

Your Pomeranian

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Pomeranians: 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 Pomeranians, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Friendly, extroverted personality
- Intelligent and easy to train
- Alert, curious, and busy
- Small, but sturdy
- Excellent companion

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

- Long coat needs to be brushed regularly
- Has a tendency to bark quite a bit if the behavior is rewarded
- Gets too hot to be a lapdog
- Needs frequent attention from her people
- Prone to separation anxiety and territoriality when not socialized properly

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



1601 Lee Road
Winter Park, FL 32789
Phone: 407-644-2676
Fax: 407-644-1312
www.wpvvet.com





Your Pomeranian'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 Pom.

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 Pomeranians 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, along with 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 Pom Pom 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.

Cataracts

Cataracts are a common cause of blindness in Pomeranians, and they may appear as early as age four. 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. And unfortunately, your Pomeranian is more likely to have problems with his teeth than other breeds. 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, the disease may shorten your pet's life 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.

Fluid Build-up in the Skull

Water on the brain, or hydrocephalus, occurs when fluid builds up inside the skull and puts pressure on the brain tissue. This condition is most common in breeds with dome-shaped heads, like your Pom Pom. It is often present when the skull bones don't fuse properly. Signs include seizures, difficulty training the puppy, dulled mental function, circling, and a spastic gait. We'll do testing if symptoms develop. Sometimes surgery can alleviate the problem.

Heart Disease

Pomeranians are prone to develop several types of heart disease, including valve deterioration (mitral valve disease), a birth defect (patent ductus arteriosus), and a malfunction of the part of the heart that signals it to beat (sick sinus syndrome). Physical signs include coughing, reduced tolerance of exercise, weight loss, shortness of breath, or weakness in the hind limbs. We listen for a heart murmur and perform diagnostic tests to look for these problems. If your pet develops heart disease, we'll recommend surgery, rest, or medication depending on the type of disease and its severity. Proper dental care and weight control also go a long way in preventing heart disease.

Infections

Pom Poms 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.

Knee Problems

Sometimes a Pomeranian's kneecap will slip out of place (called patellar luxation). You might notice that he runs along and suddenly picks up a back leg and skips or hops for a few strides. Then he kicks his leg out sideways to pop the kneecap back in place, and he's fine again. This can happen with his elbows, too, which leads to lameness in the front legs. If the problem is mild and involves only one leg, your Pom may not require much treatment beyond arthritis medication. When symptoms are severe, surgery is needed to realign the kneecap or elbow to keep it from popping out of place. Rehabilitation and special exercises can be very helpful.



Mats and Hot Spots

Because she has long, dense fur, your Pomeranian requires a lot of brushing and skin care. Mats and tangles can lead to skin infections, particularly moist, painful skin lesions called hot spots. Brush your pet at least weekly and keep an eye out for sores, especially in hot, humid weather.

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.

Skin Infections

Your Pomeranian is susceptible to pododermatitis, or skin infection of the feet. It causes blisters and ulcers between his toes. Ouch! The condition is especially common in pets with allergies. If your dog licks his feet or is limping, check for this condition and make an appointment to see us right away. We'll treat it with antibiotics.

Spaying or Neutering

One of the best things you can do for your Pomeranian is to have her spayed (called neutering in males). 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. Poms are also more likely than other breeds to have testicles that stay in the abdomen rather than descending into the scrotum, in which case we recommend removal of both testicles. Performing this surgery also gives us a chance, while your pet is under anesthesia, to evaluate and possibly address some of the diseases your Pom Pom 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.

Spinal Cord Injuries

Your Pom is prone to a genetically linked disease that causes instability in the first two neck vertebrae. This can cause a sudden spinal-cord injury in the neck. If your dog is suddenly unable or unwilling to jump up or go up stairs, cries for no apparent reason, or cries or tries to turn or lower his head when you pick him up, he is in pain. Call us immediately if your dog shows any of these symptoms! We'll control his pain with medication, and surgery is recommended. As with so many other diseases, weight control helps to prevent it. With Pomeranians, it's important to use ramps or steps from the time your dog is a puppy so that he doesn't spend a lifetime stressing his neck by jumping on and off of the furniture.

Thyroid Problems

Pomeranians are prone to a common condition, called hypothyroidism, where 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 do a blood screening test annually starting at age three (or earlier if your dog shows signs) to test for the disease. Treatment is usually simple: replacement hormones given in the form of a pill.

Tracheal Collapse

The trachea, or windpipe, is made up of rings of cartilage, making it look something like a vacuum cleaner's ridged hose. Just as in the hose, this structure provides flexibility and strength. In Poms, the cartilage rings are sometimes weak or have formed incorrectly. The trachea can collapse and become too narrow, which leads to coughing and difficulty breathing. Most cases of tracheal collapse are mild and are treated symptomatically with medication. When symptoms are severe, surgery may be an option.

Taking Care of Your Pomeranian 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 coat, 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 Poms. Another very important step 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

Build her routine care into your schedule to help your Pom live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime!

- ✓ Brush her coat at least weekly.
- ✓ Pomeranians have serious problems with their teeth, so you’ll need to brush them at least three times a week!
- ✓ Have her groomed regularly.

Diet and Exercise

Watch his diet, and make sure he gets regular exercise. Overweight Pomeranians are more prone to cancer, heart disease, arthritis, and other problems.

- ✓ Keep your dog’s diet consistent, and don’t give him people food.
- ✓ Feed a high-quality diet appropriate for his 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 Pom:

- ✓ 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 or mats
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Hopping or skipping while running
- ✓ Unwillingness to jump up or go up stairs

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- ✓ Crying out or turning or lowering his head when you pick your pet up
- ✓ Skin lesions
- ✓ Blisters or sores between the toes

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.

Your Pomeranian counts on you to take good care of her, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that she 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 her breed, lifestyle, and age. Please contact us when you have questions or concerns:

Health Evaluation Schedule for Pomeranians

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 Pomeranian 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.



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How We'll Keep Your Pomeranian Healthy

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

	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Pomeranian-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	Abnormal skull formation Retained testicle 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 infections Tonsillitis Parasites
	○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Knee and elbow evaluation Presurgical diagnostics for spay or neuter surgery	Retained testicle Knee or elbow problems Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery
	○	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Gait and lameness examination Heartworm test Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Excessive weight gain Skin infections Behavioral problems Knee or elbow problems Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Adult: 18 to 39 in People Years</i>	○	2 years through 8 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Gait and lameness examination Internal organ health check Thyroid testing Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Cataracts Healthy weight Knee problems Internal organ health and function Thyroid function Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i>	○	9 years through 11 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Senior internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Thyroid testing Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Cataracts Healthy weight Arthritis Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Thyroid function Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i>	○	12 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Cancer screening Thyroid testing Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Cataracts Healthy weight Arthritis Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Thyroid function 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.