



# Caring for Your Dog at Any Age

THE PURINA PET INSTITUTE'S  
HEALTH AND WELLNESS GUIDE

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Congratulations! Whether you are longtime dog owner or are just welcoming a puppy into your life, you are among a privileged group – the enthusiasm, loyalty and unconditional love a dog provides can enrich your life in many ways. In fact, the relationship you share with your dog may be among the most rewarding relationships you experience.

As a dog owner, you should know that many of the problems that face America's pets are preventable – from flea and heartworm infestations to undesirable behaviors such as aggression to obesity and the very serious issue of pet overpopulation. Whether you are a new puppy owner or share your life with a senior dog, be a responsible dog owner – your dog's quality of life and the relationship the two of you share is greatly influenced by you. Learn what is expected of you and what you can expect from your dog, because the more you know, the better you can become at providing your dog with the best care possible.

The Purina Pet Institute is dedicated to helping all dogs live longer, healthier lives. We've created this booklet as a step-by-step guide to responsible dog ownership, for all life stages and levels of experience. It is meant to serve as a handy, factual reference tool and covers the basics of dog care, from selecting a dog to conducting regular "wellness check-ups" at home, to providing proper nutrition and veterinary care for all life stages.

This guide is not intended as a substitute for professional veterinary care. Always consult your veterinarian for more information about your pet's health and behavior.

Here's to a long and healthy life with your special canine companion.





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### Understand Your Obligations and Options

Responsible pet ownership has no beginning or end – it's a lifetime commitment. You should fully understand this commitment before you make the decision to welcome a dog into your home. Some things to consider include:

**TIME COMMITMENT** – By nature, dogs are very social creatures so it is important that you devote time to your dog. Many breeds, and puppies in particular, are very active and need a great deal of mental and physical stimulation. All dogs, regardless of breed, should be given regular “doses” of play or some type of physical activity to help ward off excess weight. Dogs that are left alone too often or for too long may become bored or lonely and “act out” (chewing furniture, barking incessantly, digging; etc.). You should be realistic about the time you can give. Will you have time to walk your dog? Can you take the time to attend obedience training classes and keep veterinary appointments?

**FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS** – Can you realistically afford to own a dog? Do a little upfront research about the costs involved, taking into consideration the annual costs for food, grooming and other dog care supplies such as a brush and comb, carrier, collar or other form of identification and leash, and vaccinations and other medical costs, which tend to be higher during your dog's pediatric and senior years. Can you afford to provide medical care if your dog becomes ill or needs surgery or other medical care? Can you afford pet insurance? Are you able to save for an “emergency fund” if pet insurance is not an option? Will you need to board your dog in a kennel or hire a dog walker or sitter while you are away? What about the cost for obedience training classes? Some breeds require a great deal of grooming, so can you afford to hire a professional groomer if necessary?

**DOG BEHAVIOR** – Dogs are fascinating creatures with very distinctive and instinctive behaviors. They are loyal, highly social and, despite domestication, retain their pack mentality, which can potentially create problems if your dog is not properly trained. All dogs should receive proper obedience training.

There are more than 300 AKC breeds worldwide as well as mixed breeds that differ in looks, behavior and temperament. Some breeds are boisterous and playful and require a great deal of physical stimulation, like the Jack Russell Terrier, while others are more quiet and mild-tempered, such as the Basset Hound. Research the different breeds prior to selecting your pet. Visit your local bookstore for breed-specific books and magazines or visit the breed selector on [www.purina.com](http://www.purina.com). If you plan to adopt a dog from a shelter, volunteers should be able to give you information on the dog or puppy's personality and disposition. You should select the dog that best fits your personality

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and lifestyle. Age is also an important factor. A puppy isn't always the best choice, especially when there are many older dogs in shelters in need of homes. Because they are generally less active, an older dog may be the perfect companion for an older individual. And keep in mind that regardless of breed, the puppy or dog you select will exhibit behavior patterns largely determined by your care and training.

**LOCAL LAWS** – It is important that you know the pet laws in your community regarding licensing, rabies vaccination, leash use; etc. For more information on the pet laws in your community, consult your veterinarian.

**SPAY/NEUTER** – According to the 2000 State of the American Pet survey of pet owners, more than one third of dog owners (34%) have not had their pets spayed or neutered. The most common reason for this? They simply haven't had the time (30 percent). But unless your dog is a purebred you intend to breed, it is very important that you have your dog spayed (if female) or neutered (if male). It is the best way to help reduce the millions of unwanted pets that are euthanized each year, ensuring that every dog receives a lifetime of loving care. There are also numerous health benefits to spaying/neutering: spayed females are less likely to develop uterine infections, mammary tumors and other health problems while neutered males have a reduced risk of developing prostate infections or prostate and testicular cancer. It also lessens the likelihood that your male dog will roam or mark his territory in the house.

**LIVING ARRANGEMENTS** – Your living quarters are important if you own a dog. Is there enough space for your dog, especially if he/she requires a lot of physical stimulation? Do you have a fenced yard or safe area, such as a dog park, to provide regular physical activity? If you rent your home or apartment, are you certain your landlord allows pets? If required, can you afford to put down an additional deposit as a safeguard against any damage your pet may cause to your unit? Would you be willing to forgo the “perfect” apartment in the future if your dog is not allowed? Remember, this should be a lifelong commitment – returning your dog to a shelter should never be an option.

**FAMILY MEMBERS AND ROOMMATES** – It is also crucial that you discuss your intentions to bring a new dog home with all family members or roommates. Because it is important that everyone share in the dog's care to some degree, acquiring a dog should be a unanimous decision – and the responsibilities of each household member regarding the dog's care should be discussed and established upfront.

**LIFE SPAN** – On average, indoor dogs live to their early or mid teens, although small breeds can live up to 18 years. (In general, the smaller the breed, the longer the life span.) You should feel confident that you can honor the commitment to care for a dog for this length of time, if not longer.

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### Pet Selection

Considering getting a dog or puppy? Perhaps an older dog? Whether you acquire your dog from a breeder, shelter or neighbor's litter, be aware that his **appearance**, **demeanor** and **living quarters** can tell you a lot about his/her health and well-being.

#### TIME COMMITMENT –

- The best time to adopt a puppy can vary depending on a number of factors, but a general guideline is after eight weeks of age, at which time he/she can be weaned. However, once a puppy has been weaned, he/she no longer receives protective antibodies from the mother's milk and is susceptible to a number of diseases. Whether you acquire a puppy before or after eight weeks, make sure he/she is taken to the veterinarian immediately for the first round of vaccinations.
- If acquiring a puppy, make sure he/she is alert, curious and active. The puppy should not exhibit hostile behavior, nervousness or fear.
- Make sure the dog has clear eyes, no discharge from the nose or eyes, no skin irritations or red blotches and no bald patches.
- Look for a shiny coat, clean ears, white teeth and pink gums. There should be no evidence of fleas.
- Check around the tail to be certain there is no evidence of diarrhea or inflammation.
- Are the dog's living quarters clean and odor-free?
- Do the dog's caregivers – whether that's a breeder, shelter volunteer or current pet owner – exhibit affection and concern for the animal? Does the dog appear frightened by them?
- If selecting a purebred puppy, ask to see at least one of the parents. You should also be given registration papers as well as a record of vaccinations and any other medical treatment the dog has received. The breeder should show concern for the dog's well being by asking questions about the kind of care and home you will provide.

You can visit <http://www.purina.com/dogs/default.asp> and click on “breed selector” to complete a series of questions that will help determine the best type of dog for you.

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### Supplies

You should have the following basic supplies on hand at all times to provide your dog with the proper care:

**FOOD** – Because the dog food you select will likely be your dog's sole source of nutrition, it can have a large impact on his/her health and well being. Dog food labels can tell you a lot about the quality of the food, so you should do a little upfront research. Select a food that is 100% nutritionally complete and balanced, from a manufacturer you know and trust. If you have just acquired your dog, you should feed him/her whatever food he/she was previously fed if the dog is thriving. If you need to change foods, gradually transition to the new diet over a 7-to-10 day period (because changing foods abruptly can lead to digestive upset), by adding more of the new food and less of the old until the transition has been completed. For specifics on the proper food to feed for his/her age and weight, refer to the nutrition sections for puppies, adult dogs and senior dogs.

