

# Your Pointer

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



## Pointers: What a Unique Breed!

Whether she's a German or English pointer, 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 pointers, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Bold, steady, and fearless
- Intelligent and easy to train
- Excellent family dog, watchdog, and hunting dog
- Large, strong, and athletic with lots of stamina
- Requires very little grooming

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

- Requires vigorous, frequent exercise and space to run
- Prone to boredom and separation anxiety when left alone and will find trouble
- Sees cats and small animals as prey unless trained otherwise
- Can be rambunctious and rowdy, especially as a younger dog
- Sheds quite a bit

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](http://www.wpvvet.com)





## Your Pointer'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 pointer.

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 German and English pointers 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 pointer 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.

### *Arthritis*

Ninety percent of older dogs have arthritis, and bigger dogs tend to have more pain and disability with arthritis than smaller dogs. Pointers are particularly prone to develop arthritis, for which we have many treatments. The earlier we begin treatment, the more active and comfortable your dog will be as she gets older. Do not let your dog become overweight; this puts a huge strain on the joints. Good nutrition and proper exercise are also very important to help reduce bone and joint problems as your pet gets older.

### *Bleeding Disorders*

Your pointer is prone to develop a genetically linked

bleeding disorder called hemophilia. We may not know anything is wrong unless severe bleeding results during surgery or after your pet has a serious injury. We'll conduct diagnostic testing for blood clotting time before we perform surgery to check for this problem.

### *Cancer*

Cancer is the most common cause of death of pointers in their golden years. German pointers are especially prone to mast cell tumors (usually occurring as lumps on the skin) and nasal tumors (which occur in the sinuses). English pointers are more susceptible to a type of cancer called hemangioma that typically occurs as lumps on the skin. 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 pointer is overweight, we'll discuss exercise and diet because obesity is a risk factor for some types of cancer.

### *Cataracts*

Cataracts are a common cause of blindness in older dogs, but German pointers can develop them as early as six months of age, and English pointers develop them as early as two years of age. We'll watch for the lenses of his eyes to become more opaque—meaning they look cloudy instead of clear—when we examine him. 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.

### *Dry Eye*

Dry eye, also known as keratoconjunctivitis sicca or KCS, is a disease common in pointers. She may also get a certain form of it called pannus that causes dark pigmentation in the corneas (the clear window at the front of the eye). If she develops dry eye, it means the tear glands no longer produce enough tears to keep the eye moist, which results in eye sores and infections. Ouch! Symptoms include a thick discharge, squinting, pawing at the eye, or a dull, dry look instead of a glistening, shiny eye. This is a painful condition; please call us immediately if you notice any of these signs. We'll conduct a tear test each year and, if she has this disease, we'll prescribe ointment that you'll need to apply for the rest of your dog's life.





### *Hip Dysplasia*

You've probably heard of this inherited disease that causes the hip joints to form improperly and leads to arthritis, and it is common in pointers. You may notice that he has lameness in his hind legs or has difficulty getting up from lying down. We can treat the arthritis—the sooner the better—to avoid discomfort and pain. We'll take X-rays of your dog's joints to identify the disease as early as possible. Surgery is sometimes a good option in severe and life-limiting cases of hip dysplasia. Keep in mind that overweight dogs may develop arthritis two years earlier than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering.

### *Infections*

Pointers 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.

### *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. Even if she's a hunting dog and works hard, you

have to watch her caloric intake because it's easy to overfeed her.

### *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*

Pointers are prone to several types of skin disease. Pododermatitis is a painful condition that causes blisters and ulcers between her toes. They are frequently infected and require antibiotic therapy. Pointers are also prone to acne, lupus, lick granulomas (she licks a sore area of a foot or leg obsessively), loss of pigment in the nose, mange, skin cancer, and lesions of the skin. Look for lumps on the skin, nose bleeds, crusty skin, and foot lesions. The earlier you call us 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 pointer 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 pointer 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 Pointer 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 pointers. 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 pointer live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Overweight pointers are more prone to cancer, arthritis, and other problems.

- ✓ 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 pointer:

- ✓ 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 crusty skin

## 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 pointer 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 Pointers

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 pointer 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 Pointer 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: 60 to 79  
in People Years*

(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Pointer-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 Hip evaluation	Cataracts Skin infections Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Hemophilia Hip dysplasia
<input type="radio"/>	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip evaluation Heartworm test Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Cataracts Skin infections Excessive weight gain Behavioral problems Hip dysplasia Heartworms and other parasites
<input type="radio"/>	2 years through 6 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip evaluation Internal organ health evaluation Cancer screening Tear test Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Cataracts Healthy weight Hip dysplasia Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Dry eye Heartworms and other parasites
<input type="radio"/>	7 years through 9 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip evaluation Senior internal organ health evaluation Cancer screening Tear test Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Cataracts Healthy weight Arthritis Hip dysplasia Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Dry eye 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 screening Tear test Glaucoma screen 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 Dry eye 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.