

# Your Beagle

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



## Beagles: What a Unique Breed!

Your dog is special! She's your best friend and companion and a source of unconditional love. Chances are that you chose her because you like beagles, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Even temper and gentle disposition
- Intelligent, friendly, and easily won over
- Great with kids and other dogs; a true family pet
- Plenty of stamina
- Excellent hunting dog

No dog is perfect, though, and you may have noticed these characteristics, too:

- Single-minded and determined, which can make training difficult
- Has a tendency to bark or howl when excited or faced with the unfamiliar
- Easily bored or distracted if not given something to do
- Prone to separation anxiety
- Needs regular exercise and diet regulation to avoid weight gain

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's got her own personality, and you love her for it.



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## Your Beagle's Health

We know that because you care so much about your dog, you want to take good care of him. That's why we'll tell you about the health concerns we'll be discussing with you over the life of your beagle.

Many diseases and health conditions are genetic, meaning they're related to your pet's breed. That doesn't mean your dog will have these problems; it just means that he's more at risk than other dogs. We'll describe the most common issues for beagles to give you an idea of what may come up. Of course we can't cover every possibility here, so always check with us if you notice any unusual signs or symptoms.

This guide, and the health evaluation schedule it contains, helps us and you plan for your pet's health-care needs. At the end of this booklet, we've included a description of what you can do at home to keep your beagle looking and feeling his best. You'll know what to watch for, and we'll all feel better knowing that we're taking the best possible care of your pal.

### *Back Problems*

Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) is a common condition in beagles. The disease is caused when the jelly-like cushion between one or more vertebrae slips or ruptures, causing the disc to press on the spinal cord. If your dog is suddenly unable or unwilling to jump up or go up stairs, is reluctant to move around, has a hunched back, cries out, or refuses to eat or go potty, she is likely in severe pain. She may even drag her back feet or be suddenly paralyzed and unable to get up or use her back legs. If you see symptoms, don't wait. Call us or an emergency clinic immediately! For less severe cases, rest and medication may resolve the problem. In many cases involving paralysis, we'll recommend surgical removal of the ruptured discs (within

24 hours of the onset of symptoms to get the best results). As with so many other diseases, weight control helps to prevent this problem.

### *Cancer*

Cancer is the most common cause of death in older pets, and beagles are especially prone to a certain kind of cancer called lymphoma. Half of all cancers are cured by surgically removing them, and some types are treatable with chemotherapy. Early detection is critical! We'll do periodic blood tests and look for lumps and bumps when we examine your pet. If your beagle is overweight, we'll discuss exercise and diet because obesity is a risk factor for some types of cancer.

### *Cherry Eye*

Dogs have a third eyelid that contains a gland that produces about one-third of the tear fluid that bathes the eye. If the gland is sore or swollen, it looks like a red blob in the corner of the eye. This condition is called cherry eye, and it can occur very suddenly in one or both eyes. It's more common in beagle puppies or young beagles than in other breeds. If your dog develops this condition, we may treat it with ointment first, but it usually requires surgery because it tends to recur or get worse.

### *Dental Disease*

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. And unfortunately, your beagle is more likely than other dogs to have problems with his teeth. It starts with tartar build-up on the teeth and progresses to infection of the gums and roots of the teeth. If we don't prevent or treat dental disease, your buddy will lose his teeth and be in danger of damaging his kidneys, liver, heart, and joints. In fact, your beagle's life span may be cut short by one to three years! We'll clean your dog's teeth regularly and let you know what you can do at home to keep those pearly whites clean.

### *Eating Weird Stuff*

Beagles eat things they're not supposed to—rocks, coins, plants, and socks, among others. Your pet carries the item in her mouth to check it out or play with it, or she thinks it's food. When swallowed, these objects often get stuck and have to be surgically removed. Some of what your dog eats is toxic and can poison her. If you notice that she is vomiting or acting lethargic, call us immediately.

### *Glaucoma*

Glaucoma, an eye condition that affects people too, is an extremely painful disease (people say it's like being stabbed in the eye with an ice pick!) that rapidly leads to blindness. Symptoms include squinting, watery eyes; cloudiness of the cornea (the clear window at the front of the eye); and redness in the whites of the eyes. In severe cases, the eye may look swollen or like it's bulging. We'll



perform annual glaucoma screening for your pal to diagnose and treat it as early as possible. Glaucoma is a medical emergency. If you see symptoms, don't wait. Call us or an emergency clinic immediately!

### *Heart Disease*

Your beagle may inherit a heart condition commonly known as pulmonic stenosis. This disease causes a partial obstruction of blood flow in the heart, which means the heart must work harder to pump enough blood. If the condition is severe enough, your dog may faint or just seem to run out of energy during exercise. He may also have difficulty breathing, cough, or not grow as much as he should. We'll test for this disease during your dog's life and discuss treatment options with you if he has the condition. Surgery is an option when symptoms are severe.

### *Infections*

Beagles are susceptible to bacterial and viral infections—the same ones that all dogs can get—such as parvovirus, rabies, and distemper. Many of these infections are preventable through vaccination, which we'll administer to your dog based on the diseases we see in our area, her age, and other factors.

### *Obesity*

Obesity is a significant health problem in dogs and a serious disease that may cause arthritis, some types of cancer, back pain, and heart disease. Though it's tempting to give your pal food when he looks at you with those soulful eyes, you can love him to death with human food and treats.