**FOOD AND WATER BOWLS** – You should select bowls that are easy to clean and heavy enough so they will not tip over. Glass, stainless steel or ceramic bowls are recommended because they can be sterilized. Try to get into the habit of washing the bowls daily and make sure there's plenty of clean, fresh water on hand at all times.

**CRATE** – Crates come in a variety of styles and materials. If you have a puppy, it is recommended that you introduce a smaller crate and replace it with a larger one as your puppy grows. This crate should be large enough for your dog to comfortably stand up, turn around and lie comfortably in but not too large that he/she could soil one end and sleep at the other. It should also be well ventilated, secure and easy to clean. Make sure the door locks securely so that your puppy cannot push the door partially open and get his/her head or paw stuck. Once the dog is housetrained, you might place a washable blanket or cushion in the crate. If you have a puppy, it is also recommended that you leave a safe chew toy inside the crate in case he/she is teething. And before crating, remove your puppy's collar and give him an opportunity to eliminate.

**DOG LITTER** – Purina secondnature™ brand® Dog Litter & House Training System is a safe, effective and easy-to-use system to housetrain puppies and small dogs up to 35 pounds. The litter material is made from recycled newspaper (70% post consumer waste) and wood pulp formed into super-absorbent pellets. It also contains a highly-effective odor control system and is non-tracking and non-staining. You just scoop and dispose of waste as soon as it's noticed. For more information on the system, visit [www.doglitter.com](http://www.doglitter.com).





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**I.D. TAG, COLLAR AND LEASH** – Even “indoor” dogs should always wear an identification tag permanently attached to a collar. Collars come in a variety of styles and materials. For collar size, you should measure his/her neck and add two inches and check the fit of the collar frequently to be sure he/she doesn’t outgrow it. There are also training collars designed for various behaviors. Consult with your veterinarian or a professional trainer for recommendations.

The I.D. tag should include your dog’s name and your name, address and telephone number with area code. Other, more reliable identification options exist, including microchipping (which involves injecting a microchip that contains your contact information under the dog’s skin) and tattooing. Consult your veterinarian for more information about these procedures.

**BED** – Dogs should have a comfortable place of their own to sleep. (A puppy should sleep in his/her crate while he/she is being housetrained.) It is very important that your dog get used to using his bed right away. It may be cute to have a puppy sleep in the bed with you but imagine a full-grown dog doing the same. Habits are hard to break so establish his/her own sleep spot right away. Pet supply stores carry a variety of pet beds, including floor “pillows” and plush fleece or flannel bedding. To encourage the bed’s use, put an old item of your clothing in it – your scent will help your dog feel secure.

**GROOMING TOOLS** – All dogs should be groomed regularly, although the frequency will depend on your dog’s haircoat, the amount of time he/she spends outside and the weather. Grooming maintains a clean, healthy coat, loosens and removes scale, dirt and dead hair, distributes natural oils and prevents tangles and mats.

A brush with natural bristles, a rubber curry comb or grooming hand mitt work well with shorthaired breeds. Longhaired breeds generally require a sturdy wide-tooth metal comb and slicker brush for daily grooming. A flea comb, nail clippers and shampoo that is pH balanced for dogs are also important. Dental care is an important part of grooming that is often overlooked so make sure your dog has his/her own toothbrush and specially formulated toothpaste. Most importantly, conduct grooming sessions often so it is a part of your dog’s routine and reward him/her after each session to make it a pleasant experience.

**TOYS** – Dogs need mental and physical stimulation and toys help provide both. Good toys include large rawhide chips, nylon chews and hard rubber balls. Interactive toys, such as balls or cubes that can be filled with puppy kibble that falls out periodically as the puppy plays, reinforce interactive play. Be careful not to buy sponge toys or items with squeakers, whistles or other attached parts that can be torn off and swallowed. As a general rule, if a whole toy can fit in your dog’s mouth, it is too small and could





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be unsafe. Tug toys are not recommended as they unintentionally reinforce aggressive behavior and old shoes and clothing are not recommended as this may send the message that all shoes and clothing are fair game.

**HARNESS OR CARRIER FOR TRIPS** – Dogs should always be secured when they are traveling in the car with you. Options include a special harness that allows the dog to be “seat-belted” into place or a carrier. Make sure that the carrier is well ventilated and large enough so he/she can comfortably lie down and turn around. Never place carriers in the back of open vehicles like pick-up trucks.



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### Routine Health Care

Establishing routine health care in your home, as well as with a trusted veterinarian, is important for your dog's overall well being. Consider the following:

**YOUR VETERINARIAN** – For many dog owners, the veterinarian is their primary source of information. Because of this, it's important that your veterinarian is someone you and your dog like. You should feel comfortable asking questions and feel confident that you are getting those questions answered. If possible, the location and hours of your veterinarian's office should be convenient to you and your schedule. The office should be clean and orderly and the staff should be friendly, knowledgeable and helpful. If your veterinarian does not offer emergency care facilities late at night or on the weekend, make sure you identify the nearest 24-hour facility and keep the information accessible. (Also consider driving by the facility so you are familiar with its location.) Not sure how to select a veterinarian? Get a recommendation from a breeder, shelter or Humane Society or other dog owners in your neighborhood.

**Important:** If you are about to get a dog, make an appointment with your veterinarian **before** you bring your dog home.

**ROUTINE VETERINARY EXAMS** – Regardless of your dog's age or where the dog was acquired, he/she should receive thorough veterinary exams on a regular basis. Providing regular veterinary care throughout your dog's life has many important benefits – from identifying potential problems, to setting behavioral expectations to overall cost savings. These veterinarian visits may include an inspection of your dog's eyes, ears, mouth, abdomen and coat as well his/her heart and breathing patterns. Tests to examine blood or a stool sample may also be required.

**VACCINATIONS** – All dogs, and especially puppies, should be vaccinated, regardless of whether or not they live indoors. There are "core" vaccinations that are required, including rabies, distemper and parvovirus, as well as "non-core" vaccinations that your dog may or may not need depending on his/her lifestyle (such as Lyme's disease). Vaccines are often given as a series over a period of time and many require annual boosters to be effective so it is crucial that you honor the vaccination schedule your veterinarian establishes. For a complete list of age-appropriate vaccinations, refer to the veterinary care guideline sections for puppies, adult and senior dogs.

**DENTAL EXAMINATION** – Regular dental care for your dog is an important part of his/her overall health. Plaque buildup is the most common dental problem and can lead to deposits of hardened calculus on the tooth surface that, left unchecked, can cause inflammation of the gums. This condition can worsen until the teeth eventually loosen and fall out. Some dogs will allow regular brushing of their teeth – the key is



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to begin at a young age if possible. With a soft piece of gauze wrapped around the finger or soft toothbrush, apply a mixture of baking soda and water or use toothpaste formulated especially for dogs, and gently rub or brush the teeth. Regular dental exams by a veterinarian and feeding a dry dog food that may help remove tarter are also recommended.

**SPAY/NEUTER** – Unless you have a purebred dog for breeding purposes, it is very important that you have your dog spayed or neutered. Spaying/neutering help prevent unwanted litters, helps manage overpopulation, may improve your dog's disposition and prevent unwanted behaviors such as "spraying." Spaying also helps reduce the risk of uterine infections, tumors of the reproductive system and hormonal imbalances, while neutering lessens the likelihood of testicular cancer and "roaming" and aggressive behavior toward other male dogs.

**HOME HEALTH CHECKLIST** – For puppies and senior dogs, a home health check should be done once a week. For adult dogs, conduct the home health check at least once a month. Refer to the Canine Health Checklist on the next page.



