

Sibling rivalry

What is better than a sweet, precious, adorable, little puppy? Well, how about two! Double the cuteness, cuddles, and puppy breath. Sometimes people add two puppies at the same time to their family. Most of the time the thought process behind this is, the puppies will have a built-in friend and playmate. On the surface it seems like a great idea, but in actuality it may lead to serious problems in the future.

Leaving the litter and mom can be very stressful for a young puppy. Going to the new home with a littermate along does help with the stress during the initial adjustment period. But within weeks there will likely be issues that arise.

The two puppies will grow to be tightly bonded to each other. People will always be secondary to them. They will look to each other for play, affection, and comforting before they look to humans. In most cases one puppy will rise to be the leader of the two. Typically, the other puppy will prove to be insecure and always looking to the lead puppy for direction, especially in new or uncomfortable situations.

When separated from one another both puppies will be uneasy, but the follower puppy will be frantic, to the point of being inconsolable. The puppy may either thrash around trying to get away and find its sibling, or lay still completely shut down. This puppy is overwhelmed without the sibling. The leader puppy may not



get quite as upset and the follower, but will still be visibly stressed.

Given the chance, as they get older, sibling puppies are more likely to run off with each other. You can call them all you want, but they will blow you off and keep running. In some cases, as the sibling puppies mature they attempt to control the humans and take over the household.

In a group of dogs a female is usually at the top of the hierarchy. In cases when the sibling puppies are females, as they approach adulthood they can begin to display dominance aggression. If there is already a dominant female dog in the home, the siblings will gang up on her. These attacks are brutal. The siblings are trying to dethrone the dominant dog. If they accomplish this, or there is not a dominant female dog in the home, the siblings will turn on each other. The worst conflicts I've seen have occurred between females fighting for that top spot. Usually, the females are about the same size. If one of the two dogs is substantially larger and more powerful than these

battles for dominance don't usually occur.

These female dominance fights are not the norm, but they do happen. And when they do, even after only had a few seconds of contact, one or both dogs need medical attention. The dogs are trying to kill each other. Once these female fights for dominance begin it is difficult to keep them from continuing. The tension is always there and it doesn't take much to set off another fight. The dogs will have to be kept apart. Often, the best course of action is to re-home one of the dogs. In a different home where the dog is the only dog or coupled with a male dog they will not need to fight for position.

(I must take a moment to mention that when I am talking about dog behavior in this column, I am almost always referring to dogs who are spayed or neutered. In situations when the dogs are "not fixed" we are talking about an entirely different and much higher level and likelihood of aggression problems.)

As long as you provide plenty of attention, exercise, basic training, and socialization opportunities, a single puppy should thrive in your home. In most cases you don't have to get a second puppy. However, make a point of arranging regular puppy play dates that encourage positive interactions with other dogs. This will ensure your puppy grows up to like other dogs and develop good greeting and playing skills.

If you still want to get two puppies from the same litter, the best plan is to take one puppy home for a few weeks before bringing the second puppy on board. Develop the relationship by visiting the second puppy regularly (without bringing the first puppy) until it comes to live with you. When the second pup reunites with the first pup, they will likely remember each other, but that super strong bond has been broken. This method of obtaining the puppies will help a great deal in preventing them from becoming so dependent on each other.

Throughout the life of your dogs you should routinely set aside time to spend with them individually. From their puppyhood, dogs should learn that you are fun to be with, but that you are ultimately the one in charge.

Even if they are not from the same litter, be wary of getting two females of similar size, in order to reduce the risk of female dominance aggression. When in doubt, it is best to have a male and female combination. Be sure you are making responsible decisions when bringing a new dog into your world. Dogs should add joy to your life; not stress and heartache.

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Options for treating alcohol addiction within the community

by Gemma Wings

Alcohol addiction is a growing national epidemic, and one that affects almost every community in America. We are a nation that enjoys to drink: 51.3 percent of American adults enjoy drinking regularly, which is classed as at least 12 drinks a year. But what is worrying is how many of those adults choose to drink significantly more than that. Last year in the USA there were 26,654 alcohol induced deaths (not including those caused by accidents or homicides where alcohol was involved), and an additional 16,749 deaths caused by alcohol related liver disease. It is clear then that alcoholism is a real problem

affecting our local and wider community, and one that needs to be dealt with head-on in order to find a sustainable solution. So how are modern communities choosing to deal with the alcoholism in their midst? What are the options for dealing with alcohol addiction within a community like Chatham County?

HOME-BASED REHABILITATION

When struggling with addiction of any kind, a large majority of individuals choose to withdraw from society and from their community whilst they seek help, opting for treatment within an inpatient rehabilitation program. These programs have high success rates and are very good at helping the addict to

FOR A LIST OF LOCAL AA MEETINGS:
<http://www.aanc33.org/chatham-county-meeting-list/>
AA HOTLINE: 1-888-237-3235

overcome their problems, but they can also be rather isolating, particularly for individuals that have never, or very rarely, left their home town before. However, as the number of alcoholics within communities rises, and societal understanding that addiction is a mental health problem like any other and shouldn't be stigmatized increases, so too do the options for treating alcohol addiction within the community. Outpatient behavioral treatment is a drug rehabilitation technique that sees patients visit a clinic at regular intervals whilst continuing to live in their own home. As well as including medical support (if it is needed) these treatment programs also include regular therapy sessions and family therapy work in order to help you discover the route of the problems that are leading you to drink to excess or to dangerous levels. Additional benefits of this kind of treatment program are that it is discrete and that you are able to continue working whilst you receive your treatment, meaning that you won't lose your job or jeopardize your career.

LOCAL SELF HELP AVAILABLE

One of the most popular and widely attended self help options for alcoholics is the Alcoholics Anonymous support group. This is the ideal option for those individuals who recognize that they have a drinking problem and want to work

hard to take the appropriate steps to return to full health and live a life without alcohol addiction. Alcoholics Anonymous is also an ideal option for those who can't afford to pay the significant costs involved in inpatient rehabilitation or home-based clinical support. There are several Alcoholics Anonymous groups that regularly meet within the Chatham County area. You will find at least one support group available on every day of the week (except for Sunday) and these are a mixture of both closed and open groups, depending on your needs and preferences. Closed groups are only available for AA members who feel they need support with their drinking whilst open groups are available to anyone, including those who are simply interested in learning more about the program.

If you're living within the Chatham County area and are concerned that you may have a drinking problem, or feel that you drink too much then help and support is available within the community. By being open about the drinking concerns you are having or sharing the amount you are drinking, either with your physician or with a support group (ideally both) you are taking the first step to admitting you may have a problem and, ultimately, taking the first step on the road to recovery.

Gemma Wings is a Chatham writer.

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SATISFY YOUR LOVE

FEBRUARY 12, 13, 14: Sweetheart Dinner for Two. \$75
RESERVATIONS ONLY. Choose one: Crab spinach artichoke dip with crostini; Antipasto platter; Heart shaped mozzarella sticks. Choose two: Surf and turf – petite ribeye w/grilled USA shrimp; USA lobster ravioli with vodka cream sauce; mushroom manicotti. For dessert: A beautiful chocolate creation made by our Pastry Chef, Amy Bucker, for you to share. Enjoy a bottle of prosecco and a gorgeous red rose.

FEBRUARY 21: Canvas and Cork Painting Party. \$48
12:30–3:30 p.m. Wine tasting and snacks with artist Sally Sutton. Recreate Sally's "Field of Poppies". All supplies provided.

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