



## Almond Joy 308711: What to Expect

**Almond Joy is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** AJ is an energetic playful dog who loves to play with toys, go for runs, rough and tumble with her dog friends, and love on her humans. AJ is a friendly dog with people and dogs, but she is still learning to regulate her emotions in excited states. When overly excited AJ can jump, mouth, and mount and it may take repeated attempts to reset before AJ will calm down and focus. Sensitive dogs who don't enjoy this rough and rowdy playstyle will find AJ overwhelming, but those who enjoy this playstyle will find AJ a delight. It was during one of these overly excited moments where AJ was jumping and mouthing her handler in an attempt to solicit play and ended up breaking skin. We've been successful at OHS ensuring her exercise and enrichment needs are met and have been practicing relaxing protocol to help her learn to "do nothing". AJ will do best with a family who has experience with high energy dogs and/or will be taking a professional dog training course to ensure they're setting AJ and themselves up for the best success. She has already made leaps and bounds while at OHS, but we can tell she has been "tricked" many times in the past, resulting in her not trusting people when they ask her to do something like come when called or to get into a crate.

When AJ is running around having fun, if she is off leash she would rather continue playing with other dogs or toys than to leave the party. She is also nervous around crates and is reluctant to enter them with people around. This is likely because she has been "tricked" and trapped in order for people to get what they want from her rather than being patient and teaching her that rewards happen on both sides of these equations. Her new family will need to build trust and reliability through positive reinforcement training techniques to help AJ understand we're working together and not against her. Because she has a history of people likely attempting to trick her into getting what they want, AJ has some mild resource guarding where if you attempt to take a toy or food from her, she will get stiff, hard stare, and has snapped at hands reaching for her toys. She has never bitten someone in a situation like this, but she does not want to share her toys with people, and we've adopted a 2 toy play rule and she does great. For this reason, we do not believe she would be a good match for a home with young children. We've been successful teaching her to leave it, are working on drop it, and have been using other toys as a reward since she finds them more valuable than food. We suggest never taking anything from her, but continuing to work on building trust so she will continue to easily exchange items or leave valuable items in favor of listening to her trusted human friends. The more AJ is "tricked" into listening, the less likely she is to respond in similar situations in the future.

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

**If you're having people over, put Almond Joy on leash so they learn to not dart out the front door or jump all over people.** Once everyone is sitting down and calm you can drop the leash and allow your dog to decide if they want to go say hi to your guests. Ensure your guests ask Almond Joy to sit before being pet so they're rewarded for keeping 4 feet on the floor.

**Almond Joy needs daily exercise to reduce stress.** Almond Joy loves to go for runs, walks, play with toys, and chase a flirt pole. Giving your dog a healthy outlet for some of their energy will help them settle during calm hours at home.

**Work on having Almond Joy settle on a mat, dog bed, or cot** and gently praise them for lying down. If they get up to pace, call them back and use a treat to lure them into a down again. If Almond Joy is on leash, you can hold them with approximately 4 feet of leash and wait until they offer a settle by lying down.

**Walk Almond Joy on an appropriate walking tool.** We have been using a special head halter, called a transitional leash, to help guide Almond Joy to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Almond Joy sees other dogs on walks, they become incredibly excited and then frustrated that they cannot run up to say hello and play, causing them to jump, pull, and whine. It will be important to never let Almond Joy run up to other dogs on leash as that can reinforce their frustrations.

**Don't take Almond Joy 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.).

**Practice crate training.** Start by feeding meals in a wire crate and work your way up from there. It will be in your best interest to **slowly** increase time in the crate, so they view it as a safe, comfortable spot. Never "trap her in the crate, but work towards closing the door as she gets comfortable and trusting.

**"Puppy proof" your home and practice tether training** to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Almond Joy on leash, attached to you or tethered to a large piece of furniture as you go about your daily routine. This will help with potty training, bonding, and creating boundaries within the home. Let Almond Joy drag the leash around the house or yard from time to time to simulate "freedom", but do not let them off leash until they can 100% be trusted not to get into things they shouldn't. This could take up to a few weeks. Confine Almond Joy to a safe space when you cannot watch them. This will ensure their puppy curiosity doesn't get them into any trouble. You will have long lasting success if you follow this method.

**Take a training class.** Almond Joy would benefit from taking some training classes with their new owners and would love to learn more alongside their family in a training class. Training classes help strengthen the bond between owner and dog by creating clear and precise communication so there are no misunderstandings. You can find more info about our training classes on our website at (<https://www.oregonhumane.org/training/training-at-ohs/>).

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

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

### **We're here to help!**

We want Almond Joy to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Almond Joy, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-1145** 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!

### **Behavioral Medication for your new dog**

This dog has been prescribed one or more medications to help reduce anxiety and impulsivity during their time in the shelter. You may be provided with a supply of this dog's medication(s) along with specific dosing instructions at the time of adoption. We would recommend that you continue giving this medication for at least the first 6 months after adoption to help reduce stress that may be associated with this dog making a smooth transition into your home. In order to avoid any adverse side effects (including behavioral and systemic) please do not abruptly stop administering these medications or discontinue use without consulting your veterinarian. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate protocol to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a gradual weaning off process. Please do not substitute other supplements or medications (including your own prescriptions) without consulting a veterinary professional.

During this process, please watch for any signs of worsening fear or anxiety. If the dog appears to be getting worse during the weaning off process, contact your veterinarian as longer treatment or a different combination of medications may be needed. Remember that successful behavioral rehabilitation often relies on a combination of pharmaceutical therapy as well as various training modalities.