



## Cornbread 309226: What to Expect

**Cornbread is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Cornbread is a special rescue dog who was previously living on some property in the Dalles. He ran loose around a property with 20+ other dogs, many his relatives, creating tunnel systems in the dirt, and being overseen by one owner. He and his siblings were brought into OHS after the danger of a fire put their lives at risk. When Cornbread arrived to the shelter, he was very fearful and afraid of people and he only came out of his shell with the help of one of his former resident dogs. We moved him into a quieter space where he could get to know the staff and he has since come out of his shell!

We've learned that Cornbread loves people once he has a chance to be slowly introduced to them. He will lean in for pets, give kisses, and loves to go for walks. He is still a very shy and a reserved dog who will take some time to approach. It is possible prior to coming to OHS he had never walked on a leash before, and this is still a new activity for him. He will need owners who can slowly introduce him to the world through positive reinforcement techniques at Cornbread's pace. If pressured into a situation before he's comfortable he will dart and run and avoid people, if cornered further he will freeze in place. We expect that Cornbread will be overwhelmed by everything they encounter at first. During the critical first months in a new home, their safety will depend on your good judgment and forethought. **A frightened dog will look for any occasion to bolt when startled: out of vehicles, out the front door, or slipping out of the leash. Keep a very tight grip of that leash!**

While Cornbread lived comfortably with 20+ other dogs, we've seen in the shelter environment that he can resource guard food and sometimes toys against other dogs. This is likely due to the nature of the chaotic living situation he was in previously and why he is overweight. Cornbread weighs nearly 35lbs and his ideal weight is around 25lbs. His owners will need to be consistent with his diet and exercise routine and limit how many treats he has to help him accomplish his weight loss goals. Obesity presents many health challenges for these dogs and can lessen their quality of life. Extra weight puts added stress on the heart and internal organs, predisposes them to developing serious metabolic disorders, and puts excess strain on the joints, leading to arthritis. Obesity increases risks associated with general anesthesia, as more stress is placed on the body. A dog is also hindered by extra weight, and they may not be as active or playful as they could be.

### **Here's how to help Cornbread settle in during your first months together:**

**Designate a "safe spot" in your home.** You can use a crate or taller baby gates to confine them to a smaller area where they have access to water, bed, and toys. When you are unable to supervise the dog, leave them in their safe spot. Slowly work toward leaving them alone, unsecured, once they've had the chance to settle into your home and you know with certainty, they will be comfortable.

**Be your dog's advocate.** It's okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from letting their dog come up to say hi to your dog. Watch their body language and help your dog out of situations if they appear stressed. Explain that Cornbread is not comfortable with people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Tossing a treat on the ground is more effective for your dog to make positive associations with new people. Distance is calming.

**Let them drag a leash attached to their collar** for the first week or two inside and outside the home. Fast movements are startling, and it will take time for them to be okay with you approaching and removing the leash. If you go slow at the beginning, you'll build a trusting relationship. Treats always help!

**Allow for time to build trust.** Always let Cornbread decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Cornbread decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and following your resident dog around.

**Supervise your dog outside.** Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Cornbread out alone. They are small and could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! They do like to go for short walks and go outside to potty, but need some time to build confidence to go on longer excursions in even the quietest of neighborhoods.

**Limit introductions to new people.** Take your time to get to know Cornbread before introducing them to someone new. They may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Treats and allowing Cornbread to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Cornbread at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

**Use routine to get Cornbread comfortable in their new home.** It will take a couple weeks for Cornbread to feel comfortable in their new home and with you. Having a predictable schedule will help them adjust to their new home.

**Patience will come in handy for you.** Cornbread responds best to positive reinforcement and reward-based training. They will need an understanding, calm owner who has the time and desire to work on helping them learn to live in a home. Cornbread will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

**Use treats and toys to build trust.** Maintaining and continuing Cornbread’s training will create a bond and a form of communication between two species who don’t understand each other. The more positive experiences Cornbread has with their owners, the more valuable you will become in high distracting situations.

**Don’t take Cornbread to busy places** where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., Home Depot, etc.).

**Visiting the Vet:** Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. The vet can still be a scary place. Bringing tasty treats like cheese and/or hot dogs can help make the experience more pleasant.

Try using **Adaptil (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** or **Rescue Remedy by Bach Flower Essences**. These products may help dogs settle in new environments by easing the stress associated with change.

### **We’re here to help!**

We want Cornbread to be successful in your home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Cornbread, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-7722 ex 422** or [BMODTrainers@oregonhumane.org](mailto:BMODTrainers@oregonhumane.org).

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Reach out if you have questions or concerns, or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing! Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new dog!