

CHECK LIST: FOR A HEALTHY DOG



Congrats on your new pet! This welcome kit is a great reference for tips from Pinnacle Veterinary Center on how to keep your pup healthy and happy.



NECESSITIES

- Nutritious Foods & Treats
- Bowls - Ceramic or Stainless Steel for Food & Water
- Leash & Collar & Harness ID Tag & Microchip
- Crate
- Potty Training Aids
- Therapeutic Chew Toys
- Stain Remover & Odor Eliminator
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Brush or Comb
- Poop Bags
- Flea & Tick Preventative
- Heartworm Preventative
- Toothbrush Kit & Dental Aids
- Obedience Training (Formal Classes, Books, etc.)
- Routine Exams with your Veterinarian



OTHER SUGGESTED ITEMS

- Dog Treats & Cookies (low calorie)
- Nail Trimmer & Styptic Powder
- Air-Tight Food Container & Scoop
- Regular Grooming Program
- Dog Bed
- Short/Long Term Confinement Area
- Books on Dog Care (breed specific)
- De-Shedding Tool



DAILY PET CHECK: FOR A HEALTHY DOG



MY PET

- Is acting normal, active and happy.
- Does not tire easily after moderate exercise. Does not have seizures or fainting episodes.
- Has a normal appetite, with no significant weight change. Does not vomit or regurgitate food.
- Has normal appearing bowel movements (firm, formed, mucus-free). Doesn't scoot on the floor or chew under the tail excessively.
- Has a full glossy coat with no missing hair, mats or excessive shedding. Doesn't scratch, lick or chew excessively.
- Has skin that is free of dry flakes, not greasy, and is odor-free. Is free from fleas, ticks or mites.
- Has a body free from lumps and bumps. Has ears that are clean and odor-free.
- Doesn't shake head or dig at ears.
- Doesn't rub face and ears on the carpet after eating. Has eyes that are bright, clear and free of discharge.
- Has normal hearing and reactions to the environment. Walks without stiffness, pain or difficulty.
- Has healthy looking feet and short nails (including dewclaws). Breathes normally, without straining or coughing.
- Has normal thirst and drinks the usual amount of water at the same frequency.
- Urinates in the usual amount and frequency; color is normal, no unusual odor.
- Has a moist nose, free of discharge.
- Has clean white teeth, free from plaque, tartar or bad breath.
- Has gums that are moist and pink with no redness, swelling or offensive odor.
- Has no offensive habits (biting, chewing, scratching, or spraying urine, or aggressive behavior).





BRANDS WE RECOMMEND

DRY/KIBBLE

- Royal Canin
- Hills
- Wellness Core
- Go! & Now
- First Mate

WET

- Royal Canin
- Hills
- Canidae Pure
- Weruva & B.F.F.

When choosing a food, don't be afraid of the words "by-products" and "meal." The old definition of by-products included beaks, feet, feathers, etc. The new definition does NOT consider these to be by-products and are NOT included in your pet's food. The new definition of by-products includes cleaned bodily organs such as liver, kidney, stomach, heart, and intestines, which all contain vital nutrients for the health of your pet. High-quality does not always equal high price.

DOGS

For kittens, feed wet and dry food 3-4x daily until 3-4 months of age, then switch to 2-3x daily through adulthood.



FAQ: SPAYING & NEUTERING FOR DOGS



Q Will spaying or neutering cause my pet to become overweight and lazy?

A Spaying or neutering your pet will not necessarily make your pet become overweight and lazy. Heredity, diet, and how much and what type of exercise has more influence on the weight and attitude of your pet than does the surgery.

Q Is spaying or neutering dangerous?

A There is always a risk while a patient is under general anesthesia, whether the patient is human or animal. Veterinary procedures are very similar to human medical procedures. The risk is very small in healthy animals; and we take extra precautions for your pet's comfort, safety, and recovery.

Q Should I wait until my pet has had a litter?

A The answer to this question is NO.