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### Home Health Check-Up

Forming a good relationship with your dog's veterinarian and providing regular veterinary care are important. However, it is also important for you to monitor your dog's health at home on a regular basis. Become familiar with what is "normal" in your dog's appearance, behavior and health so you can identify any problems as soon as they start.

During your dog's puppy and adult years, conduct the following home health check on a monthly basis. During your dog's senior years, conduct this check once a week. Alert your veterinarian to any problems or changes.

To help you remember what to look for during your home health check-up, just remember the words **CANINE HEALTH**:

### C<sub>oat</sub>

Smooth, thick, shiny coat. Free of tumors, ticks, fleas, greasiness, dandruff and bare patches.

### A<sub>ctivity</sub>

Your dog needs regular physical activity. Make sure your dog is not showing signs of stiffness, pain or limping when walking. Also watch out for excessive panting or changes in breathing patterns when engaging in physical activity.

### N<sub>ose</sub>

The nose should be moist and free of discharge or sores.

### I<sub>nstinct</sub>

Changes in your dog's senses and response to smells, the sound of your voice, tastes; etc.

### N<sub>utrition</sub>

Puppies, adults and senior dogs have different nutritional requirements so be sure to provide your dog with food that is appropriate for his/her age. Is your dog in ideal body condition? Ask your veterinarian to do a Body Condition Score to make sure your dog is not carrying too much weight for his breed and size.

### E<sub>ars</sub>

Check to make sure that your dog's ears are clean and free of odor, discharge and ear mites.



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## HABITS

Watch for changes in your dog's habits such as:

**EATING AND DRINKING** Any changes in appetite or the amount of food and water normally consumed.

**URINE AND BOWEL MOVEMENTS** Any changes in elimination habits, including appearance of waste. There should be no signs of pain when your dog urinates or defecates. Anus should be free from swelling, with no evidence of internal parasites (excessive scratching, licking or chewing in this area are signs.)

## EYES

Bright and clear. No signs of discharge, irritation, discoloration, tearing or cloudiness.

## ATTITUDE

Any changes in responsiveness and interaction with family, sleeping or barking patterns; signs of confusion, disorientation or lethargy.

## LUMPS

Check your dog's entire body- including his/her paws and underside - for any lumps, bumps and unusual skin problems such as red and raised skin.

## TEETH

No evidence of excessive tartar build-up. Pink gums with no redness or swelling, bad breath, sores or growths.

## HUG

Hug your dog, the healthy way. Perform a Purina Rib Check:

1. Begin by placing both thumbs on your dog's backbone. Run your fingers along the rib cage. If you can't easily feel the bony part of each rib, your dog may need to lose weight.
2. While your dog is standing, stand directly over him/her and look down at him/her. You should see a clearly defined waist behind the ribs. If your dog doesn't have an "hour glass" figure, he/she may be carrying extra pounds.
3. Check your dog's profile. If you don't see a clearly defined abdomen tucked up behind his/her rib cage, he/she is probably overweight.



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### Nutrition

Because the dog food you choose will likely be your dog's sole source of nutrition, it should include the proper levels of vitamins, minerals, protein, calories and fat for the life stage. The best advice is to provide a 100% nutritionally complete and balanced dog food that your dog enjoys and stick with it. Use the feeding instructions on the dog food label as a guideline, and monitor your dog's body condition to avoid over-feeding. His/her food should include proper nutritional requirements for his/her life stage and activity level. Other important considerations:

**FEEDING SCHEDULE** – Routine is important. Your dog should be fed the same amount, at the same time and in the same place each day. Measure the correct amount of food for the size and age of your dog. For most breeds, food should be given twice a day – in the morning and early evening – but work with your veterinarian to establish the right feeding schedule. Place the food and water dishes in an area away from foot traffic and noise. Use your dog's name when feeding him/her. This can help to reinforce his/her name while associating it with a pleasant activity. Remember to avoid feeding your dog too late in the evening, as he/she will be more inclined to eliminate inside the house.

**WHAT AND HOW MUCH TO FEED** – Nutritional requirements differ by age and size so it is recommended that you discuss with your veterinarian what and how much to feed. In general, large breed dogs require less food per pound of body weight than small breeds. However, even within a particular breed, the food requirements of individual dogs vary according to the dog's metabolism, level of activity and age. Due to their rapid growth and high energy level, puppies, like babies, need their own specially formulated food, as do senior dogs.

**WHAT NOT TO FEED** – Often, out of love, many dog owners will supplement their dog's diet with "people food" or scraps. It's best to avoid feeding people food, as it is rarely given in nutritionally balanced proportions. Certain foods, such as chocolate, can be toxic to dogs. Because of the chance of contamination, raw meat, eggs and similar foods should also be avoided.

**TREATS** – If you want to reward your dog with a treat, read the guidelines on the packaging so you do not overindulge your dog. Keep a food and treat log on the refrigerator to track the type and number of treats you and other family members feed him/her daily.



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**TREATS** – Avoid feeding table scraps as you may create a finicky eater and an overweight pet. If you want to reward your dog with a treat, you should read the guidelines on the packaging so he/she is not overindulged. You may want to keep a treat log on the refrigerator to track the type and number of treats you and other family members feed him/her daily. (Remember, treats should be included as part of your dog's total daily calorie intake.)

**SWITCHING FOOD** – To avoid turning your dog into a finicky eater, try using one dog food exclusively. If you must switch foods, consult your veterinarian first and always switch gradually over the course of 7–10 days to avoid digestive upsets.

**FRESH WATER** – Provide your dog with fresh, clean water daily.





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### Obesity Prevention

Obesity is the number one nutritional disorder among dogs in the U.S. It can shorten a dog's life span, impair heart and breathing functions, contribute to digestive distress, and lead to musculoskeletal disorders such as arthritis. And it doesn't take much in the way of pounds for obesity to become an issue. For instance, a dog that is ten pounds over his/her ideal weight of 50 pounds is the equivalent of a woman whose ideal weight is 120 pounds weighing 144 pounds. Recent research has shown that dogs who attain a healthy weight are generally more mobile, have less morning and evening stiffness, and less pain.

Some general guidelines to keep your dog's weight in check:

**PREVENTATIVE MEASURES** – Avoid feeding table scraps and excessive treats.

Remember to feed the dog, not the bowl. In other words, measure the food rather than filling a bowl with an indiscernible amount of food. Observe your dog to over time to see if you need to adjust his food intake up or down to maintain ideal body condition. Make sure every member of the family knows and complies with these rules. You may also consider switching to a lower-calorie food if your dog's activity level slows down.

**WEIGHT MONITORING** – Unfortunately, few owners know how to tell if their dog is overweight. A few easy hands-on and visual checks can help you be on the lookout for signs of obesity before serious health problems develop: the Purina® Rib Check, and Purina Body Condition System.

**To perform a Rib Check:**

1. Begin by placing both thumbs on your dog's backbone. Run your fingers along the rib cage. If you can't easily feel the bony part of each rib, your dog may need to lose weight.
2. While your dog is standing, stand directly over him/her and look down at him/her. You should see a clearly defined waist behind the ribs. If your dog doesn't have an "hour glass" figure, he/she may be carrying extra pounds.
3. Check your dog's profile. If you don't see a clearly defined abdomen tucked up behind his/her rib cage, he/she is probably overweight.

Visually assess your dog's Body Condition Score or BCS, against the chart below. The Purina BCS was developed by veterinarians and scientifically verified as one of the most accurate for estimating body composition. Your veterinarian should confirm your suspicions and can help you choose the proper weight management plan for your dog.



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### BODY CONDITION CHART



1

#### 1 Emaciated

Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.



2

#### 2 Very Thin

Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences easily visible. No palpable fat. Minimal loss of muscle mass.



3

#### 3 Thin

Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.



4

#### 4 Underweight

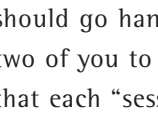
Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from the side.



