

Your Poodle

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Poodles: What a Unique Breed!

Whether she's a toy, miniature, or standard poodle, 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 poodles, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Hypoallergenic coat sheds very little
- Intelligent and easy to train
- Energetic, active, and athletic
- People-oriented and eager to please

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

- Coat requires regular grooming
- Needs daily exercise
- Easily bored and may find trouble
- Has quite a few health problems

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

Your Poodle'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 poodle.

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 poodles to



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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 in this booklet, 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 poodle 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 toy and mini poodles. 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, go up stairs, or move around, she is likely in severe pain. 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, surgical removal of the ruptured discs is required. As with so many other diseases, weight control helps to prevent this problem.

Blood Disorders

Poodles are particularly prone to some relatively rare diseases of the blood that occur when the immune system goes haywire and starts attacking the pet's own red blood cells or platelets. We'll perform diagnostic testing for blood clotting time to check for these problems before we perform surgery. To slow or stop the immune system's destruction of cells, we'll prescribe steroids and other immune-suppressive drugs. Sometimes we must give emergency transfusions of red blood cells or platelets.

Recovery takes weeks to months.

Cancer

Poodles are especially prone to certain kinds of cancer, including lymphoma, melanoma, and squamous cell cancer. In poodles, melanoma, or skin cancer, tends to arise as a lump inside the mouth. The squamous cell cancer tends to occur as a lump on the toe. Half of all cancers are cured by surgically removing them, and some types are preventable by vaccination or 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 poodle is overweight, we'll discuss exercise and diet because obesity is a risk factor for some types of cancer.

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. Unfortunately, poodles are particularly likely to develop this problem. 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, it may shorten his 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.

Diabetes

If your poodle has diabetes, it means she has a problem regulating how her body processes sugars and carbohydrates. It is a serious condition and one that is important to diagnose and treat as early as possible. Symptoms include increased eating, drinking, and urination, along with weight loss. If she shows signs, we will do lab tests to determine if she has this condition and discuss treatment options with you.

Eye Problems

Poodles can inherit or develop a number of different eye conditions, including glaucoma, eyelashes that grow abnormally, cataracts, and abnormalities in their retinas. In other words, your poodle's eyes can cause him all kinds of problems, and they can be painful! We will evaluate his eyes at every examination, but be sure to call us if you notice anything different at all. For ingrown eyelashes and cataracts, surgery is an option. Glaucoma is a medical emergency, so if you notice that he is pawing at his eye or it looks dull and dry, call us immediately!

Heart Disease

Poodles are prone to heart disease, including mitral valve disease and dilatative cardiomyopathy. We'll listen for heart murmurs and abnormal heart rhythms when we examine your pet. We'll treat heart disease with medication that may prolong your pet's life for many years. Proper dental care and weight control go a long way



in preventing heart disease.

Infections

Poodles 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.

Kidney Disease

Poodles are prone to renal dysplasia, a genetic form of kidney disease, and it can affect your dog as early as puppyhood. Signs include excessive drinking of water and urine production; poor appetite or weight loss; and eventually vomiting and diarrhea. We'll test for this disease annually and before using anesthesia. Treatment may include medication, fluid therapy, and a special diet.

Knee Problems

Sometimes a toy or miniature poodle'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. If the problem is mild and involves only one leg, your poodle may not require much treatment beyond arthritis medication. When symptoms are severe, surgery is needed to realign the kneecap to keep it from popping out of place. Rehabilitation and special exercises can be very helpful.

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 Conditions

Poodles are prone to a variety of skin problems, including ear infections. You may notice that your dog has dry, scaly skin, patches of hair loss, smelly ears, or other skin abnormalities. Treatment is generally long term, and we'll likely try a combination of approaches to determine what is most effective with your dog. 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 poodle 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. Some male toys and minis have a condition where a testicle stays in the abdomen instead of descending into the scrotum, and we recommend removal of both testicles in that case. Performing this surgery also gives us a chance, while your pet is under anesthesia, to evaluate and possibly address some of the diseases your poodle is likely to develop.

Taking Care of Your Poodle 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 poodles.

Routine Care

Build her routine care into your schedule to help your poodle live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime! Another very important step in caring for your pet is signing up for pet health insurance. There will certainly be medical tests and procedures she will need throughout her life and pet health insurance will help you cover those costs.

- ✓ Brush her coat at least weekly.
- ✓ Clean her ears weekly, even as a puppy. Don't worry—we'll show you how!
- ✓ Poodles have serious problems with their teeth, so you'll need to brush them at least three times a week!

Diet and Exercise

Watch his diet, and make sure he gets regular exercise. Overweight poodles are more prone to cancer, back pain, arthritis, heart disease, 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.
- ✓ 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 poodle:

- ✓ 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, discharge from the ear, or unusual behavior when you touch or rub the ear
- ✓ A foul odor about the ear or mouth
- ✓ Hopping or skipping while running
- ✓ Unwillingness to jump up or go up stairs
- ✓ Gums that are a color other than bright pink

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 poodle 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 Poodles

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 poodle 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 Poodle 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	Poodle-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	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 and ears 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 Presurgical diagnostics for spay or neuter surgery, including blood clotting time Knee evaluation	Retained testicle Skin infections Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Kidney disease Ingrown eyelashes and other eye problems Bleeding disorders Knee problems
○	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Gait and lameness examination Heartworm test Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Cataracts and other eye problems Skin infections Excessive weight gain Behavioral problems Knee problems Heartworms and other parasites
○	2 years through 8 years for toy and mini; 2 years through 6 years for standard	Head-to-tail physical examination Gait and lameness examination Internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Glaucoma screen Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Cataracts and other eye problems Dental disease Skin infections Healthy weight Back pain Knee problems Internal organ health and function Kidney disease Signs of cancer Glaucoma Heartworms and other parasites
○	9 years through 11 years for toy and mini; 7 years through 9 years for standard	Head-to-tail physical examination Senior internal organ health evaluation Diabetes screen Cancer screen Heart health check Glaucoma screen Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Cataracts and other eye problems Dental disease Skin infections Healthy weight Back pain Arthritis Internal organ health and function Kidney disease Diabetes Signs of cancer Heart disease Glaucoma Heartworms and other parasites
○	12 years and older for toy and mini; 10 years and older for standard	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Diabetes screen Cancer screen Heart health check Glaucoma screen Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Cataracts and other eye problems Dental disease Skin infections Healthy weight Back pain Arthritis Internal organ health and function Kidney disease Diabetes Signs of cancer Heart disease Glaucoma 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.