

Resource Guarding Warning Signs

Guarding food, chews, toys or a favorite spot is a normal dog behavior that can become dangerous. **Learn the early signs, never punish a growl, and manage the situation so nobody gets bitten** while you work on it with a professional.

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DOG'S NAME

WHAT THEY GUARD

TRAINER / BEHAVIORIST

THE WARNING LADDER



Mild

Freezing over the item, a hard sideways look, eating faster, head lowered into the bowl.



Moderate

Growling, lip quiver or lifted lip, showing teeth. **A growl is a warning: never punish it**, or the next warning may be a bite.



Severe

Snapping, biting anyone who comes near, charging from another room. **Manage now and get professional help.**

KEEP EVERYONE SAFE

- ☐ **Never take food or the bowl away** while your dog eats
- ☐ **Feed behind a gate or door** in a quiet spot
- ☐ **Pick up empty bowls**, and skip the chews your dog guards most
- ☐ **Children never approach** a dog that's eating, resting or holding something
- ☐ **If your dog warns you**, walk away calmly; don't reach or scold

BUILD TRUST (WITH A PRO)

- ☐ **Walk past and toss** a better treat from a no-warning distance
- ☐ **Trade up:** offer something better, adults only
- ☐ **Teach "drop it"** with low-value items and great rewards
- ☐ **Vet check first** if guarding is new or appetite changed

INCIDENT & PROGRESS LOG

DATE	ITEM	WHO WAS NEAR	SIGNS SEEN	WHAT YOU DID

THE FULL VERSION: [RESOURCE GUARDING TRAINING GUIDE](#) · ON ETSY: [NEWDOGCO.ETSY.COM](#)

Sources: American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (preventing food guarding); VCA Animal Hospitals (food bowl and possessive aggression; aggression toward children); Cornell Riney Canine Health Center (dog bite prevention). For growling, snapping or bites, work with a certified behaviorist or veterinary behaviorist.