Q When is the best time to have my pet undergo this procedure?

A The best age for spaying and neutering is around five months of age. The first heat cycle in a female cat usually occurs around this time. Neutering your pet prevents many undesirable behavior patterns.



BENEFITS OF SPAYING

- Eliminates Heat Cycles
- Prevents Accidental Pregnancies
- Significantly Reduces Undesirable Behavior
- Prevents Uterine Infections & Other Common In Pets
- Significantly Reduces Mammary Tumors



BENEFITS OF NEUTERING

- Significantly Reduces Prostate & Testicular Disease or Cancer
- Reduces Undesirable Behavior





PINNACLE VETERINARY CENTER

(661) 254-2000

23026 Soledad Canyon Rd,
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

Open 7 days a week,
10:00 AM to 10:00 PM



CRATING TRAINING: YOUR PUPPY



YOU CAN

- Enjoy peace of mind when leaving your dog at home alone, knowing that nothing can be soiled or destroyed and your pet is protected.
- Housebreak your dog quickly, using confinement to encourage control.
- Prevent “accidents” at night or when left alone.
- Effectively confine your dog when over-excited or bothered.
- Travel with your dog without risk of the driver being distracted or your dog getting loose

YOUR DOG CAN

- Enjoy the privacy and security of a “den” of their own.
- Easily learn to control their bowels and to associate elimination only with the outdoors or other designated locations.
- Be conveniently included in family outings, visits, and trips instead of being left behind.
- Stay out of trouble when you’re not around

CRATING A PUPPY

A crate should always be large enough to permit your dog to stretch out flat on his side without being cramped and to sit up without hitting his head on the top. Measure your dog from the tip of their nose to the base of their tail. In the instance that a crate is too large for a growing puppy, purchase a crate that comes with a partition so you can adjust it as your puppy grows. If the crate is too large your puppy will sleep in one end and use the other end as a bathroom.

The crate should be placed in or as close to a “people” area as possible, like the kitchen, family room, or bedroom.

A young puppy (8-16 weeks) should normally have no problem accepting the crate as their “own place.” Your pet may bark when first placed in the crate during the early stages of training. He or she is simply learning to accept this new environment.

For bedding, use a towel or blanket that can be easily washed. A nylon bed is also a great option because it is easy to clean and durable. Avoid putting newspaper in or under the crate, as it may encourage elimination.

Make it clear to all family members that the crate is NOT a playhouse. Its purpose is to be a special and comforting room for the puppy. You should not however allow your puppy to become overprotective of the crate. Your puppy should allow you to reach into the crate at any time.

Establish the “crate routine” immediately, closing the puppy in at regular intervals throughout the day and whenever your puppy must be left alone for up to 3-4 hours. Consider removing your puppy’s collar and tags because they could get caught.



SHEDDING: TIPS TO REDUCE SHEDDING



We all love our pets, but we do not love the fur they leave all over our homes and on us. Here are some tips to reduce shedding:

BATHING & GROOMING

Brush your pet regularly. Regular brushing reduces shedding, helps to reduce the undercoat without damaging the top-coat, and helps to bring out the pet's natural oils, promoting healthy skin and a shiny topcoat. Start brushing at a very young age to get your pet used to the sensation.

Bathe your pet as needed with an oatmeal-based shampoo. Dogs and cats benefit from bathing and grooming. A clean pet gets petted more and therefore a clean pet is a happy pet.

DIET

Provide a high-quality diet—look for foods that contain vitamins E and C (tocopherals and ascorbic acid) as a preservative rather than BHT, BHA, and ethoxyquin.

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements you give to your animal should be tailored to them. Please consult with your Heartfelt veterinarian..



VACCINES: PUPPY CARE SCHEDULE



Please note not all vaccines are for all pets. Your veterinarian will discuss with you the vaccinations that are right for your pet and its lifestyle. In addition to the schedule below, we recommend year-round flea and tick prevention.