### *Parasites*

All kinds of worms and bugs can invade your dog's body, inside and out. Everything from fleas to ticks to ear mites can infest her skin and ears. Hookworms, roundworms, heartworms, and whipworms can get into her system in

any number of ways: drinking unclean water, eating or stepping on feces, or being bitten by an infected mosquito. Some of these parasites can be transmitted to you or a family member and are a serious concern for everyone. For your friend, these parasites can cause pain, discomfort, and even death, so it's important that we test for them on a regular basis. We'll also recommend preventative medication as necessary to keep her healthy.

### *Spaying or Neutering*

One of the best things you can do for your beagle is to have him neutered (called spaying in females). In males, this means we surgically remove the testicles, and in females, it means we surgically remove the uterus and ovaries. Spaying or neutering decreases the likelihood of certain types of cancers and eliminates the possibility of your pet becoming pregnant or fathering unwanted puppies. Performing this surgery also gives us a chance, while your pet is under anesthesia, to evaluate and possibly address some of the diseases your beagle is likely to develop. This is convenient for you and easy for your friend. Don't worry; we'll let you know what specific problems we'll look for when the time arrives.

## **Taking Care of Your Beagle at Home**

Much of what you can do to keep your dog happy and healthy is common sense, just like it is for people. Watch his diet, make sure he gets plenty of exercise, regularly brush his teeth, and call us or a pet emergency hospital when something seems unusual (see "What to Watch For" below). Be sure to adhere to the schedule of examinations and vaccinations that we recommend for him. This is when we'll give him the necessary "check-ups" and test for diseases and conditions that are common in beagles. Another very important step in caring for your pet is signing up for pet health insurance; there will certainly be medical tests and procedures he will need throughout his life, and pet health insurance will help you cover those costs.

### *Routine Care, Diet, and Exercise*

Build her routine care into your schedule to help your beagle live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Your dog is prone to obesity, and overweight beagles are more likely to have cancer, arthritis, heart disease, back pain, and other problems.

- ✓ Supervise your pet as you would a toddler. Keep doors closed, pick up after yourself, and block off rooms as necessary. This will keep her out of trouble and away from things she shouldn't put in her mouth.

- ✓ Beagles have serious problems with their teeth, so you'll need to brush them at least three times a week!
- ✓ Keep your dog's diet consistent and don't give her people food.
- ✓ Feed a high-quality diet appropriate for her age.
- ✓ Exercise your dog regularly, and don't overdo exercise.

### *What to Watch For*

Give us a call immediately if you notice any of these signs in your beagle:

- ✓ Vomiting or chronic diarrhea
- ✓ Weight loss or weight gain
- ✓ Lumps, bumps, and moles
- ✓ Lethargy, mental dullness, or excessive sleeping
- ✓ Fearfulness, aggression, or other behavioral changes
- ✓ Limping or lameness
- ✓ Hair loss
- ✓ Coughing or difficulty breathing
- ✓ Episodes of weakness
- ✓ Pot-belly appearance
- ✓ Inability or straining to urinate
- ✓ Cloudiness, redness, itching or any other abnormality involving the eyes
- ✓ Itchy skin (scratching or licking)
- ✓ Change in appetite or water consumption
- ✓ Scratching or shaking the head, or discharge in the ear
- ✓ Unwillingness to jump up or go up stairs

## Partners in Health Care

DNA testing is a rapidly advancing field with tests being developed to help diagnose conditions before they become problems for your friend. For the most up-to-date information on DNA and other screening tests available for your pal, visit [www.Genesis4Pets.com](http://www.Genesis4Pets.com).

Your beagle counts on you to take good care of him, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that he lives a long and healthy life. Our goal is to ensure that your pal has the best health care possible—health care that's based on his breed, lifestyle, and age. Please contact us when you have questions or concerns.

## Health Evaluation Schedule for Beagles

Now that you've read about the health issues we'll be monitoring, we wanted to give you an at-a-glance summary of what services we'll provide to keep your beagle happy and healthy for a lifetime. We'll review these health-care steps with you in more detail, but please feel free to ask questions or voice concerns at any time.

*Studies to determine the frequency of inheritance or disease in this breed either have not been completed or are inconclusive. There is a general consensus among canine genetic researchers and veterinary practitioners that the conditions we've described herein have a significant rate of incidence and/or impact in this breed.*



# How We'll Keep Your Beagle Healthy

*Puppy to Adolescent:  
Infant to 17 in People Years*

	(✓) ○	Age	Services We'll Provide	Beagle-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	○	6–8 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Internal parasite test and/or deworming Vaccinations Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care	Heart murmurs Hernias Proper dental alignment Parasites
	○	10–12 weeks	Brief physical examination Heartworm prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth at home	Proper growth rate Behavioral problems Parasites
	○	14–16 weeks	Brief physical examination Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss obedience training, nail trimming, and grooming Schedule spay/neuter surgery	Adult teeth coming in properly Skin infection Tonsillitis Parasites
	○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Presurgical diagnostics for spay or neuter surgery	Cherry eye Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery
	○	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Heartworm test Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Excessive weight gain Back pain Behavioral problems Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Adult: 18 to 39 in People Years</i>	○	2 years through 7 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Internal organ health evaluation Glaucoma screening Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Back pain Healthy weight Internal organ health and function Glaucoma Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i>	○	8 years through 10 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Senior internal organ health evaluation Glaucoma screening Cancer screen Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Back pain Healthy weight Arthritis Internal organ health and function Glaucoma Signs of cancer Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i>	○	11 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Glaucoma screening Cancer screen Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Back pain Arthritis Healthy weight Internal organ health and function Glaucoma Signs of cancer Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites

Note: We recommend twice-a-year examinations so that we may diagnose problems sooner. This approach also gives you the budget-friendly option of spreading preventive testing over two visits rather than one.