



Almond Joy 308711: What to Expect

Almond Joy is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Almond Joy, “AJ,” is busy bee of a dog, she is a mover and a shaker and is interested and up for anything! She adores her human friends, and she will sit at your feet, lovingly gaze up into your eyes, and lean in for hearty scratches. 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 share similar playstyles will find AJ a delight. 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” and self-regulate. 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 away from fun or to crate up. 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 developed resource guarding behaviors around her toys, food, and anything she deems important enough to not want to share. She will freeze, growl, and snap if she perceives the threat of someone taking away her resources. As she builds trust and a relationship with her handler, this behavior seems to soften, and she feels less passionate about protecting her resources. She will make trades and feels comfortable enough to relax around her items once this relationship is built, however, it will take time and continued training and to maintain this relationship with her. Our team of trainers will be able to help set up her new family with training and boundaries to maintain with AJ to ease her transition into the home and help create this new and wonderful relationship on a positive note! Due to her tendency to guard, AJ would do best in a home with no other pets, and with older children who can understand and help further her training goals with this behavior.

AJ was previously adopted and returned after she chased the resident cat, cornered it, and began attacking it, resulting in wounds to the cat that needed medical attention. When the owners attempted to remove AJ, she turned and bit the owners resulting in multiple bites and broken skin. For these reasons, AJ is not a candidate for a home with resident small animals like cats, rabbits, or small dogs.

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.

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.