

Do Dogs Like Hugs?

by VetDepot on October 31, 2014

Dogs are loyal and loving members of the family, so it's natural to want to show them affection. Giving your dog a big hug might seem like a therapeutic way to end a stressful day or a nice way to show your pup you care, but pet parents should be cautious.

DOGS DO NOT VIEW HUGS THE SAME WAY THAT HUMANS DO, which can have dangerous consequences. It is true that some dogs (especially therapy dogs) will tolerate or even like being hugged, but many dogs do not enjoy the gesture. Canines heavily rely on body language for communication, and placing one or both arms over your dog is a sign of dominance. This might be confusing or even intimidating for your dog. If you notice your dog becomes very still or stiffens her muscles during a hug, that's probably a sign she's not enjoying the experience. A hug also typically means that a person's face is very close to the dog, which can be dangerous should the dog become aggressive out of fear or discomfort.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT CHILDREN ARE TAUGHT HOW TO APPROACH AND HANDLE DOGS SAFELY. Even if your dog does tolerate a big old bear hug, that doesn't mean every dog will. Of course, there are plenty of other ways to show your canine companion some affection. Opt for a belly rub or some behind-the-ears scratching and your dog will have no doubt about how much you care!