5

#### 5 Ideal

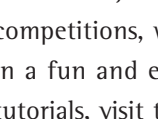
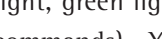
Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.



6

#### 6 Overweight

Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.



7

#### 7 Heavy

Ribs palpable with difficulty, heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be absent.



8

#### 8 Obese

Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distension may be present.



9

#### 9 Grossly Obese

Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck

**EXERCISE** – In order to keep extra pounds off, dogs must burn the calories they consume. The best way to do this is through regular exercise or play, which should go hand-in-hand with a proper diet. Exercise is also a great way for the two of you to bond. The key is to make sure you engage in the activity daily and that each “session” is sustained for at least 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Walking is a great activity for you to enjoy together, as is playing a game of fetch or “red light, green light” (a game of “stop and go” that reinforces the “sit” and “stay” commands). You may also consider getting you and your dog involved in agility competitions, which provides you and your dog with physical and mental stimulation in a fun and effective way (for more information, including a few agility training tutorials, visit the Purina Dog Chow web site at <http://www.dogchow.com/incrred/tricks.asp>).



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### Home Safety

Dogs are like toddlers – if left unsupervised, they can get into just about anything. Unfortunately, many common household fixtures can be dangerous and even deadly to your dog. Also remember that dogs, and especially puppies, have a lower vantage point than you and may be attracted to things that you do not see when you are standing. Here are some suggestions to keep your dog out of harm's way:

**CONFINEMENT** – Confine your puppy or dog to a safe area inside when you are away from home. One recommendation, particularly for a puppy, is a crate.

**SECURE POISONOUS MATERIALS** – Common household materials such as laundry detergent, antifreeze, disinfectants, pesticides, rodent poisons, insecticides, cleaning fluid, fertilizer and mothballs can be deadly. Store all harmful substances in tightly closed areas where your dog cannot gain access.

**SECURE WINDOWS** – Windows, balconies, upper porches and high decks are all dangerous places. Keep your dog away from these when you are not there to supervise and make sure these places are secured to prevent accidents.

**KEEP DANGEROUS OBJECTS OUT OF REACH** – Don't leave nails, needles, staples, push pins, and aluminum can tabs or items such as buttons, string, ribbon, yarn and thread where a dog can chew and swallow them. Store plastic bags where your dog can't get inside them and chew or tear them, which can cause suffocation.

**KEEP DANGEROUS PLACES CLOSED** – Cabinets, dresser drawers and washing machine/dryer doors should remain closed at all times as your dog could become trapped inside. Keep toilet lids down too, as residual toilet bowl cleanser left in the bowl is harmful if swallowed.

**PROTECT EXPOSED ELECTRICAL WIRES** – Cover electrical wires with special plastic covers or cover with a harmless but unpleasant-tasting substance such as lemon juice to prevent the risk of injury from chewing.

**USE CAUTION WITH MEDICATIONS** – You should never give your dog any medications unless under the directions of a veterinarian, as many medications that are used safely in humans can be deadly if a dog ingests. Also, store any prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs in closed cabinets. Many human medications, vitamins and diet pills can be potentially lethal, even in small dosages.



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**DO NOT KEEP POISONOUS PLANTS IN THE HOUSE** – Many common household plants such as philodendron, ivy, dieffenbachia, and caladium are poisonous. Ask your veterinarian for a complete list of hazardous plants and avoid keeping them in the house altogether (if you must keep, make sure the plant is kept in a hanging basket completely out of your dog's reach). The ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center at 888-4ANI-HELP (888-426-4435). There is a consultation fee.

**KEEP FOOD OFF COUNTERS, TABLES OR OTHER EASILY-ACCESSIBLE PLACES**, as some people food, such as chocolate, are toxic to dogs.

**CONDUCT A "PET CHECK"** – Get in the habit of conducting a "pet check" before leaving home to make sure that your dog has not accidentally been locked out of the house or is in a closet, empty room or other potentially dangerous place.



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### Training

All dogs need to be trained, and ideally, this should involve obedience training classes, which are offered at most shelters or humane societies for a nominal cost. As a responsible dog owner, it is important that you always control your dog and discourage inappropriate behavior. Talk to your veterinarian, a board certified pet behaviorist, or a professional trainer to learn more.

### Boarding

If your dog spends a lot of time alone at home, you may want to consider investing in “doggie day care.” These facilities, which are in many communities, provide your dog with a variety of activities, including play sessions with other dogs and training. This is also an option if you are traveling and are unable to leave your dog with a friend or family member. You can find such places in your local phone book or ask your veterinarian to recommend a respected place.



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### Grooming Needs

In addition to keeping your dog looking his/her best, grooming is a great way to assess a dog's health. Learn what is normal for your dog and what characteristics distinguish him/her, as any changes in appearance or behavior may be signs of illness. In general, the kind of routine you establish will depend on how much time he/she spends outside, weather conditions and whether he/she is a longhaired or shorthaired breed.

It helps if grooming is introduced early in life, but if that is not the case, you can build your dog's comfort level with grooming by engaging in frequent grooming sessions. Start with short sessions and reassure and praise your dog as you groom him/her to reinforce it as a pleasant experience. Get your dog used to opening his/her mouth for inspection and having his/her ears and paws handled. If you acquire a dog that resists grooming, he/she has likely had a bad experience but, with your patience, can be shown that there is nothing to fear.

#### Some other general guidelines:

**LONGHAIRIED BREEDS** – These dogs generally require daily grooming as their hair easily tangles and mats. A sturdy wide-tooth metal comb and slicker brush are the ideal tools to use.

**SHORTHAIRED BREEDS** – In general, groom two-to-three times a week with a brush with natural bristles, a rubber curry comb or grooming hand mitt.

**BRUSHING** – All dogs, regardless of their haircoat, should be brushed. Brushing is recommended every day in the spring and fall when shedding can be very heavy. Be sure to brush down to the skin as the massaging action helps loosen and remove dandruff flakes. Brush under your dog's body too – not just on his/her back.

**BATHING** – Dogs should be bathed when they look dirty and/or have a strong dog odor. Puppies or small dogs can be bathed in sinks while large breeds may require bathtubs. In warm weather, a child's wading pool and garden hose may be used. Before bathing a longhaired dog, brush the coat thoroughly to remove dead hair and mats. Shampoo twice with a shampoo that is specially formulated for dogs and rinse after each shampoo. (The first shampoo loosens the dirt while the second shampoo removes it.) Be sure to use warm water. Let the dog "drip dry" for a few minutes, then cover with a dry towel before brushing dry. A hair dryer may be used if held 12 inches or more from the coat. Never leave a wet dog outside in cold weather. (In fact, bathing is not advisable in cold weather; use dry "bathing cloths" instead.) Too frequent bathing may cause dry skin.



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**NAIL CARE** – A dog's nails do not wear down naturally, so it is your responsibility to trim them regularly. Excessively long nails can damage feet, making walking and running painful. When trimming the nails, cut the tips only and do not cut too far back where you may hit a vein, causing it to bleed. If you find nail trimming difficult, ask your veterinarian or a professional groomer to do the trimming.

**SPECIAL GROOMING PROBLEMS** – Here are tips for some common grooming problems:

- 1. Warm weather** – Regular grooming not only helps control summertime shedding, but also helps in flea and tick control. Examine your dog's haircoat carefully during each grooming session for evidence of external parasites.
- 2. Shaving and clipping** – A dog's haircoat serves as an insulator against the heat. For this reason, close clipping should be avoided during hot weather. Dogs who have recently received short haircuts may become sunburn victims and are as susceptible to heat stress as dogs with their natural haircoats.
- 3. Post-swimming** – Always rinse your dog with warm water after a day at the beach as salt water can irritate his/her skin.
- 4. Fields and wooded areas** – If your dog is in a field or wooded area, burrs may adhere to his/her haircoat and cause irritation if not removed. Sometimes seeds find their way into a dog's ears, nostrils, mouth and paw pads and even internally. Prompt removal helps prevent problems, so always check his/her coat for burrs and ticks if he's been in such an area and if any are found, saturate them with Vaseline, mineral oil or olive oil. Then carefully work out by hand, using your thumb and forefinger.
- 5. Removing tar from the feet** – Hot pavement, sticky tar or gravel may cause footpad problems. To remove tar from footpads, rub them with petroleum jelly, butter, margarine or vegetable shortening until the tar softens for easy removal. Or soften the tar by soaking paws in warm water, then mineral oil. Repeat until the tar loosens and is easily removed. Never use kerosene or turpentine to remove tar. These chemicals irritate the skin and can be toxic to your pet. Rub butter, margarine or vegetable shortening into the affected area and let it remain.





