



205 E. Butterfield Rd. #601  
Elmhurst, Illinois 60126  
Phone: 708-572-4552  
Fax: 636-582-6818  
[www.GreatLakesLabRescue.org](http://www.GreatLakesLabRescue.org)

**Placing Great Labs in Great Homes around the Great Lakes**

**THANK YOU FOR FOSTERING A GREAT LAB!**

Thank you for helping us save a Lab's life! Our foster homes are critical to our ability to save Labs; the more foster homes we have - the more dogs we can save.

Please keep in mind your dog has been traveling most of the day in a crate and has been bounced around from one transport vehicle to another. It has been a very traumatic day for them, so we encourage *adults only* at transport. While we understand your children are really looking forward to meeting the new dog, a child's enthusiasm or their squeals of delight may only increase the dog's anxiety.

**AT TRANSPORT**

- **Did your dog come with paperwork from the transport person?**  
If so, please mail paperwork immediately to Patty Ilg at the address listed above. This paperwork is the only record we have on your foster dog's condition and vaccination history. Please ensure it's placed in the mail to Patty right away. Before mailing, please check to see if there is a microchip tag in the package. If there is, that tag should be placed on the dog's collar and the dog should have it with him/her at all times.

If you did not receive paperwork on your dog, Patty will email you all pertinent information on your dog soon.

- **Great Lakes Lab Rescue Identification Tag**  
If you don't have a Great Lakes Lab Rescue I.D. tag for your foster dog, please contact Patty immediately. This I.D tag is the only way to identify your foster dog should he/she get loose.

Again, if your dog has a microchip tag, please make sure it stays with the dog at all times.

- **Examine your foster dog thoroughly:**  
Are there any lumps?  
Do the whites of the dog's eyes appear red or pink?  
Does the hair around the dog's eyes appear wet?  
Do you notice any yellow-greenish colored discharge from the dog's eyes or nose?  
Any cuts or bleeding?  
Is the dog limping?  
Are the dog's nails long?  
Are the dog's ears dirty?  
Is the dog shaking his/her head frequently?  
Is the dog sneezing or coughing frequently?  
Is the dog vomiting?

If any of the above answers are "yes" please contact Patty immediately.

Please note that most dogs will be rather dirty as a result of the ordeal they've been through. Please help make your foster dog more comfortable by giving him/her a bath but only if they haven't been recently spayed or neutered.

## UPON ARRIVAL AT YOUR HOME

- **Introducing your foster Lab to your own dog(s).**  
Introductions on neutral ground are best. Have another family member bring your dog outside on the sidewalk away from your home - down the block, across the street, a nearby park. You can have your foster Lab there waiting. When your dog arrives, don't allow them to sniff one another yet. Walk everyone together on the sidewalk or the park for about 20 minutes. Then allow them to sniff one another.

When walking into your home keep a leash attached to your foster Lab at all times and monitor him/her closely. The leash will allow you to correct the dog if he/she shows behavior you don't approve of.

- **Please keep the chaos to a minimum for the first week.**  
It's important to bring your foster Lab home to an environment that's as low-key and calm as possible. The ideal time is when there are no family gatherings, large dinner parties, out of town guests, etc. This allows your dog to bond with the members of your household. Outside distractions, as listed above, can be very disruptive to your dog.
- **Allow at least 2 weeks for your Lab to settle in.**  
We often don't know much about the background of our rescued Labs. Therefore they may have been moved around a bit from their previous environment (stray, owner surrender, a shelter or pound). Because your dog is unfamiliar with you and your home they will be jittery and nervous, and may pant quite a bit. Usually this behavior stops within a day or two but can sometimes take a week or two.

## MEDICAL CONCERNS

- **Has your dog been recently spayed or neutered?**  
The GLLR volunteer coordinating the transport of your dog will advise you if your dog recently had surgery. Please check the incision site to be sure it's not red, inflamed, or oozing. If so, please consult with Patty to discuss the situation and determine what steps are necessary.

Your dog cannot be bathed until the sutures have been removed, or for 14 days post-op, whichever applies. Vets may use absorbable sutures (which can't be seen from the outside) so the 14 day timeframe applies in these cases. Bathing prior to suture removal (or within the 14 day period) can cause infection to the incision site. You may use baby wipes on your dog until he can be bathed.

All dogs must have a plastic E-collar (or "cone") attached to their collar to prevent licking or chewing of the incision site. This cone must stay on the dog 24/7 until sutures are removed, or for 14 days post op. If you need a cone, please contact Patty.

- **Does my dog have internal parasites?**  
Internal parasites can be easily transmitted to another, dog and some can even be transmitted to humans. Patty will email you with info about your dog pertaining to vaccinations, internal parasites found (if any), and spay or neuter dates (if applicable).

If your dog was found to have parasites (hookworms, roundworms, whipworms or tapeworms), he was treated prior to transport. However, to minimize the risk of transfer, immediately remove any stool your foster dog leaves behind until you get the all clear from the vet.

- **What if my dog has diarrhea?**  
Diarrhea is common with incoming dogs. Again, this may be a result of the ordeal they've been through. A change in dog food can cause short-term diarrhea or sometimes it's due to internal parasites (see above). If diarrhea persists longer than 3-5 days, please call Patty.

