

lissa.scott

From: lissa.scott [lissa.scott@verizon.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 18, 2007 1:33 PM
To: 'MAGDRL Extended List'
Subject: DOE Topic #36: Toenail Chewing

Hi All,

Our Dane Merlot will chew her back nails until they're bloody. I guess it's not just Merlot -- this morning I had an e-conversation with a friend whose Dane also did this. I decided to do some research, and I'm sharing my findings as Dog Owner Education Topic #36: Toenail Chewing.

I found that the rule of thumb is to first eliminate health-related causes for this behavior, and some are listed below.

Health-related causes of toenail chewing:

- Allergies (food, environmental, seasonal)
- Lawn, floor, carpet cleaning, or de-icing chemicals
- Dietary insufficiency
- Cysts or lesions; injury to the foot, cuts/scrapes
- Split nails, nails too long, nails too short
- Flea dermatitis
- Yeast, bacteria/staph or fungus infection; moist dermatitis (aka Hot Spots, may be result, not necessarily the cause)
- Pain (cause may be anywhere in the dog's body)

This list came from a dozen different web sites, but most suggested that with health-related causes of toenail chewing, a trip to the vet is highly recommended. Some sites mentioned success with change in diet, change in environment, or working with a canine dermatologist.

Non-health related causes of toenail chewing:

- Obsessive Behavior (see here: <http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&C=153&A=2180&S=0> Quoting: "It takes human detective work to find (the source of) many of these problems.")
- There's another article from Texas A&M on boredom as a cause, "When Pets Get Bored, Problems Can Start, Says Vet" here: <http://newsarchives.tamu.edu/stories/06/040706news-6.html>
- There is a good discussion of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and toenail chewing: "Self directed traumatic disorders in dogs and cats" here: <http://www.dermapet.com/articles/art-18.html>
- And another from Tufts University: "Compulsive behavior in Dogs" here: http://critterweb.com/btneuro/moon-fanelli_tufts_expo.htm

On the other hand, in some cases toenail chewing might not be a bad thing. See here:

<http://forum.greytalk.com/lofiversion/index.php/t98118.html>

"I have a friend whose Dobe mix has NEVER needed to have her nails clipped. All she has to do is to tap the nail that is long and Lady will bite it down to an acceptable length. If they all need trimming, she just touches each toe and says "Lady, do your nails" and she DOES!"

I should be so lucky..... 😊

As always, thanks for educating yourself to benefit dogs and their owners!

Lissa Scott
AKC Canine Good Citizen Evaluator

Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League

MAGDRL web: <http://www.magdrl.org>

MAGDRL events: <http://www.lissa.net/Joya/MAGDRL.htm>

Bloat info: http://www.lissa.net/Joya/Merlot_bloat.htm

Gastropexy info: <http://www.lissa.net/Joya/Lapro-Pexy.htm>

Colon Torsion info: http://www.lissa.net/Joya/jupiter_torsion.htm

"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings

