com) for further information.

We do strongly recommend a raw diet as it is closest to the dog's natural diet. We will be happy to advise you if you make that choice. Please email [jam@jamdweck.com](mailto:jam@jamdweck.com) if you want more information on this.

If you do not choose a raw diet but would like to cook for your dog, we recommend [The Honest Kitchen Preference](#) to which you can add your own fresh protein (meat, chicken, poultry, etc.) to make a complete and balanced fresh diet for your cocker.

### **Dog Foods We Recommend**

- [The Honest Kitchen Force Raw Dehydrated Force \(grain free\)](#)
- [Raw Instinct by Nature's Variety Prairie](#)
- [Innova](#)
- [California Natural](#)
- [Evo](#)
- [Solid Gold Barking at the Moon \(grain free\)](#)
- [Solid Gold Hund-n-Flocken](#)
- [Canidae](#)

Each dog does differently on different foods, Your rescue contact will bring with them the dog food that your cocker is presently eating. If you choose to change the diet, please do it slowly over a period of time. Please give us a call and we will be happy to work with you on a food change to avoid digestive problems from changing too quickly.

### **Housetraining:**

Praise your Cocker when he eliminates outside (giving a treat as a reward immediately is also a positive reinforcement). Don't overly chastise your pet if he has an accident or he could become afraid to go in your presence at all. This often results in a dog that sneaks off to a remote part of the house to go when you cannot see him. Instead take your dog outside right away, and then praise him when he goes. It is important to go outside with your dog and to praise them!

### **Crate Training:**

It's a good idea to crate a new companion when you're not at home or can't supervise him especially in the beginning. If your dog whines in the crate ignore it. Praise your dog when he is quiet. You can give your dog a treat when putting him in the crate. The crate should be a positive place, a den of his own. Establishing a routine is helpful in letting your Cocker know what to expect.

### **Obedience Training:**

Obedience training at any age is beneficial. A dog needs to know the rules. He will be a much happier animal when he knows what is expected of him. Find a competent trainer. If possible watch a class to be sure you will be comfortable with the trainer's style. Only choose a trainer who uses positive reinforcement. Rough stuff went out with high button shoes. You will find that obedience training will be a bonding experience for you and your dog. We will be happy to provide you with a list of trainers we have worked with previously in your area.

### **Pack Behavior:**

Your dog sees your family as his pack and immediately tries to find his rank in the pack. He should be at the bottom. If he challenges you it is important to set him straight through obedience training. If there is one person in the family that he questions, put that person in a position of power. For example, have that person feed him every day only after he sits or obeys some other basic command. Every dog needs a calm, assertive leader.

We recommend that you cocker not be allowed on the furniture or beds for the first few days, just to make sure he/she finds his appropriate level in the pack. This is especially important if there are children in the family. If and when you allow them on the furniture and beds, be sure to teach them "off" on command.

If there are other dogs in the home, we recommend picking up all of the toys for a few days until pack levels are worked out between the dogs, and problems over claiming toys will not become a problem.

### **Sensitive Personality:**

Some Cockers are considered sensitive and some are fearful of strangers. If you notice this trait in your dog don't encourage strangers to pet him/her until he/she gets to know the person. After your cocker gets to know people, you may find that he/she can be very affectionate.

### **Possessive:**

Cockers like many breeds can be very possessive of their owners. Put them at ease by relaxing and talking in a calm voice, but never reinforce this behavior of possessiveness by cuddling them or petting them a lot when they are displaying this behavior. If your dog actually growls at anyone because they do not want to share you, this is time for a sharp **NO**.

### **Mischievous:**

Cockers may steal food off the edge of a counter or table if given the opportunity. Some like to get in the garbage and shred tissue etc. If you dog proof your home this should not be a problem. Obedience training will also help teach a dog what is not acceptable.

### **Eyes & Ears:**

You can clean your Cocker's eyes with saline solution (made for cleaning contact lenses) or buy an eye cleaner from a pet store as necessary. Clean eyes as needed.

Cockers are prone to ear infections because air cannot get into those long, floppy ears, but this can be prevented with routine ear cleaning and clipping. Ask your groomer to trim the inside of the ears very short, so air can get into your pets ears. You should clean your Cockers ears at least once every week . We have found that cosmetic squares work well for this. Your rescue contact will leave several "recipes" for homemade ear cleaning solutions that we have found work very well. If you cocker's ears become inflamed, please seek help from your vet immediately.

Your rescue contact will leave with you a starter pack of ear treatment, ear cleaner and eye/face cleaner.

We also recommend you feed the grain-free foods listed above to avoid future eye, ear and skin problems that can be common in cockers from wheat, corn and soy products.

### **Grooming:**

Today's Cockers are a long haired breed and require a fair amount of grooming. It's necessary to brush them at least once a week to prevent mats and have them clipped every 2 months or more (depending on their coat). Show coated or heavy coated dogs do need grooming more frequently. The "puppy cut" which leaves the coat shorter, and the "Cocker cut" which leaves the coat longer are both popular with Cocker owners. Remember the coat acts as an insulator to both heat and cold and shaving your dog too short in the summer leaves him with no protection from the heat and the dog can sunburn.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact us. We are available at all times to help make this transition smooth for your entire family.

## **Thank You for Adopting a Rescue Dog!!!**

\*Special thanks [to Shorewood Cocker Rescue](#) for their preparation of the basic format for this handout.