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### Warm Weather Cautions

Mingled with the joys of summer are possible dangers to our pets. Being aware of threats to their comfort and safety can make summertime living easier for you and your dog.

**HEARTWORM** – Summer means mosquitoes and the danger of heartworm disease. Before warm weather arrives, schedule a trip to your veterinarian to have your dog checked for heartworm as well as other internal parasites and to begin a heartworm prevention program.

**FLEAS** – Your veterinarian can recommend flea control products for your pet and its environment.

**PROVIDING PLENTY OF COOL, FRESH WATER** – will help keep your pet cool throughout the summer.

**CONFINEMENT IN A CAR OR ANY OTHER POORLY VENTILATED ENCLOSURE CAN BE FATAL TO A PET** – One study reports that when the outside temperature is 78 degrees Fahrenheit, a closed car will reach 90 degrees Fahrenheit in five minutes and 110 degrees in 25 minutes. Avoid excessive exercise of dogs during hot days or warm, humid nights. The best time to exercise dogs is either early in the morning or late in the evening.

**AS TEMPERATURES SOAR, PETS BECOME MORE VULNERABLE TO HEAT STRESS** – Puppies and kittens and geriatric dogs tend to be more susceptible. Others at risk include short-nosed breeds, like the bulldog and the pug; overweight pets; pets with cardiac or respiratory disorders; and those who recently moved from cool to warmer climates.

**HEATSTROKE** – is the most common kind of heat stress. It develops rapidly and is often associated with exposure to high temperatures, humidity and poor ventilation. Symptoms include panting, a staring or anxious expression, failure to respond to commands, warm, dry skin, extremely high temperature, dehydration, rapid heartbeat and collapse.

To treat heatstroke, move the dog to a cool place and immerse the pet in cool water or soak it with a garden hose to help lower its body temperature. With any form of heat stress, prompt veterinary attention is important.

Remember, never leave your dog outside or in a closed car in extreme heat. Leaving windows open a few inches in heat does not provide sufficient air to keep your dog cool and comfortable. For general guidelines on appropriate environmental temperature ranges, consult your veterinarian.



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### Cold Weather Cautions

The cold winter months present special concerns to dog owners, particularly if your dog is kept or allowed outdoors.

**PROPER NOURISHMENT** – is a prime consideration. Well-nourished pets, particularly those housed outdoors, are better prepared to withstand the rigors of winter. Outdoor pets normally need more food to generate enough energy to cope with the cold. This is easily accomplished by feeding a high-quality nutritionally complete and balanced dog food. You don't need any supplements unless your veterinarian recommends them for a health condition. If this is the case, chances are your pet should not be housed outside.

**ALONG WITH A GOOD DIET, OUTDOOR PETS NEED FRESH WATER** – They cannot eat snow in sufficient amounts to prevent dehydration. Offer your dog fresh water several times during the day. Electrically-heated water bowls are available but they must be installed safely and monitored regularly.

**DOGS HOUSED INDOORS MAY REQUIRE LESS FOOD** – in order to maintain good body condition. They tend to be less active and expend less energy. Please continue their regular walks and play periods. Short-haired or geriatric dogs or those with health problems need the protective warmth of a dog sweater or jacket during outside jaunts.

If you notice a weight gain or loss, adjust food portions accordingly. If you have questions about your pet's body condition, check with your veterinarian.

**OUTDOOR PETS NEED HOUSING TO HIDE FROM SEVERE COLD** – Your dog's shelter should be insulated, elevated, protected from prevailing winds and watertight. Because they use their own body to keep warm, the shelter should be small enough to preserve your dog's body heat. Bedding should be kept clean and dry.

You may also want to make "paw checks" a regular part of your winter care routine. Remove packed snow or ice from between the toes of your pet's paw pads and wipe the paws thoroughly. Otherwise, moisture can be trapped and cause sores. Salt and other de-icers spread on sidewalks and roads may also irritate the pads and cause them to bleed.

**DAMPNESS IS A WINTER DANGER** – Dry your dog if he/she gets wet and do all you can to keep him/her dry.



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**ANTIFREEZE** – another winter danger is antifreeze which is toxic to pets. Dogs are attracted to it because of its sweet taste and lap it up when it is not properly disposed of. Store antifreeze where your dog cannot reach it. Anti-freeze poisoning is serious and requires immediate veterinary treatment.

**DRY SKIN AND SHEDDING** – You may find your dog experiencing dry skin and shedding. This is usually the result of low humidity. Frequent brushing helps remove dead hairs, skin and stimulates oil glands.

**FIREPLACES** – Although a fire in the fireplace is cozy, it may create problems for pets. If your dog lies too close to the fire, he/she could be in danger of hot cinders or sparks. Fireplace heat also contributes to dry skin and fumes from the fireplace may cause respiratory problems in some pets. Keep fireplaces screened and train pets to keep a safe distance.

**FROSTBITE** – Sometimes a dog may accidentally be left outside or become lost during a heavy snowstorm. Frostbite may result. Signs are flushed and reddened tissues, white or grayish tissues, evidence of shock and scaliness of skin and possible shedding of dead skin. The ears, paw pads and tail are more frequently affected.

Let's hope your dog never experiences frostbite. If the unthinkable happens, please remember – frozen tissues should never be rubbed. This causes additional tissue damage. Prompt veterinary treatment is needed. If this is not possible, warm the affected area rapidly by immersing in warm, never hot, water or by using warm, moist towels that are changed frequently. As soon as the affected tissues become flushed, discontinue warming. Gently dry the affected tissues and lightly cover with a clean, dry, non-adhering bandage. A dog who has suffered from frostbite should be protected from exposure to the cold, as frostbitten tissues are more susceptible to repeated freezing.

**PUPPIES AND GERIATRIC DOGS ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE** during harsh winter weather. Please give them extra attention. If you have any concerns about your pet's well-being and health during the cold months or would like general guidelines on appropriate environmental temperature ranges, consult your veterinarian.



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### Caring for an Ill Pet

Despite your best efforts to the contrary, there may be times when your dog becomes ill or encounters a medical emergency. The following should keep you prepared for both:

**KEEP IMPORTANT INFORMATION HANDY** – Saving time is crucial in any emergency. Phone numbers of the veterinarian, nearest poison control center, and closest emergency veterinary care facility should be kept at hand. (You can fill out the emergency preparedness form)

**KEEP A WELL-STOCKED FIRST AID KIT** – Stock a first aid kit with sterile gauze, bandages, sterile eyewash, tweezers, cold pack, rectal thermometer, towel and gloves.

**CALL AHEAD** – Always call ahead to alert the veterinary staff that an emergency is on the way.

**EXTREME WEATHER CAUTION** – Never leave your dog outside or in a closed car in extreme cold or heat. Leaving windows open a few inches in heat does not provide sufficient air to keep your dog cool and comfortable. For general guidelines on appropriate environmental temperature ranges, consult your veterinarian.

