

(Q) I've heard that a Small Munsterlander's sharpness on fur generally translates into "snottiness" with dogs they don't know.

(A) This behavior is the same for both males and females. In fact, some of the snottiest dogs I know of are female.

You'll find that somewhere around 5 months of age your Munster will stop all submissive behavior when encountering new dogs. He'll also become intolerant of other dog's poor social behavior. He won't like excessive butt sniffing or being jumped on, or a dog who tries to take things from him. He also will become defensive of his space and stuff, such as your yard, your truck, his crate, you, your birds, etc. It's unusual for Munsters to be aggressive, in that he won't pick a fight or go out of his way to attack a new dog, but all Munsters are defensive to some degree. His reaction might be as little as growling or as big as fighting, depending upon his personality. For this reason, I recommend you stop taking trips to dog parks where there are dogs off-lead and not under their owners' control, when he is 4 months old. After he is 4 months old, you should definitely continue conditioning him to be around dogs he does not know, but you should look for situations where all the dogs are leashed and under their owners' control (such as NAVHDA training days and tests).

The best way to introduce two dogs is off-lead where they can easily get away from each other. Dogs are always more defensive when they feel trapped. Taking them for a short run together is usually the best way, because they have distractions and can pee on each other's pee and work out who is boss in a non-confrontational manner. I've never seen two Munsters, even two adult, intact males, fight while they are hunting. They always seem to hunt together just fine. The only fights I've heard of have happened when one dog tries to take a bird away from another while retrieving - which is bad manners and should not be allowed anyway.

There is no way to prevent this behavior. No amount of puppy kindergarten nor exposure to other dogs as a puppy will make a difference. As the owner of a Munster, you must *manage* the behavior. You need to pay attention to his body language and be aware of your surroundings, especially be aware of other dogs who are off-lead, so you can prevent problems from occurring. If there will be dogs around that he does not know, you should keep him leashed and under your control at all times. If/when he exhibits inappropriate defensiveness, you should immediately let him know it is unacceptable. Depending upon how poorly he behaved, give him a firm "no" and a correction with his lead. Or, turn him around and walk him away from the activities. Or, put him in his crate in the truck for a while, since being separated from his master is a severe punishment in his eyes.

I do not recommend putting him down on the ground and lying on him, as he might consider it a challenge and if he would decide to accept the challenge, you are both going to get hurt. You'll be bitten and you'll have to do whatever it takes to win, which means you're going to have to seriously hurt your own dog. If you severely hurt him, you will lose his respect and he'll be useless to you as a hunting partner. Rather, use your leash and crate.

If he would happen to get into a fight with another dog, do NOT use your e-collar to stop it. He will think the other dog is causing the pain and his viciousness will escalate. Using your e-collar is a way to get one of the dogs in the fight killed. Instead, use your body to get between them and gain control of your dog. Use your legs, not your hands/arms, because you don't want your face down at their level. Hopefully the other dog's owner will be there too. Usually, your persistence and interference will be enough to deflect the fighting.