



Hiking with a dog (note the singular) requires a good deal of common sense. You already know what you will read here. All you need to do is practice what you know. Please follow the principles of *Leave No Trace* when hiking and backpacking.

You know that you should be physically fit before you hit the trail. Your dog must also be physically fit. Even though your dog may be very active, it is probably either a yard or house dog, living on soft earth or carpet most of the time. Take your friend to the veterinarian for a check up. Ask if your dog can take the rigors of hiking, and ask how best to condition your dog's footpads for walking on rough, rocky trails. It may be that a nightly walk on neighborhood sidewalks or streets will be the answer. Please take the time to prepare your pal, and its foot pads, for the hike.

You can carry 1/5 to 1/4 of your weight as a back pack. Your dog can also carry a backpack, 1/3 to 1/4 of the dog's weight. Ask your veterinarian if your dog can carry this weight. Check the pack often for balance, for cushioning, and for rub spots. Know and carry proper antibiotics to use in the event of a cut or scrape. Know how to attach a bandage so that the dog cannot pull it off in 30-seconds. Tweezers, or needlenose pliers, and a small magnifying glass might be handy for thorns and ticks. Ask the veterinarian for ideas, advice, and suggested first aid for your dog. Make sure your dog's shots are up to date.

It is up to you, not the hike leader, to know the rules and regulations concerning dogs in the area where you will be hiking, and to know if dogs are allowed. Even though dogs may be allowed, the final say as to whether or not a dog may take part in a hike rests with the hike leader - ask your hike leader. In my case, as a hike leader, I recommend that only one dog accompany the group, only one, and sometimes none.

Although it may seem that you are doing the dog a favor by allowing it to run free, you are not. There are too many places to explore, too many scents to investigate, and too many new things out yonder. If disoriented even a wee bit, the dog does not know the territory, and does not know how to come back to you or the tent. A quick chase after a rabbit or squirrel may well leave the dog lost and confused. A loose dog may well tangle with a poisonous snake, a skunk, or (up north) a porcupine. Most state and federal parks and forests require a dog to be on a leash at all times. Please respect other hikers and the forest - keep your friend leashed, tethered, or in the tent, at all times.

There is nothing quite so disconcerting as having a strange dog appear out of nowhere as you sit down to a meal. Nor is it very

nice to come around a trail bend and to have your leashed dog met by a larger, loose dog.

Don't rely on the old adage that your dog is under your "voice control." I've seen several such dogs whose masters or mistresses have become lost to them. A chipmunk chase may well deafen your friend to your calls. Be considerate to your dog. If running 10 to 20-ft ahead of you, does your dog really know enough not to approach a rattlesnake, or a skunk, or a ...?

We have other friends in the forest, including ticks. Before you do your own body check each night, thoroughly check your dog. They, too, can and do catch tick-borne diseases.

You do carry a small trowel or U-dig-it™ to bury your waste, don't you? Please use it to bury your dog's waste, rather than leaving it smack dab in the middle of the trail or camp for another hiker to find on his, or her, boot soles. A plastic newspaper bag, or grocery bag, makes an excellent poop-picker-upper. Please, remember to *Leave No Trace*.

Not all dogs smell really nice in the rain. And not all hikers like to be showered by a wet dog. Water is as important to a dog as it is to you. At home the dog has instant access to its water bowl every minute of the day. In the field, make a conscious effort to offer your dog water at every break, and to have a bowl within reach when the dog is tethered in camp. If you would not drink directly from a water source, should your dog do so? Our veterinarian assures me that dogs, like humans, can contract giardia. This may be another reason to keep your dog leashed, to prevent it from lapping up untreated water.

And be careful when cleaning up after your dog if it has the diarrhea that accompanies giardia. Since the cyst is passed in the animal's feces, use a good disinfectant to clean up the mess and to clean your hands afterwards. For further information, and to find out how long your dog may be a carrier, contact your own veterinarian and ask questions. Your dog can pass giardia to you, to your kids, and to other pets.

Have I told you anything new? I hope not. Remember that, yes, a dog can be a great companion, and can really enjoy the out-of-doors along with you and with your hiking group.

Just follow the *Leave No Trace* principles: "RESPECT WILDLIFE," and "BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS."

The Wild File

From The Wild File, 'a question and answer column in the August 2002 issue of the magazine OUTSIDE. Reprinted by permission from Outside Magazine Copyright ©2002, Mariah Publications Corporation.

Why does tomato juice de-skunk my dog, whereas my guava-strawberry shampoo doesn't help at all? Gillian Ashley, Gardiner, Maine

We'll give Ms. Ashley an A for aggressive trial and error, but the bad news is, her entire premise is flawed: Even tomato juice doesn't work as a skunk-spray deodorizer. Giving Fido a V-8 bath is no better than soaking Pep Le Pew in \$5 perfume - it will temporarily cover up the skunk's calling card but do nothing

to combat the source. To really quell the smell, says William Wood, a chemistry professor at California's Humboldt State University, try this mad scientist's blend of one quart hydrogen peroxide (the common 3% variety), one-fourth cup baking soda, and a teaspoon of liquid laundry detergent. This concoction will blitzkrieg the malodorous thiols - the skunk's offending chemical compounds, which contain rotten-egg-smelling sulfur - and through oxidation transform them into odorless sulfonic acids. Douse a sprayed dog with this recipe, rinse, and repeat until the odor disappears. It's harmless, but beware: Hydrogen peroxide has one side effect long embraced by Midwestern mallrats and SoCal surfers alike. "It's strong stuff," warns Wood. "It can turn a black lab into a chocolate Lab."

Dogs and Giardia

From a daily column by Dr. Michael Fox in the Virginia Pilot on 8/1/2002. Reprinted with permission of Dr. Fox.

Keep an eye on your pets and never let them drink from standing water where wildlife may have contaminated the water with their feces. Such water is the most likely source for an internal parasite called "giardia," a protozoa that lives and multiplies in the intestines and is very difficult to eliminate.

Editor: For giardia symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and dangers, and for other questions, please refer to your own veterinarian.

Dog Waterer

A powdered drink container, such as a Tang™ container, makes a jim-dandy water 'bowl' and water carrier for a dog.

The 'bowl' is light and will tip over - so hold it while your dog drinks.