**SYMPTOMS THAT MAY INDICATE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY** – Signs to look for, which indicate that your dog may need veterinary attention:

1. Frequent sneezing or coughing spells
2. Severe diarrhea for more than 24 hours or that's accompanied by other signs of illness
3. Constipation that persists for more than 24 hours
4. Persistent vomiting or vomiting of blood or greenish-yellow bile
5. Labored breathing or panting
6. Straining to urinate or blood in the urine
7. Acute swelling or small body lumps
8. Lameness or pain
9. Loss of appetite for several days
10. Sudden weight gain or loss
11. A dull, patchy coat which sheds heavily
12. Red, watery eyes or nasal discharge
13. Lying or crouching listlessly
14. Any changes in elimination patterns
15. Resenting or resisting handling or petting
16. Scratching or biting by a normally even-tempered dog



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**PROVIDING FIRST AID FOR COMMON EMERGENCIES** – In an emergency, try to remain calm and think clearly. Approach your injured dog in a quiet, non-threatening manner and speak in a soothing tone as you call him/her by name. You may need to restrain your dog by placing a blanket over him and looping a strip of fabric over his muzzle.

Taking your pet to a veterinary facility immediately for treatment is recommended if your dog encounters any of the following medical emergencies:

1. Poisonous plants
2. Objects in the mouth
3. Electric shock
4. Wounds

**ADMINISTERING MEDICATION** – If your veterinarian prescribes oral medication, ask for a demonstration of how to administer it. It may not be enough to simply mix it with his/her food as he/she may sense it has been added and avoid eating it. Here are some tips to make it easier:

### How to give your dog a pill

1. Wrap one hand over your dog's muzzle and lift his/her head up with thumb and forefinger on either side of his/her upper lips.
2. With the other hand, gently but firmly pull down his/her jaw and place the pill at the very back of his/her tongue.
3. Close your dog's mouth and hold it shut. Firmly stroke downward along his/her throat until he/she swallows.

### How to give your dog a liquid medication

1. Gently tilt your dog's head back.
2. Slowly place the medication into the pouch formed by the dog's cheek and teeth.
3. Encourage your dog to swallow by stroking his/her throat.



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## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WORKSHEET

Prompt veterinary care is crucial in the case of a medical emergency, so fill out the form below and place it in a convenient location such as on your refrigerator or near the phone.

NAME OF VETERINARIAN:

ADDRESS OF VETERINARIAN:

VETERINARIAN PHONE NUMBER:

VETERINARIAN CLINIC HOURS:

EMERGENCY CLINIC NUMBER:

EMERGENCY CLINIC NUMBER:

POISON CONTROL:

888-4ANI-HELP (888-426-4435)



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## HOW OLD IS YOUR DOG?

Relative age of your dog in “human years”

DOG'S AGE	0-20 lbs	21-50 lbs	51-90 lbs	> 90 lbs
<i>5 YEARS</i>	36	37	40	42
<i>6 YEARS</i>	40	42	45	49
<i>7 YEARS</i>	44	47	50	56
<i>8 YEARS</i>	48	51	55	64
<i>9 YEARS</i>	52	56	61	71
<i>10 YEARS</i>	56	60	66	78
<i>11 YEARS</i>	60	65	72	86
<i>12 YEARS</i>	64	69	77	93
<i>13 YEARS</i>	68	74	82	101
<i>14 YEARS</i>	72	78	88	108
<i>15 YEARS</i>	76	83	93	115
<i>16 YEARS</i>	80	87	99	123
<i>17 YEARS</i>	84	92	104	
<i>18 YEARS</i>	88	96	109	
<i>19 YEARS</i>	92	101	115	
<i>20 YEARS</i>	96	105	120	





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If you have a small breed or medium breed dog, he/she is considered a puppy through his/her first year. Many large breed dogs are considered puppies through their second year. Consult with your veterinarian to determine your dog's appropriate life stage.

### Nutrition

Use the recommended feeding guidelines on your puppy's food bag as a starting point on how much to feed your puppy. Since a puppy's nutritional needs differ depending on size, activity level, metabolism and breed, you should consult your veterinarian to determine the best food to provide. Monitor your puppy's weight carefully to make sure he/she doesn't become overweight, particularly if you have a large breed dog, as they are susceptible to weight gain.

Until your puppy stops growing, signaling adulthood, feed him/her a puppy food. Also follow these guidelines:

**FIRST SIX WEEKS** – Puppies generally nibble solid foods at three to four weeks of age but are not typically ready for weaning until six to eight weeks of age. Feed dry puppy food moistened with water during this stage but discard after one hour as it may spoil.

**SIX TO 12 WEEKS** – You may want to get your veterinarian's advice on pet food selection. In general, the amount of food depends on the breed and the food selected.

**3 TO 6 MONTHS** – Check package recommendations and adjust for healthy growth weight.

**6 TO 12 MONTHS** – Energy needs per pound of body weight begin to decrease. Adjust amount of food accordingly.

**2ND YEAR** – Once your puppy reaches his/her first birthday, he's officially an adult and is ready to make the gradual transition to an adult food. (If you have a large breed dog, consult your veterinarian on when to switch foods.) Start by gradually adding the new food to the previous food and reducing the previous food until, by the 10th day, he/she is only being fed the new food.

### How to Feed Your Puppy

For the best results, develop a regular feeding schedule, such as three small meals a day for younger pups. You can gradually reduce to one feeding in the morning and one in the evening as your puppy ages. The routine should not vary.



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### Behavior and Training

The best time to bring your puppy home is after he/she is weaned and before he/she becomes too accustomed to the place of his/her birth. Ten to twelve weeks is ideal because he's old enough to eat solid food but young enough to be attached to you right away.

If possible, plan to pick up your puppy at the beginning of the weekend so you and the entire family can have at least two full days with him/her to start his training. This will give your puppy time to get acquainted with everyone. Your dog will probably be homesick for a couple of days, whimpering and crying at bedtime or mealtime. But remember, he/she has just been taken away from his/her mother and littermates, and this is usual behavior.

It is important to accustom your puppy to being handled at a young age, so he/she becomes accepting of your touch. Regular petting, brushing, and stroking of his/her teeth, mouth and paws are important and will help make home health checks a breeze.

Gradually introduce puppy to new people and environments, so he/she is well socialized and feels more at ease in the presence of unfamiliar people, places and sounds. Get in the habit of rewarding your dog with kind words, petting, play or treats when he/she exhibits good behaviors.

**PUPPY TRAINING** – Your puppy should start a "kindergarten" training course once he/she has completed his/her core vaccination schedule, usually at 16 weeks. These are offered at some shelters for a nominal fee and in addition to answering many of your training questions, the presence of other dogs in the class will add to your puppy's socialization and distraction blocking. You can get a referral for a trainer from a veterinarian or breeder.

**BASIC TRAINING** – Every puppy should receive proper training as it will help keep his/her behavior in control when he's an adult dog. When you bring your puppy home, show him/her his/her crate, toys and food and water bowls.

**HOUSETRAINING** - The first step in housetraining is to decide whether your pup will be trained to eliminate indoors, outdoors, or both. If your dog will be trained to eliminate only outdoors, start by introducing your puppy to his/her spot for elimination. State commands like "go potty" or "hurry up." After your dog does his duty, bring him/her inside for food and water. About 15 to 20 minutes after the meal, take your puppy outside again for elimination, returning your dog to his/her "spot" at each elimination time. Maintain a regular feeding, drinking, and elimination schedule.



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If you plan to train your dog to eliminate indoors, consider using Purina secondnature™ brand Dog Litter Housetraining System for puppies who will weigh up to 35 pounds when full grown. Purina secondnature™ is a convenient, stress-free alternative consisting of three elements: Super-absorbent Dog Litter, Specially Designed Litter Pan, and an Easy to Follow Training Guide (found in every secondnature™ bag.) The centerpiece of the system is the training guide.

Here's how secondnature dog litter works:

**SCHEDULING FOOD, WATER AND EXERCISE** By scheduling times for food, water and exercise, you'll be training your puppy's digestive system to be more predictable.

