

# Your Doberman Pinscher

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



## Doberman Pinschers: 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 Doberman pinschers, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Energetic and playful
- An affectionate companion and family dog
- Obedient and devoted
- Highly intelligent and trainable
- Requires very little grooming
- Protective; an excellent guard dog
- Large, strong, and athletic

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

- Must be properly trained and socialized to avoid aggression as an adult
- Sheds quite a bit
- Needs daily exercise
- Barks or chews when bored
- Can be rambunctious and rowdy, especially as a puppy
- Has quite a few health problems
- Aggressive toward other animals

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

## Your Doberman Pinscher's Health

We know that because you care so much about your dog, you want to take good care of him. That's why



1601 Lee Road  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
Phone: 407-644-2676  
Fax: 407-644-1312  
[www.wpvvet.com](http://www.wpvvet.com)





we'll tell you about the health concerns we'll be discussing with you over the life of your Dobe.

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 Doberman pinschers 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 the booklet, we've included a description of what you can do at home to keep your Dobe 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.

### *Bleeding Disorders*

Your Doberman is prone to a bleeding disorder called hemophilia. We'll conduct diagnostic testing for blood clotting time before we perform surgery to check for this problem. This is an important test, as we may not know your pet has this disorder until severe bleeding occurs during surgery or after a serious injury.

### *Bloat*

Gastric dilatation and volvulus, also known as bloat, usually occurs in dogs with deep, narrow chests. This means your Dobe is more at risk than other breeds. When a dog bloats, the stomach twists on itself and fills with gas. The twisting cuts off blood supply to the stomach, and sometimes the spleen. Left untreated, the disease is quickly fatal, sometimes in as little as 30 minutes. Your dog may retch or heave (but nothing comes out), act restless, have a pot belly, or lie in a prayer position (front feet down, rear end up). If you see symptoms, take your pet to an

emergency hospital immediately! Preventive surgery in which the stomach is tacked down or sutured in place so that it cannot twist is an option.

### *Cataracts*

Cataracts are a common cause of blindness in older Doberman pinschers. We'll watch for the lenses of her eyes to become more opaque—meaning they look cloudy instead of clear—when we examine her. Many dogs adjust well to losing their vision and get along just fine. Surgery to remove cataracts and restore sight is an option.

### *Dental Disease*

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. It starts with tartar build-up on the teeth and progresses to infection of the gums and roots of the teeth. We'll clean your dog's teeth regularly and let you know what you can do at home to keep those pearly whites clean. It's also important to prevent broken or damaged teeth by avoiding certain kinds of toys and treats, including chew hooves, tennis balls, bones, and ice cubes.

### *Eating Weird Stuff*

Doberman pinschers eat things they're not supposed to—rocks, coins, plants, and socks, among others. Your pet carries the item in his mouth to check it out or play with it, or he 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 him. If you notice that he is vomiting or acting lethargic, call us immediately.

### *Hair Loss*

Dobies are prone to pattern baldness. As with balding men, the hair gradually falls out and does not grow back. The hair loss does not cause itchiness, though the skin can sometimes be dry. Usually the areas affected are the throat, chest, belly, and insides of the legs. We'll do testing to rule out treatable problems that have hair loss as a symptom, such as too little thyroid hormone. If it is true hair loss (called alopecia), we can supplement a particular hormone, which may help somewhat. There is no cure for this disease.

### *Heart Disease*

Your Doberman pinscher is especially prone to a kind of deadly heart problem known as dilated cardiomyopathy, or DCM, in which the heart becomes so large, thin, and weak that it can no longer effectively pump blood to the body. Watch for your friend acting weak or tired, fainting or collapsing, breathing in a labored way, or coughing. We'll regularly conduct an ECG screening to look for abnormal heart rhythms, starting when your dog is a puppy. We'll treat this condition with medication and may also recommend a dietary supplement called taurine.

### *Infections*

Doberman pinschers 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.

### *Ligament Tear*

The cranial cruciate ligament is one of the four tough bands of tissue that hold each knee together. A torn cranial cruciate ligament is a common injury of active dogs, which includes your buddy. If not surgically corrected, he will eventually suffer from severe arthritis. Ouch! Keeping him at the right weight, feeding a high-quality diet, and avoiding too much jumping (like playing Frisbee) are the keys to avoiding this painful injury.