8 WEEKS	12 WEEKS	16 WEEKS	5-6 MONTHS	1+ YEAR
1st DA2PP (Canine Distemper, Adenovirus Type 1 & 2, Parainfluenza, & Parvovirus)	2nd DA2PP (Canine Distemper, Adenovirus Type 1 & 2, Parainfluenza, & Parvovirus)	3rd DA2PP (Canine Distemper, Adenovirus Type 1 & 2, Parainfluenza, & Parvovirus)	Spay or Neuter Procedure ID/ Microchip Heartworm Test	DA2PP (Canine Distemper, Adenovirus Type 1 & 2, Parainfluenza, & Parvovirus)
Fecal Intestinal Parasite Screen	Flea/Tick & Heartworm Preventative	2nd Leptospirosis Vaccine Rabies Vaccine	Flea/Tick & Heartworm Preventative (Proheart6)	Bordetella (Kennel Cough)
Deworming Treatment	1st Leptospirosis Vaccine	2nd Fecal Intestinal Parasite Screen (if needed)		Leptospirosis Vaccine
Consider Pet Health Insurance & Preventive Plan	2nd Influenza Vaccine	Flea/Tick & Heartworm Preventative		Rabies Vaccine
Flea/Tick & Heartworm Preventative	Bordetella (Kennel Cough)			Fecal Intestinal Parasite Screen
Bordetella (Kennel Cough)				Influenza Vaccine
1st Influenza Vaccine				Deworming Treatment



Dog Vaccination Chart

Pet's Name _____

DOB _____

Breed _____



VACCINE	IMMUNIZATION DATES				VETERINARIAN
DA2PP or DHPP - (Distemper, Adenovirus-2 (Hepatitis), Parvovirus, Parainfluenza)					
DHLPP - Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza					
Leptospirosis					
Rabies					
Bordetella					
Lyme Disease					
Coronavirus					
Canine Influenza					
Heartworm					
Rattlesnake					



NOTES:



PINNACLE
VETERINARY

HOME HAZARDS: BE MINDFUL OF THESE



GENERAL HOME HAZARDS

Plants*	Lead	Fire Places
Drugs, Medicine, Vitamins	Wax	Fire Pits & Grills
Fabric Softener	Cotton Swabs	Compost
Mothballs	Pins, Needles, Tacks Paper Clips	Fertilizers & Mulch
Bleach	Rubber Bands	Algae
Disinfectants, Detergents, & Cleaning Products	Hair Pins & Fasteners	Bodies of Water
Solvents & Removers	Twists & Ties	Sinks & Tubs
Potpourri	String, Yarn, Dental Floss	Washers & Dryers
Tobacco Products	Buttons	Toilets
Lighter Fluid	Coins	Doors & Windows
Gasoline	Small Balls/Toys	Balconies
Oil & Antifreeze/Coolant	Batteries	Fences & Gates
De-icing Salts	Electric Cords	Branches & Sticks
Pesticides, Insect or Rodent Traps & Bait	Glass & Sharp Objects	



HARMFUL FOODS

Avocados	Grapes & Raisins	Moldy/Spoiled Foods
Chocolate	Macadamia Nuts	Fatty Foods
Coffee	Tea Leaves	Raw Yeast Doug
Onions	Alcohol	Gum, Candies, & Foods
Garlic	Salt	Sweetened with Xylitol