**CONFINEMENT/CRATING** Too much freedom too quickly can be overwhelming to a puppy, so make your puppy comfortable by placing him/her in a crate that's near your family activity center - the kitchen, utility room or a foyer.

**PRAISE** After the litter pan is filled with dog litter, gently place your puppy inside the pan and provide positive encouragement with a cue word or phrase ("Go potty!"). Be patient! When he eliminates appropriately (in the pan), always praise and reward him/her - softly say "Good puppy."

To find out more information on secondnature visit <http://doglitter.com>.



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### Veterinary Care Guidelines for Puppies

The following wellness checklist outlines some of the important veterinary care your puppy needs during the first year. However, this should only be used as a general guide – it is important that you work together with your veterinarian to ensure your puppy is receiving the appropriate health care throughout his/her first year.

#### 6 TO 10 WEEKS

##### At the Vet -

1. A baseline physical examination, including:
  - Fecal examination
  - First vaccinations for core vaccines: Distemper, Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus (DHPP)
2. Ask your veterinarian if the following non-core vaccinations are necessary:
  - Bordetella (Canine Cough Complex)
  - Lyme Disease
  - Coronavirus
  - Leptospirosis

**IMPORTANT:** Try to limit exposure to public places and other dogs until the 16-week core vaccination schedule is complete

##### Things to Consider - Important for first visit:

- Be prepared to give your puppy's history (birth date, any vaccinations already received)
- Discuss core and non-core vaccinations with your veterinarian and establish vaccination schedule:
  - Core vaccinations are those vaccinations required by law
  - Non-Core vaccinations are optional depending on your veterinarian's recommendation and your pet's lifestyle
- Discuss spaying/neutering options with your veterinarian; schedule procedure if possible
- Discuss puppy training classes (cost, location; etc.) and begin classes once puppy has completed the 16-week core vaccination schedule
- Find out the clinic's hours, emergency clinic number; etc.
- You may want to drive by the emergency clinic to become familiar with its location



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### 10 TO 12 WEEKS

**At the Vet** - Veterinarian visit for vaccinations:

1. Second vaccination/boosters for DHPP
2. Rabies vaccine (check with veterinarian on timing, as laws vary among communities)

**Things to Consider** -

- Discuss heartworm and flea prevention programs with your veterinarian.
- If haven't done so already, discuss puppy training classes (cost, location; etc.) and begin classes before 12 weeks
- Now is a great time to puppy-proof your home, including:
  - Securely screen all windows
  - Securely store poisonous materials
  - Keep toilet lids down and doors and drawers closed
- Puppy will be teething and may chew on inappropriate items. Provide a safe chew toy instead. Ask your veterinarian to show you how to brush your puppy's teeth.

### 14 TO 16 WEEKS

**At the Vet** - Veterinarian visit for vaccinations:

1. Third vaccination/booster for DHPP
2. Rabies vaccine, if not given sooner (check with veterinarian on timing, as laws vary among communities)

**Things to Consider** - Now is a great time to introduce grooming and regular dental care. If you perform at-home grooming regularly, your puppy will get used to it, which will help as he/she gets older.

- Begin with short, daily grooming sessions
- Brush your puppy all over including his/her underside
- Handle your puppy's paws so he/she will allow nails to be trimmed
- Reassure and praise your puppy as you groom

**also**

- Talk to your veterinarian about scheduling your dog to be spayed or neutered.

### TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS:

- If your puppy has completed the 16-week core vaccination schedule, you can begin obedience class training and/or puppy agility class



## pediatric puppy

### 6 MONTHS

**At the Vet** - Veterinarian visit for vaccinations:

1. Physical exam for overall development and body condition
2. Dental check-up (most of your puppy's permanent canine teeth have come in)
3. Spay or neutering procedure, unless you are planning on breeding

**Things to Consider** - Talk to your veterinarian about:

- Any concerns you have with puppy's behavior or health and the veterinarian's recommendations
- Your puppy's weight and how to tell if he/she gets too heavy
- How to perform a Rib Check

**TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS:** Begin obedience class training and/or puppy agility class if you haven't already.

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## adulthood

Most dogs are considered adult after the first year of life, but some breeds mature more slowly. Consult with your veterinarian to determine your dog's appropriate life stage.

### Nutrition

The high-calorie requirements for a growing puppy diminish when your dog becomes an adult, and he/she ready to make the transition to an adult food. To avoid digestive upsets, you should gradually mix the new food with the previous food over the course of 7 to 10 days.

When your dog reaches adulthood, he/she enters the maintenance period. Normal healthy dogs who are not pregnant, nursing, or hardworking have relatively low energy requirements for maintaining an appropriate body condition. Feeding recommendations for adult dogs can vary, depending upon the breed, activity, metabolism and owner's preference. The amount fed should be adjusted so your dog maintains ideal body condition. Whether an animal is fed once or twice each day, it should be fed at the same time, and fresh drinking water should always be made available. Just as with humans, a dog's appetite may vary from day to day.

For dogs with lower caloric needs and/or for dogs that are less active, attention should be paid to the potential for excessive weight gain. Often a dog's weight can be reduced simply by eliminating table scraps and treats from the diet and by avoiding high-energy dog foods. Overweight dogs may have more health problems and a shorter life expectancy.





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## adulthood

### Behavior and Training

Your dog looks to you for the guidance he needs to grow into a well-behaved member of your family. He/she should master basic commands such as “come” and “heel,” and hopefully the groundwork of training was laid during your dog’s “puppyhood.” If this is not the case, know that it is never too late to teach your dog obedience training. Classes taught by a certified instructor are recommended and can help your dog master basic commands that he/she needs.

During your dog’s adult years, he/she may exhibit inappropriate behaviors, such as digging, which may be influenced by the lifestyle you maintain for your dog. Regular walks or play periods with your dog and praise for tricks you teach him/her will make your dog’s life fun and stimulating. Such a dog is less likely to develop annoying behavior problems resulting from boredom or anxiety. There may be other reasons at work though, so talk to a veterinarian, behaviorist or certified trainer to determine the best way to stop unwanted behaviors.



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## adulthood

### Veterinary Care Guidelines

Regular health care is essential throughout your dog's adult life. In general, healthy adult dogs should visit the veterinarian once a year. Use this wellness checklist to help guide you through your dog's adult years and ensure you're on top of all your dog's physical health needs. However, you should work with your veterinarian to establish the appropriate health plan for your dog.

As an easy reminder to keep on track with annual veterinary exams, you may want to schedule the annual check-up around your dog's birthday.

### Veterinary Care Guidelines for Adult Dogs\*

- 1 YEAR TO 10 YEARS FOR SMALL BREEDS
- 1 YEAR TO 7 YEARS FOR MEDIUM BREEDS
- 2 YEARS TO 5 YEARS FOR LARGE BREEDS

\* Older dogs' needs can differ. Refer to the section on Senior dogs for dogs older than 5, 7 or 10 years of age

### ADULT DOGS

At the Vet - Veterinarian visit for vaccinations:

1. Regular health checks are advisable at least once a year. Annual check-up may include:
  - Weight analysis (Rib Check)
  - General physical exam to check body systems
  - CBC test
  - Chemistry Profile
  - Heartworm test
  - Fecal examination
  - Nutritional counseling as necessary
  - Dental check-up
2. Core Vaccinations Boosters may be needed for:
  - Distemper
  - Hepatitis
  - Parainfluenza
  - Parvovirus
  - Rabies Vaccination (each year according to local law by your veterinarian)



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### 3. Non-core vaccinations may include:

- Bordetella (Canine Cough Complex)
- Lyme Disease
- Coronavirus (DHLPPC)
- Leptospirosis

### Things to Consider - Recommended questions for the veterinarian:

- How is my dog's overall health?
- Is my dog's weight in a healthy range? If not, how can I help my dog lose weight?
- Is my dog getting enough exercise? What are some healthy activities for my dog?
- Does my dog need to have any of the non-core vaccinations?
- What is the best vaccination schedule for my dog?

