

## Ask the Vet Audio Questions

More audio answers from Dr. Geller

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towards the older dog.

How can I help my dog cope with the deaths of his two packmates?

Which fruits and vegetables are toxic to my dogs?

My dog is coughing a lot - does that mean he has a cold?

Help! My younger dog is aggressive

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**Q.** This is Pat from Pensacola, FL. I have a young, 3 year old Doberman and an old, 14 year old Sheltie Mix. Unfortunately, the Sheltie Mix is not in great health. She has a little arthritis and is blind a little bit. Is it true that the younger dog will realize the older dog is weaker and will try to eliminate or take out the older, weaker dog? Is there anything you can do to alleviate the problem if you have it in the home, where the younger dog is a little more aggressive towards the older dog? Thank you. I appreciate your help.

**A.** This message is for Pat. Pat, you have a two-year-old Doberman and an older, 14-year-old Sheltie and it sounds like your Doberman is picking on your Sheltie somewhat. It would be perfectly normal for one of your dogs to want to be the alpha dog so it is not unexpected. However, I would definitely be careful about leaving them alone, especially if there is any food involved. Supervising them together would be a good idea to avoid any unplanned aggression. Also, I would consider starting your older dog on some arthritis medication if you haven't done that yet because that can definitely make older dogs crouch if they're painful all the time and that can definitely spark or cue a fight. Finally, I would try to give your younger dog plenty of exercise to work off some energy so that there's not an issue later as far as wanting to play perhaps that can then turn into a fighting issue that occasionally happens. So, thank you very much for your question and I look forward to more in the future.

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**Q.** Hi, my name is Dina from Pennsylvania and this question is either for the Vet or the Trainer. I recently, within the past two months, have had to put 2 of my dogs to sleep. I have a remaining dog and want to know, now that her pack is gone what she's feeling and how I can make this transition with being the only dog in the house easier for her. Thank you very much.

**A.** This answer is for Dina in Pennsylvania. I understand that you have had to put two of your dogs to sleep. I'm sorry to hear about that. You have one dog left. Dogs make pretty good adjustments from being in a pack or a group to being a sole dog. A way you can make that work better is by giving your dog extra attention. I definitely would not go out and get another dog. I'd just keep your first dog company. However, again, increase attention and lots of exercise. And, potentially, doggy daycare if that's something that's available to you, can help make that transition go smoother. Thank you very much for your question.

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**Q.** Hi, I'm Barbara from Charlotte, NC. I would like to know what fruits and vegetables could be toxic to my dogs? I know that grapes and raisins are not good but are there any other fruits and vegetables they should not eat?

**A.** This answer is for Barbara in Charlotte, North Carolina. Thank you for your question Barbara about what foods or

vegetables might be toxic for your dog. You already know about grapes and raisins. Some dogs are very sensitive to those while others can eat them without a problem. It's not knowing what content is in the grapes and raisins that makes the dog sick. Another vegetable you have to be careful with is rhubarb, especially the rhubarb that has the reddish color to it. That red color is oxalate and that can definitely be toxic to dogs and cause all kinds of gastro-intestinal problems. Other than that, most garden vegetables and fruits are not a problem for dogs. I do want to mention that macadamia nuts also have toxic ingredients that are a problem for some dogs. Thank you very much for your question.

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Q. I want to know when your dog is spitting out stuff and is coughing, is that a cold or is it something else?

A. This message is for Chris in Littleton, Colorado. Chris, it sounds like from your question that your dog has some sort of gagging cough and is possibly coughing up some phlegm or mucus. Sometimes it's hard to sort out the difference between vomiting and coughing and if your dog is actually vomiting, it could be an upset stomach or something your dog ate but more likely with a gagging cough, it could be related to some sort of upper-respiratory infection. Kennel cough typically sounds like a gagging cough and kennel cough is caused by bacteria that can be spread through the air by dogs that are held together. If your dog is acting sick otherwise, such as not eating or acting lethargic, I would definitely go to your veterinarian and have him or her checked out because another cause of gagging cough can be canine influenza, which is more prevalent in certain parts of the country. That is a virus that causes an upper-respiratory infection which more severe signs. If your dog has canine influenza, it is important to have veterinary attention; possibly hospitalization could be involved. If your dog just has kennel cough, there are some effective antibiotics that can be prescribed and also cough suppressants. However, I want to warn you not to give your dog over-the-counter cough suppressants which you can find at the drugstore because they have a lot of ingredients that can definitely cause more harm than good. Good luck and thank you for your question.

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