HAZARDS: PLANTS



PLANT HAZARDS

Aloe	Corn Flower Crocus	Ferns (Most Forms)	Marble Queen	Pokeweed
Amaryllis	Castor Bean	Gladiolas	Morning Glory	Poppy
Andromeda Japonica	Caladium	Golden Pothos	Mother In Law	Potato
Avocado	Ceriman	Golden Glow	Mountain Laurel	Red Emerald
Asparagus Fern	Clematis	Heavenly Bamboo	Mistletoe	Rhododendron
Australian Nut	Cordatum	Honeysuckle	Monkshood	Ribbon Plant
Autumn Crocus	Corn Plant	Hurricane Plant	Mushrooms	Rhubarb
Azalea	Cycads	Hyacinth	Narcissus	Sage Palm
Anemone	Cyclamen	Hydrangea	Nephtysis	Satin Pothos
Apricot	Cactus	Henbane	Nightshade	Scheffera
Arrow Grass	Cherry (Most Forms)	Hemlock	Nutmeg	Striped Dracaena
Buttercup	Chrysanthemum	Horse Chestnut	Oleander	Sweetheart Ivy
Belladonna	Daphne	Iris	Panda	Scotch Broom
Bird of Paradise	Daffodil	Ivy (Most Forms)	Philodendron	Skunk Cabbage
Bittersweet	Delphinium	Jerusalem Cherry	Poison Hemlock	Star Of Bethlehem
Black Locust	Dieffenbachia	Jimson Weed	Precatory Bean	Sweet Pea
Burning Bush	Dumbcane	Jack In The Pulpit	Privet	Tulip
Buckeye	Euonymus	Japanese Plum	Peach	Tobacco
Buddhist Pine	Eucalyptus	Java Beans	Pear	Tomato
Balsam	Elephant Ears	Jonquil	Peony	Virginia Creeper
Baneberry	Fiddle Leaf Philodendron	Kalanchoe	Periwinkle	Water Hemlock
Black-Eyed Susan	Flax	Lantana	Pimpernel	Wisteria
Bleeding Heart	Four O-Clock	Lilies (Most Forms)	Poinsettia	Wild Barley
Bloodroot	Foxglove	Lupine	Poison Ivy	Yew
Boxwood		Locoweed	Poison Oak	

For more information:

www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants





VALENTINE'S DAY

Many types of flowers and plants found in bouquets are harmful to dogs and cats if they are ingested (see our list of hazardous plants).

Chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and in severe cases chocolate poisoning can be fatal (see our list of harmful foods).

EASTER

Fake grass may look appetizing to your pets, but it could cause them to choke or obstruct their intestines if ingested.

Small toys and plastic Easter eggs can cause your pet to choke or damage their intestinal tract.

Chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and in severe cases chocolate poisoning can be fatal. Xylitol (artificial sweetener) in candy and gum is toxic to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).

4TH OF JULY

Fireworks can scare your pets, making them highly nervous or even run off. Fireworks can also cause serious injuries if detonated near your pet. If ingested, they are toxic.

With more people and food around during picnics and parties, be mindful of food accessible to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).

HALLOWEEN

Repeatedly opening doors for trick-or-treaters can increase the chances of your pet running out. If your pet likes to run out or is not friendly to other people, consider crating or keeping them in a secure area.

Pets are naturally curious and may be attracted to lights and flames. Dogs and cats could get burned on candles or knock them over and cause a fire.

Chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and in severe cases chocolate poisoning can be fatal. Xylitol (artificial sweetener) in candy, gum and mints is toxic to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).

THANKSGIVING

Animal bones, especially turkey, chicken, and other small animals, are very different from the large bones you find in the pet store. These small bones splinter easily and can cause serious internal damage if swallowed. Never give them to your pet.

Your pet will most likely become curious when they smell something cooking. Keep an eye on hot containers so that your pet does not tip them over and get burned.

There are many foods that are dangerous to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).





CHRISTMAS

Holiday plants like poinsettia, holly, lilies and mistletoe are all toxic to dogs and cats. (see our list of harmful plants).

Ribbons may look adorable on your pet but placing them around your pet's neck may cause them to choke. If swallowed, your pet could choke, or it could cause internal trauma.

Antique bubbling lights are attractive decorations, but may contain methylene chloride, which is a highly toxic chemical.

Fire salts contain chemicals that could be harmful to your pets.

Angel hair is a form of spun glass and can be irritating to the eyes and skin and could cause intestinal obstruction if eaten.

Christmas tree water containing preservatives or stagnant water could result in stomach upset if ingested. Styrofoam can cause your pets to choke if swallowed.

