

Deaf Dog With Seizures Can Be Protective

Sight, smell, and touch will alert Pointer to intruders.

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Q. I found a gentle, 2-year-old Pointer today at a local pet shelter with a no-kill policy. She's a white shorthair with light brown speckles on face, light brown patches on rear, a long white tail, and golden eyes. She is sweet and alert, and took to me instantly.

She is deaf but she does bark. She takes phenobarbital daily because of seizures. She no longer has them. I was told that perhaps the stress of living with a variety of dogs may have caused the seizures. Could there be any connection with her being deaf and having seizures?

I would love to adopt this beautiful gentle Pointer, but I need a dog who will bark for protection. Any advice?

A. I hope it works out for you to adopt this Pointer. She sounds like a great dog.

It is likely that she will need to remain on phenobarbital for the rest of her life. Rarely are seizures caused by environmental influences such as a noisy shelter environment. However, you should work with your veterinarian to keep her on the lowest possible effective dose to minimize side effects.

Another anticonvulsant medication with fewer side effects is potassium bromide. Dogs that are on medication for seizures usually do need some blood tests every six months to test the drug level in the bloodstream, and monitor kidney and liver function.

As far as a deaf dog's ability to be a good protector, it is undoubtedly similar to people: Her sense of sight, smell, and touch are probably enhanced, and most likely she will be a good watchdog.

Deaf dogs must be trained with visual clues, but she sounds like an intelligent dog who would have no problem learning any skills you require of her. Based on the description of your property, it sounds like she would be extremely happy with you, and vice versa. A fence will definitely be required.