



Puppy's anxiety is a real poo

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I adopted a puppy about two months ago. "Spencer" seemed to house-train just fine, but for the last couple of weeks, he has been pooping on the bathroom rug. It's not diarrhea, just regular healthy poos. He does it between walks -during walks! What is going on?

- John D. in Burlington, Vermont
DEAR JOHN: Even though Spencer seems healthy, take him to the vet to rule out any underlying health issues. In the days prior to the vet appointment, get out a notepad and write down his behaviors, what time he poops each day, if he's doing a lot of barking - anything. Bring that to the appointment; it might give the vet additional insight.

Puppies go through phases during their growth, and it's not too unusual to see some regression in housetraining periodically. For example, when they're teething, or as they enter their "teen" phase at around 8 months or so, you may see a change in behavior patterns or "forgetting" commands you know they've learned.

If there is no health issue to worry about, focus on training. Go back to basics and teach him how to alert you when he needs to go outside. Work on his basic commands. Observe him closely when you're at home to see whether his behavior is changing.

You may need to adjust your schedule as well. If he's an especially young puppy, his body is changing rapidly and he may need more potty breaks than the training guide says. Be prepared to make those adjustments as you patiently retrain him. And don't worry, he will fully housetrain, as long as you remain diligent.

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