

Preparedness for Dogs

By: Hayseed

I have two dogs, hound dogs to be exact. Nothing is worse than a nasty, stinkin' hound dog, but like poison ivy, they grow on you. One is an eleven year old basset hound and one is a 6 year old beagle. The basset hound has arthritis, but other than that still thinks he's a puppy. The vet says he has the heart of a dog half his age and I think he has the attitude of a lion. He is fearless and will bite with the ferocity of a piranha! He looks all sweet and innocent and most of the time he is, but if you quit rubbing his belly and he thinks he's been cheated, your hand may as well be a sausage.

Now the beagle is my alarm dog. He boo's at everything. When he sounds off, it's time to check into what's setting him off. He's a good dog with less evil tendencies than the basset. I love them both even when they are taking things out of my trash (Bad dog!). They would protect me to the bitter end, and I would them as well.

Dogs do more for people than people could ever do for the noble dog. They protect us, alert us to trespassers, lift our spirits, do jobs unpaid (fetch!), make messes, cost you money, steal your heart, they're almost as bad as kids! But they love us unconditionally and therefore deserve to be taken care of well. I recently took both my ferocious animals to the vet for their yearly checkup, vaccinations and to restock their medicines. The basset is on Cosequin and Deramaxx for his arthritis. Being on Deramaxx requires occasional blood tests for liver enzymes, so that required a blood draw too. All went well and cost me a small fortune, but it is worth it to keep the dogs in top shape.

The dogs are good on their vaccinations for at least a year now. I got a year supply of flea and tick prevention, as well as heartworm protection for both hounds. The basset has a good 6 months of his arthritis meds and a nice supply of Ace. Ace is used to sedate him during thunder storms - nothing worse than a psychotic basset hound, so we give him a doggy downer when we get bad weather. This prevents him from ripping a toilet out of the floor when he tries to get behind it to hide. Did I mention that he is freakishly strong? An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of fixing the plumbing!

I figured it was a good time to inventory my dog supplies. So when I came home I went through the dog box and made sure I had plenty of dog shampoo, shed gloves (gloves with rubber on the palm to grip the hair), toe nail clippers, ear cleaner and eye "goop" (Vetropolycin HC which is a veterinary ophthalmic ointment which we put in our dogs eyes after weed seed extraction to prevent infection). I also made sure I have plenty of canine wound antiseptic for cuts. I keep at least 6 months worth of dog food and treats on hand and more often than not I have about a years worth.

Each breed family has it's own special care considerations and should be planned for accordingly. Hounds are prone to nasty ear problems so they need a little extra attention to the ears. Terriers are notorious for cutting their toe pads digging, so terrier owners should be aware

of the need for wound cleaning and dressing supplies. Older dogs have a variety of special needs (such as my basset's arthritis). A lot of dogs, no matter what breed, have weather related issues (such as the nervousness when a storm front moves in).

I take my dogs to my farm every evening so they can run unleashed. This is the only place I allow them to run freely because even if they do go to the neighbors, they are on welcome ground. In town I keep them tied on a cable in the yard or on a leash when I'm out walking with them. I also keep a good spare leash and a spare collar for both dogs. Several years ago I had an American Staffordshire terrier and the metal buckle broke, fortunately I had a spare! With a big strong dog like that I had to be sure I always had him under control, he loved to chase squirrels and if he weren't well leashed he would have run out in front of a car to try to catch the illusive squirrel!

I keep all the dog medications, wound treatments and toenail clippers in a plastic tool box with a handle - great to grab and go. It's got nice little compartments for bandages, rags and Q-tips. The first aid box fits nicely inside of my big Rubbermaid tote that holds all the leashes, collars, shampoo, etc. We depend on our dogs to warn us of danger and we should keep them safe in return.