Ornaments can look like toys to your pet, but they can cause serious injury, especially if your pet breaks or swallows them.

Tinsel can cause choking or internal trauma if swallowed.

Pets are naturally curious and may be attracted to lights and flames. Dogs and cats could get burned on candles or knock them over and cause a fire.

Your pet will most likely become curious when they smell something cooking or baking. Keep an eye on hot containers so that your pet does not tip them over and get burned.

There are many foods that are dangerous to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Balloons and confetti can cause your pet to choke or obstruct their intestines if ingested. Keep an eye on your pets when they're around these items or move them to an area that is not decorated.

New Year's Eve can be a loud holiday. Unfortunately, loud noises can frighten pets and cause them to be overly nervous or run off. Keep your pets away from noise makers, loud music and other sounds that startle them.

Watch your pets around party foods and alcoholic beverages, that are often left unattended. There are many foods that are dangerous to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).



HOW TO GREET A DOG: & WHAT TO AVOID



Human to Human INCORRECT



Avoid reaching into their safety zone.



Avoid rushing up.



Avoid interactions without asking.



Avoid staring at people. This is scary.



Avoid looming over.



Avoid reaching into personal space.



Avoid close interaction if the person is afraid of you.

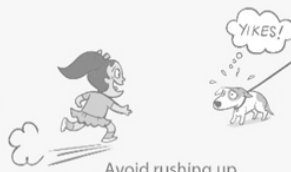


Avoid touching inappropriately.

Human to Dog INCORRECT



Avoid reaching in or towards the dog's car.



Avoid rushing up.



Avoid interacting with unfamiliar dogs, especially if they're tied up.



Avoid staring at or approaching head-on.



Avoid leaning over or towards dogs even when you change position to squat or get up.



Avoid reaching your hand out for the dog to sniff.



Avoid petting if the dog looks nervous or tense. Just admire him instead.



Avoid hugging, kissing, and patting roughly. This is too familiar and disliked by many dogs.

Human to Dog CORRECT



Stand a safe distance away so that you are not a threat.



Approach slowly (at a relaxed walk).



Ask if you can interact first.



Approach sideways and look using your peripheral vision.



Stay outside the dog's bubble and present your side to the dog.



Let the dog approach at his own rate.



It's OK to pet the dog if he looks relaxed, comes up to you, and solicits your attention by rubbing against you.



Pet gently.

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KIDS & DOGS: HOW TO INTERACT



BE KIND

Be polite and kind to pets. Learn to recognize when your dog is scared or anxious.

Comfortable



Uncomfortable



PLAY APPROPRIATELY

Play games that are appropriate for your pet or teach him training tricks.

Playing Fetch



Training & Teaching

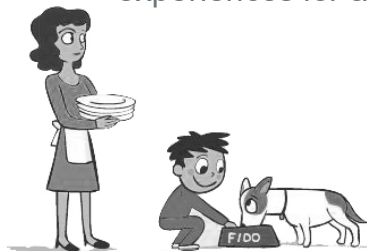
Walking & Running



Hide-N-Seek

ALWAYS REMEMBER

Supervise your kids to avoid accidents and train your dog to associate the kids with positive experiences for appropriate pet-child interaction.



Source: www.drsophiayin.com, Dr Sophia Yin, DVM, MS





What is Laser Therapy?

Laser therapy uses a beam of light able to penetrate deeply into tissues and induce chemical changes in cells. This is called photo-bio-stimulation.

What does it do?

The particles of light or photons penetrate damaged cells and stimulate healing and pain relief within those tissues. Therapeutic lasers have no effect on normal cells. They are not simple heat treatments, but rather a method of increasing cellular metabolism. This speeds up and facilitates the healing process.

Can it hurt my pet?

Therapeutic lasers are not the same as cutting lasers used in surgery. They will not burn but will create warmth in the treated area.

What can it treat?

Most conditions that are associated with inflammation, wounds or pain can be treated.