- **Heartworm Preventative**  
*PLEASE DO NOT PURCHASE HEARTWORM PREVENTATIVE FROM YOUR VET OR FROM ONE OF OUR APPROVED VETS FOR A FOSTER DOG.* GLLR will supply you with heartworm preventative for your foster Lab. If you don't have heartworm preventative for your foster dog, please contact Patty and she will send you some.
- **Is your dog too thin or overweight?**  
You should not be able to see a dog's ribs, hip bones, shoulder bones, spine, etc. If your dog is too thin, please feed an adult dog 6 cups of food per day (2 in the morning, 2 at midday, 2 in the evening) until a healthy weight is achieved.

An adult dog at their ideal weight should be eating only 2 cups of dry food in the morning and 2 cups in the evening.

An overweight dog is typically a symptom of lack of exercise or bad feeding habits (i.e. over feeding, receiving table scraps or a full meal of "people food"). Intake quantity for an overweight Lab will be determined on a case by case basis by the vet's recommendations.

#### DAILY CARE

- **What kind of food should I buy for my foster dog?**  
Just like humans, dogs should eat high quality foods high in protein (chicken, turkey, fish, beef, venison), low in fat, with very few fillers (corn, wheat, white rice).

There is a huge difference between low quality dog foods (Pedigree, Purina, Beneful) and high quality dog foods (Wellness, Innova, Orijen, Fromm). There are many good brands in between.

The first 3 ingredients on the label make up the majority of the dog food. Compare labels and see for yourself.

- **Develop a routine for your foster Lab.**  
To help your foster Lab settle in quickly, please adopt a routine for your dog as soon as possible. This means feeding at a consistent time every day, exercising every day, and giving routine potty breaks. Your dog needs to know what to expect from you and when.
- **Give your foster Lab frequent potty breaks.**  
Remember, your home is foreign to your foster Lab. Treat the dog as if he/she is an 8 week old puppy when establishing a routine with your foster. This means frequent trips (as often as every hour for the first couple of days), taking them out the same door each time, and praising them each time they urinate and/or defecate. Food rewards help expedite the process.
- **Crate train wisely.**  
We highly recommend using a crate for your Lab. Since you don't know the dog it's best to crate train until he earns his freedom from the crate. Your Lab is getting use to you and your family and using a crate ensures he won't be destructive when you're gone.

A crate is not to be used as a substitute for exercise and your dog should never be left in a crate for more than 6 hours without a break. Labs need to be with their pack (i.e. you) so don't leave him in a crate on another level when you go to bed.

- **Exercise, exercise, exercise - and, when all else fails, exercise some more!**  
A tired dog is a good dog. Exercise is a must for Labs - especially with a rescued Lab! The younger they are the more exercise they'll need. If daily walks aren't always possible please consider local doggie day care centers. Dog walking services are another option.

- **Obedience Training/Leash Walking**

After your foster dog settles in, please begin to work with him/her on basic obedience commands (i.e. sit, stay, down, come). There's no magic to teaching obedience, it just takes consistency and frequency.

Often foster dogs need to be taught how to walk properly on a leash. To do this you will need a training collar and leash. We highly recommend a 6 foot leather leash. In our experience, prong collars seem to work best for training purposes. A prong collar should fit snugly high up on the dog's neck, just behind the ears and under the chin. When fitted and positioned correctly the prong collar acts just like a nylon collar.

- **Socialize your dog as much as possible.**

Try to take your dog to the local Petsmart and/or Petco as often as possible. Trips to your city's downtown area also helps get your dog acclimated to noise, hustle and bustle of people and traffic, etc. Your dog may also encounter other dogs on your trip which gives the dog a good opportunity to socialize with other dogs. If you, someone in your family, or neighbor, have a cat - see how your foster dog is around cats. It's best to keep the dog at your side on a leash when exposing him/her to a cat to address any bad behavior. Not all dogs like cats and knowing how your foster dog is with cats will help us determine the best forever home for your dog.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

- **What does Great Lakes Lab Rescue pay for?**

GLLR pays for the dog's vet care including all vaccinations, heartworm testing, heartworm preventative (provided to you by Patty), stool sample testing, and spaying/neutering. *Any additional vet costs must be approved by Patty prior to the visit to the vet. This includes emergency visits.*

We ask that foster homes provide food, shelter, toys, treats, and leashes. You will be able to keep your leash and many of the toys you purchase. It is a nice gesture to send the dog to his/her new home with at least one familiar toy and some food to start the family out.

- **Veterinary care and emergencies**

Great Lakes Lab Rescue has partnered with several veterinary hospitals in the area for veterinary care and emergency veterinary care at discounted rates. Patty will provide a list of approved veterinarians should your dog require these services. *Please note that all veterinary visits must be approved by Patty prior, this includes emergencies.*

- **Training is available.**

If you identify any problems with your foster Lab we have trainers who can help. Please contact Patty to discuss.

- **Support is available.**

If you identify any topic we have not covered here, just call. We want your fostering experience to be a good one so if you have questions, just ask. We'll do our best to resolve any concerns or issues that you may have.

**We appreciate your opening your hearts and homes to a Great Lab!  
We hope you find it as rewarding as we do!**