

Puppy Love

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Teddy's In Love

There is no doubt that Teddy knows he is loved by his belly rub posture, and his love and trust equally radiates the love he has for his family. Teddy's physical stance changes when his belly is rubbed. He randomly turns over, tail wagging and belly up when someone in his family passes by, always requiring a much needed belly rub, it can happen anytime, anywhere. Teddy gives them "the look," stop what you are doing and rub my belly. His response is magic like; his eyes start to close, his breathing softens, his tail stops moving and his muscles relax. His only deliberate movements come from his front paws. If you stop rubbing, Teddy touches your arm; a reminder to please keep rubbing. Teddy's confidence level is heartedly displayed when he greets visitors. He welcomes them with a hearty bark, brings them a toy and tries to engage them in play, and finally, he rolls over for a belly rub. These encounters bring laughter and smiles from those doing the rubbing and those watching. For those few minutes, whether it be a visitor, or a meeting, or a dinner party, everything is at a standstill until Teddy's tummy has been thoroughly rubbed. For that moment in time, stress levels are reduced for everyone, even the grumpiest can't resist Teddy's love.



Hoppla is on the go with his amazing and adoring mom in North Carolina.



Just Like Mama

When a puppy is born, their mother cleans them repeatably by licking their stomach and body. The loving experience of grooming provides the puppy with their first bonding experience. When you rub a dog's tummy they are taken back to a memory when they felt safe and comforted by their mother's touch. Belly rubs also sets off a specific reaction in their brain that responds to stimulation of hair follicles. Experts believe that dogs love petting, and a belly rubs in particular, because the stroking of hair is linked to social grooming; like mama used to do. And there is a bonus, happy follicles mean a shiny healthy, looking coat.



OXYTOCIN

Belly rubbing is a comforting action, explains Dr. Peter Brown, chief medical officer of Wagly, a veterinary-based service provider with campuses in California and Washington. "It's an opportunity for bonding and part of our relationship with our dogs." According to some experts, dogs have neurons in their brains that light up when their fur is being caressed. Some refer to it as "feeling the fur." This action releases the "love hormone" oxytocin. We get it, and so do our dogs. The benefits lower heart rate and blood pressure for both.

"The greatest reward you can give your dog, is the touch of your hand." Michael Schaier, certified professional dog trainer and author of *Wag That Tail: A Trainer's Guide to a Happy Dog*.