- Post-surgical pain, wound healing and swelling
- Chronic inflammatory and/or painful conditions such as arthritis, nerve entrapment, joint or muscle pain/swelling
- Non-healing wounds
- Laser treatment Improves nerve function following injury
- Lasers can be used as “needleless” acupuncture point stimulation

Can laser therapy be used on people?

Laser therapy was discovered in Hungary in 1967 and used in the Soviet Union and China during the 1970's-1980's. In 1993 research on laser treatments at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Princeton lead to the effort to compile data to comply with FDA regulations and in 1998 the North American Association for Laser Therapy was established.

How long are treatments?

Treatment sessions can be as short as one minute if one small area is involved and up to thirty minutes for multiple joints in the case of severe arthritis.

How many treatments are needed?

The frequency of treatments is as important as the number of treatments. We usually advise six treatments for most cases, sometimes more for acute conditions. Generally, we treat three times the first week, twice the second week and once the third. The effects of laser therapy are cumulative and therefore not as successful if many days pass between initial treatments.





Knowing about common dog diseases and being aware of appropriate prevention and treatment can better help you provide excellent care. Some of the most common and serious dog diseases have been made less common through vaccines; however, these diseases continue to threaten a dog that lacks proper immunization. The following diseases can be prevented through vaccinations.

Distemper

Canine distemper is caused by a highly contagious, airborne virus. It affects the dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems. Early symptoms are those of a "cold" — runny eyes and nose, fever, cough, and often diarrhea. Later in the course of disease there may be nervous twitching, paralysis, and seizures (convulsions). There is no successful treatment.

Hepatitis (Adenovirus)

Canine infectious hepatitis is a viral disease transmitted by urine, feces, or saliva of infected animals. It affects the liver, kidney, and blood vessels. The signs are fever, tissue swelling, and hemorrhage. Treatment may require blood transfusions and intensive care.

Leptospirosis

Canine leptospirosis is caused by bacteria spread through contact with nasal secretions, urine, or saliva of infected animals. The disease also can infect humans. Lepto infects the kidneys and causes fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and jaundice. Treatment requires antibiotics, intensive care, and intravenous (IV) fluid therapy. Dogs that recover may be left with permanent kidney damage.

Kennel Cough

Canine infectious tracheobronchitis is caused by several viruses (including parainfluenza) and bacteria (including Bordetella). This highly contagious disease attacks the respiratory system, causing a chronic, dry, hacking cough. It is generally a mild infection, but it may progress to severe pneumonia in young puppies or older dogs.

Parvo

Canine parvovirus is a deadly contagious viral disease that is spread by contact with infected fecal material. The virus is difficult to kill and is easily spread. It attacks the gastrointestinal system, causing fever, lethargy, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, and rapid dehydration. Treatment requires intensive IV fluid and supportive therapy and has a variable rate of success.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral infection of all mammals, including man. It is transmitted by the bite of an infected animal. The virus infects the central nervous system, causing a brain infection (encephalitis), which is always fatal. There is no treatment for dog or man after symptoms appear. However, a vaccine is effective in preventing the disease in people if it is administered soon after their possible exposure.





Heartworms

Heartworms are devastating internal parasites that live in a dog's heart and in the big vessels near the heart, where they cause severe damage to the circulatory system and lungs. They are transmitted by the bite of a mosquito that has bitten an infected dog. Treatment is difficult, but preventive measures are available. Dogs should be tested annually. If the test is positive, treatment may be attempted. If the test is negative, preventive medication can be given to your dog on a monthly basis throughout the year. Consult with your veterinarian to determine the best heartworm prevention plan for your dog.

Tapeworms

Tapeworms are long, segmented worms. They are transmitted when a dog ingests a larval stage of the worm found in a flea or the raw meat of small mammals. A dog that hunts on its own or has had fleas will likely develop tapeworms. Individual tapeworm segments are easily seen in freshly passed feces. Special deworming medication is required for treatment.

