THE 3 OVER'S OF PUPPY MOUTHING

(Understanding why mouthing happens)

Mouthing is a normal part of puppy development. Just like babies, puppies use their mouths to explore and learn about the world. But when mouthing becomes harder, more intense or turns into biting, it can be a sign that your puppy has had too much. The 3 Over's — overstimulated, overtired and overhandled — can help you work out what your puppy needs in that moment.



OVERSTIMULATED

- Lots of activity or play
- New people or environments
- Exciting sights, sounds or smells
- Busy households
- Not enough downtime

Mouthing can increase when everything feels exciting and their brain is in overload.



OVERTIRED

- Zoomies then a sudden drop in energy
- Difficulty settling
- More mouthing
- Whining or fussing
- Struggling to focus
- Naps are needed

Tired puppies can become cranky, lose self-control and mouth more.



OVERHANDLED

- Constant patting or cuddling
- Being picked up frequently
- Not having enough space
- Lots of interaction without breaks
- Handling when they're already excited or tired

Some puppies mouth when they have had excessive handling or attention.

What can help?

- Recognise the signs early
- Give them time to rest
- Provide calm, consistent routines
- Offer appropriate chew toys
- Encourage gentle play
- Give them space when they need it
- Use positive reinforcement for calm behaviour

