

# Hey there. It's me, your dog

Sometimes we wish animals could just tell us what's wrong. We know you feel the same way. Here's a handout to help us work together to take better care of your furry friend.

by Sarah Wooten, DVM

**H**ello human! You know you are the center of my universe, right? I love you so much, and I'm so grateful for our life together. Hang on, mailman's here. Gotta go yell.

OK, I'm back. Anyway, thank you for everything you do for me. I know that you love me too, and I've seen you trying to figure out what's going on inside my head. I don't have the ability to talk in your funny language, but if I did, here are some things I might tell you.

**My mouth is sore.** And you don't like the smell—you make a funny face when I yawn at you. I also have this cracked tooth that I can't chew on anymore. I've learned to live with it, but sometimes it makes me sad and tired. I really want to do everything with you (remember, you are the sun I orbit around?) but sometimes I would rather sleep, because when I sleep, I don't feel the pain. Do you know what's wrong?

**I'm bored.** Sometimes, when you are gone all day, I go to sleep and dream about chasing those pesky squirrels. And you're there too! My bed is really comfy and I'm really grateful, but sometimes I wish I had something to do during all these hours alone. I like to figure things out and play and use my mind—remember when you got me that food puzzle? It took me forever to figure that thing out—it was so fun! Sometimes when I get bored I chew on things I shouldn't or I get into the trash. I'm sorry. Can you help me?

**I'm scared.** I love going on car rides with you, especially when I can stick my nose out the window and smell all the smells! I get a little nervous though, because sometimes when I get in the car you take me to that scary place where all the other animals are scared and strange people touch me and do things that sometimes hurt. Some of them are really in pain or sick, and that scares me too. I don't understand. Can you make it less scary?

**I love walks.** I really, really do. Next to you, they are my favorite thing ever! I'm sorry when I drag behind on the walk and slow you down. I don't mean to, it's just that my leg hurts. I know I'm getting slower, and I really want to keep up but it just hurts so bad. You gave me a treat a couple of days ago that was delicious and I don't know what happened, but after you gave me the treat I felt better! I could run, and play, and be myself again. Thank you! Can I have another one, and then can we go for a walk?

Getting inside of my brain is hard, but I know you can help me. You're the greatest human and you can do anything! OK, the squirrels are playing so I'm gonna go yell some more. Bye!

