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## Guarding Food and Toys

Protecting their resources - food, toys, treats, beds, humans, etc. - is a normal survival behavior for dogs. Some dogs may even guard items with special scents, like a dirty shoe. This is a survival skill for dogs but you can help your dog curb this reaction.

Here are ways you can help your dog:

- **Never enter space while eating.** Consider feeding your dog in a crate or separate room.
- **Never take anything from your dog's mouth.**
- **Offer your dog a "trade" for an object in their mouth,** such as a high-value treat. Allow your dog to drop the first item from his mouth, then guide him away and give the traded item. Give praise when your dog gets the new items.
- **Teach your dog "trade", "drop it" or "leave it"** - these are taught in our basic manners classes at JHS. Visit [jaxhumane.org/training](http://jaxhumane.org/training) for details!
- **If your dog is guarding against other dogs,** remove the item permanently. Feed dogs separately in crates. Don't leave items like toys, bones, etc. out in your home.
- If your dog is guarding you or another person, make the person less valuable. If your dog is pushing others (people or dogs) out of the way to get to you, growling or snapping, ignore all dogs and people and leave the room.

Repeat these behaviors and stay consistent to help your dog be the best they can be. Never punish your dog for guarding. Yelling or taking things away from them can actually make this behavior worse.

Remember, you are your dog's advocate and JHS is here to help. For additional support, call 904.394.4586 or email [behavior@jaxhumane.org](mailto:behavior@jaxhumane.org).