If interested, get recommendations from your veterinarian or breeder on the following specialized training:

- Hunting
- Retrieving
- Obedience
- Agility



## senior dogs

### Changes in the Senior Dog

Dogs mature at different rates, but as a rule, large-breed dogs mature earlier than small dogs. If your dog is age seven or older, he/she is probably approaching, or in, his/her senior years.

Even though your dog may be slowing down, there is no reason the older years can't be some of the best years. The best approach is to be on the lookout for possible age-related behavior and health changes, as this may mean a change in lifestyle for your dog and for you. Simply put, how old does your dog act, look, and feel? For starters, check out the Seven Signs of Senior below for some basic changes common to aging dogs.

**GRAYING MUZZLE OR COAT** – You will likely notice changes in your dog's haircoat, like gray hair around the muzzle and ears and light whiskers. A dog's coat can thin and become dull as he/she ages and you may notice that the skin thickens and becomes less pliable.

**SLOWING DOWN, STAYING DOWN** – Your dog's mobility may be affected as he/she ages. You may notice your dog experiencing stiffness in his/her leg, hip and shoulder joints. This could just be normal wear and tear, or it could be a result of an old injury or a sign of arthritis, which is common in older dogs. Check with your veterinarian for a professional opinion and appropriate treatment.

**SLEEPING MORE** – As your dog gets older, you may notice a decrease in energy level. In particular, your dog may become tired more easily and nap often.

**CHANGING HABITS** – Excessive thirst and frequent or uncontrolled urination are often signs of kidney problems or diabetes. Inappropriate urination may be a sign of incontinence caused by a hormone imbalance, which is most common in spayed females, or caused by other medical conditions. Your veterinarian should be contacted if you notice these changes in your dog.

**CHANGE IN WEIGHT** – Like humans, a dog's metabolism slows down as he/she gets older. And because older dogs may not be as active as they used to be, they have a tendency to gain weight. To tell if your dog is overweight, refer to the Rib Check guidelines. Sudden weight loss or unplanned chronic weight loss should be reported to your veterinarian. This could be an indication of a health problem.

**BAD BREATH** – An older dog is more likely to develop tooth and gum disease. Because of sore gums or loose teeth, he/she may let food drop out of his/her mouth or even refuse to eat.

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**VISION OR HEARING CHANGES** – If your dog doesn't respond to his/her name or verbal commands, or suddenly barks for no reason, it could indicate hearing problems. Regarding vision, a hazy, bluish cast on your aging dog's eyes is normal and usually does not hinder the eyesight. However, the hazy, whitish growth of cataracts can lead to blindness. Your veterinarian can help you distinguish the difference.

If your dog is experiencing one or more of the signs below, bring it to your veterinarian's attention.

- Increased thirst
- Increased urination
- Changes in elimination behaviors such as soiling in the house
- Excessive panting or changes in breathing patterns
- Increased stiffness or limping
- Altered appetite
- Weight change
- Changes in activity level
- Tremors or shaking
- Decreased responsiveness
- Circling behavior or other repetitive movements
- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Confusion or disorientation
- Excessive barking
- Less interaction with family



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### 4. Seniorhood 101:

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## senior dogs

### Nutrition

As dogs age, their energy requirements decrease, and they need more specialized nutrition. They should be fed a food specially formulated for older dogs. To accustom them to a new food, gradually mix the new food with the previous food over the course of 7 to 10 days. Keep in mind that age-related diseases may require your dog to eat a specialized diet, which you should discuss with your veterinarian.

### Wellness Program

You can help your senior dog live an active, pain-free life by providing a consistent wellness regimen. Just six months for a senior dog is the equivalent of about five years for a human. Given this rapid “aging” process, your dog should have more frequent health exams – at home and with the veterinarian – to watch for the onset of disease and other age-related problems.

Because their metabolism slows down with age, older dogs are prone to gaining weight. Excess weight can contribute to or exacerbate certain age-related health problems such as diabetes and arthritis. Attaining a healthy weight has been shown to improve mobility and lessen the symptoms of arthritis, including morning and evening stiffness and pain. So try to keep an eye on your dog's weight and make it a point to provide him/her with some form of physical activity for at least a few minutes a day. You should consult your veterinarian for recommendations on appropriate activities for your dog's age and health condition.

Because many geriatric diseases plague our older pets, including cancer, heart disease and diabetes, it is recommended that you ask your veterinarian what diseases your senior dog is susceptible to and know how to recognize some of the signs and signals. Fortunately, many advances in veterinary care have extended the life of our beloved pets, and there are specialists who can address and treat geriatric diseases.



## senior dogs

### Veterinarian Care Guidelines for Senior Dogs

- 10 YEARS AND ABOVE FOR SMALL BREEDS
- 7 YEARS AND ABOVE FOR MEDIUM BREEDS
- 5 YEARS AND ABOVE FOR LARGE BREEDS

Regular health care is essential throughout your dog's life, but it's particularly important as your dog gets older. No matter what the life span of your breed may be, identifying and understanding the needs of your aging pet will give you a head start on beating the life expectancy odds. In general, healthy senior dogs should visit the veterinarian every six months. Use the checklist below to help guide you through your dog's senior years and ensure you're on top of all his/her physical health needs.

As an easy reminder to keep on track with the bi-annual veterinarian exams, you may want to schedule the six-month check-up six months into the new year.

#### SENIOR DOGS

**At the Vet** - Regular health checks are advisable every six months.

Bi-annual check-up may include:

1. Review of all previous disorders
2. Complete physical examination
3. Complete blood chemistry profile
4. Complete blood count
5. Fecal examination and heartworm test
6. Chest x-rays if needed
7. Cardiac evaluation
8. Weight evaluation
9. Nutritional counseling if necessary
10. Core Vaccinations Boosters may be given for:
  - Distemper
  - Hepatitis
  - Parainfluenza
  - Parvovirus
  - Rabies Vaccination (each year according to local law by your veterinarian)
11. Non-core vaccinations may include:
  - Bordetella (Canine Cough Complex)
  - Lyme Disease
  - Coronavirus (DHLPPC)
  - Leptospirosis

**IMPORTANT:** As your dog gets older, give it a thorough home check-up every month to catch any signs of ill health. Conduct a Rib Check and assess your dog's body condition on a monthly basis as senior dogs are prone to gaining weight.

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**Things to Consider** - Recommended questions for your veterinarian:

- How is my dog's overall health?
- Is my dog's weight in a healthy range? If not, what is healthy?
- Is my dog getting enough exercise appropriate for his age? Why is it important for his/her well being?
- What is the best vaccination schedule for my dog?

#### **DISCUSS WITH YOUR VETERINARIAN:**

- Any changes you've noticed in your pet's behavior, activity level or appearance
- Beginning a fitness program if he/she isn't on one already





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### End of Life Options:

**SAYING GOOD-BYE** - Even if your dog isn't extremely old, you may have reason to consider the emotion-laden option of euthanasia - also called putting a dog to sleep.

It may be time to end your pet's life if his/her condition is irreversible, and in spite of medical care, his/her quality of life is inadequate. But even knowing that these situations hold true for your dog doesn't mean it's easy to consider euthanasia - in many cases, your dog is your best friend.

Many experts advise that the whole family should decide as a group whether to have their dog euthanized. Parents with younger children may choose to make the decision and then give the children a chance to say good-bye to their pet.

Be careful about using the phrase "put to sleep" when explaining the decision to children, who then may be afraid to sleep themselves or may expect the dog to wake up in the future. Tell them that the dog isn't going to get better and that ending his life is a loving way to end his pain. Answer your children's questions as honestly as possible, and let them cry and grieve. Some veterinarians let the pet owners be present when the dog is euthanized, but talk with your veterinarian ahead of time if you would like to be there.

In addition to euthanasia, ask your veterinarian about other diagnostic tools/treatments available for your dog. Fortunately, there are also counseling services available for pet owners as well as groups and hotlines for support through these difficult times.