Welcome Home: The 3–3–3 Guide

FOSTERS & ADOPTERS

The rule is a reminder, not a deadline

The first three days, three weeks, and three months are common milestones people use to discuss adjustment. They are not evidence-based deadlines. Some dogs settle quickly; others need much longer. Judge progress by the individual dog, not a calendar.

First 3 days — reduce pressure

Provide a quiet, secure resting space; predictable meals and bathroom trips; and uninterrupted sleep. Limit visitors, outings, handling, and introductions. Allow the dog to approach voluntarily. Changes in appetite or toileting can occur with stress, but persistent symptoms warrant veterinary advice.

First 3 weeks — build trust

Keep routines consistent. Reward calm behavior and desired choices. Introduce new experiences gradually, with the option to retreat. More activity or new behaviors can emerge as the dog becomes comfortable; do not assume that early quietness meant the dog was relaxed.

First 3 months and beyond — continue listening

Expand the dog's world only at a pace they can manage. Setbacks can happen. Progress is not linear. A fearful or medically complex dog may require an individualized plan and professional support.

What helps

Quiet, predictable routines; secure equipment; separate spaces for pets; choice-based affection; reward-based training; early communication with GNR or the adopter’s veterinarian.

When to seek help

Contact a veterinarian promptly for repeated vomiting, prolonged refusal of food, severe diarrhea, pain, or unusual lethargy. Emergency signs such as trouble breathing, collapse, or seizures require immediate veterinary care. Contact GNR for placement or behavior support.