Roundworms

The long, thin spaghetti-like Ascarids worms inhabit the intestine. Some types of these worms can be seen in an infected dog's feces. These worms commonly create a problem in puppies, where they cause stunted growth, lethargy, diarrhea, vomiting, and a pot-bellied appearance. In severe cases, ascarids can cause seizures (convulsions).

Hookworms

Hookworms attach themselves to the intestinal wall and suck blood from the dog. They can be transmitted in utero and via the mother's milk to newborn puppies. Consequently, puppies may have hookworms at a very early age. Signs of infection include lethargy, stunted growth, anemia, and dark, tarry feces. Hookworms are a potentially life-threatening parasite at any age. Blood transfusions may be necessary in advanced cases.

Whipworms

These are tiny worms that inhabit and develop in the lower bowel. They often cause chronic watery diarrhea and weight loss. Their life cycle is longer than most intestinal parasites, and proper timing of repeated deworming is important for their control.

Influenza

Dog flu, or canine influenza virus, is an infectious respiratory disease caused by an influenza A virus, similar to the viral strains that cause influenza in people. There are two known strains of dog flu found in the United States: H3N8. H3N2. Signs of influenza include coughing (both moist & dry, sneezing, nasal discharge, purulent nasal discharge, runny eyes, fever, lethargy, difficulty breathing. Dog flu symptoms resemble kennel cough symptoms, which is also an illness you should talk to your veterinarian about as soon as you notice symptoms.





Fleas

Fleas are readily seen in a dog's haircoat. They are pencil-lead size, brown, compressed side to side and seem to be in constant motion. They are seen most easily at the base of the tail, between the ears, or in the short hair on the abdomen. Many treatments are available; however, the dog's environment must be treated just as vigorously, due to infant flea stages that are on your pet. Flea control should be implemented at the earliest sign of flea infestation because fleas multiply rapidly and a small problem becomes a major one in just a few days. While most dogs scratch with fleas, some dogs are also allergic to flea saliva. For them, one flea bite can set off an allergic reaction of severe skin inflammation.

Ticks

Ticks are most prevalent in early spring and are most commonly found on outdoor dogs that get into underbrush and wooded areas. Ticks can transmit several diseases and should be removed with care. Grasp the tick near its head with a pair of tweezers and pull away from the skin with a firm tug. Do not try to kill the tick first. Disinfect the area with alcohol to prevent infection.

Lice

These are small, light-colored parasites that are transmitted dog to dog. They can be seen at the base of the hair. Signs of lice infestation (pediculosis) are a rough and dry haircoat, matted hair, and scratching and biting of the skin.

Mange

Mites cause two types of mange in dogs. Sarcoptic mange is caused by the sarcoptic mite, a microscopic parasite similar to a chigger. These mites are transmitted from dog to dog and can also infect human skin. They burrow into the skin and cause severe itching and consequent skin irritation and inflammation. Hair loss can be severe and generalized over the body. Diagnosis by a veterinarian is essential, and treatment is usually quite effective. All animals in contact with the infected dog should be treated at the same time.

Demodectic mange is caused by demodectic mites that destroy the hair follicle in which they reside. This causes small patches of hair loss that can spread to the entire body. The initial skin lesions may become infected and are difficult to treat. The tendency to develop demodectic mange is thought to be hereditary. It is seen most frequently in pure-bred dogs. Demodectic mange is not contagious. Diagnosis and treatment by a veterinarian are necessary; treatment is difficult.

Ear Mites

These mites tunnel in the skin of the outer ear canal. They are easily transmitted from dog to dog or cat to dog. They can be seen in the ear with magnification. Ear mites are suspected when dark coffee-ground debris is present in the ears. Infestation signs are head shaking and scratching at the ears. Left untreated, ear mites predispose the ear to secondary bacterial infection. Treatment requires cleaning of the ear by a veterinarian and use of mite-killing insecticide. Be sure to treat any other cats or dogs in the household.