### *Liver Problems*

Your Doberman is prone to a chronic liver disease, called hepatitis, starting when she is middle aged. We usually diagnose it with blood testing or a liver biopsy, and we treat it with medication and special diets. Signs of liver disease do not usually occur until most of the liver is already damaged or destroyed. Early detection and intervention with routine blood screening allows us to detect this problem at an earlier, more treatable stage.

### *Neurological Disease*

A genetically linked neurological condition that could occur in your Dobe causes a wobbly, drunken gait. This condition, known as wobbler disease or wobbler syndrome, happens because there is a narrowing of the vertebrae in the neck, which pinches the spinal cord and associated nerves. If the nerves don't send signals to the brain the way they're supposed to, your dog can't feel his feet. The first signs you'll notice are unstable hind legs, stumbling, and sometimes falling. Medications, neck braces, rehabilitation exercise programs, and surgery are treatment options.

### *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 she looks at you with those soulful eyes, you can love her 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 his skin and ears. Hookworms, roundworms, heartworms, and whipworms can get into his 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 him healthy.

### *Skin Infections*

Your pal is susceptible to different kinds of skin infections and diseases. One common skin disease called seborrhea can cause dry, flaky skin or greasy, oily skin. Another problem common in Dobermans is chronic skin sores, which are caused when the dog obsessively licks the same area of the body over and over (called lick granulomas). Yet another condition is caused by a mineral deficiency, which causes red, hairless, crusting, scaling, or oozing skin on the mouth, ears, eyes, nose, or foot pads. These diseases make your pet itchy and uncomfortable. The earlier you call to have skin problems checked out, the less likely it is that you will end up with an itchy, bald, smelly dog to take care of. You don't want that, and neither does she!

### *Spaying or Neutering*

One of the best things you can do for your Doberman pinscher 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 Dobe 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.

### *Thyroid Problems*

Doberman pinschers are prone to a common condition called hypothyroidism in which the body doesn't make enough thyroid hormone. Signs can include dry skin and coat, hair loss, susceptibility to other skin diseases, weight gain, lethargy, mental dullness, sleeping excessively, fearfulness, aggression, or other behavioral changes. We'll conduct a blood screening test annually to look for the disease. Treatment is usually simple: replacement hormones given in the form of a pill.

## Taking Care of Your Doberman Pinscher at Home

### Pinscher 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 Dobermans.

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 Dobie live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Overweight Doberman pinschers are more prone to cancer, ligament tears, arthritis, 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.
- ✓ Brush her teeth 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.
- ✓ Don’t let your dog chew on bones, ice cubes, hooves, or tennis balls.

#### *What to Watch For*

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

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Change in appetite or water consumption
- ✓ Scratching or shaking the head, or discharge in the ear

- ✓ Dry, itchy, flaky, or oily skin
- ✓ Wobbly, shaky, or unstable gait

## 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 Dobie 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 Doberman Pinschers

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 Dobie happy and healthy. It may seem like your pet is prone to quite a few problems, but don’t worry; we’ll take the lead in keeping her 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 Doberman Pinscher Healthy

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

*Adult: 18 to 39  
in People Years*

*Senior: 40 to 59  
in People Years*

*Senior: 40 to 59  
in People Years*

(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Doberman Pinscher-Specific Problems We're Looking For
<input type="radio"/>	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
<input type="radio"/>	10-12 weeks	Brief physical examination Heartworm prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth at home	Proper growth rate Behavioral problems Parasites
<input type="radio"/>	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 infections Tonsillitis Parasites
<input type="radio"/>	4-6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Presurgical diagnostics for spay or neuter surgery Blood clotting time Stomach tuck	Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Hemophilia Prevention of bloat
<input type="radio"/>	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Heart health check Heartworm test Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Skin infections Excessive weight gain Behavioral problems Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites
<input type="radio"/>	2 years through 6 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Internal organ health evaluation Heart health check Thyroid testing Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Skin infections Dental disease Healthy weight Internal organ health and function Liver disease Heart disease Thyroid function Heartworms and other parasites
<input type="radio"/>	7 years through 9 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Senior internal organ health evaluation Thyroid testing Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Skin infections Cataracts Dental disease Healthy weight Arthritis Internal organ health and function Liver disease Thyroid function Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites
<input type="radio"/>	10 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Thyroid testing Glaucoma screen Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Skin infections Cataracts Dental disease Healthy weight Arthritis Internal organ health and function Liver disease Signs of cancer Thyroid function Glaucoma 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.