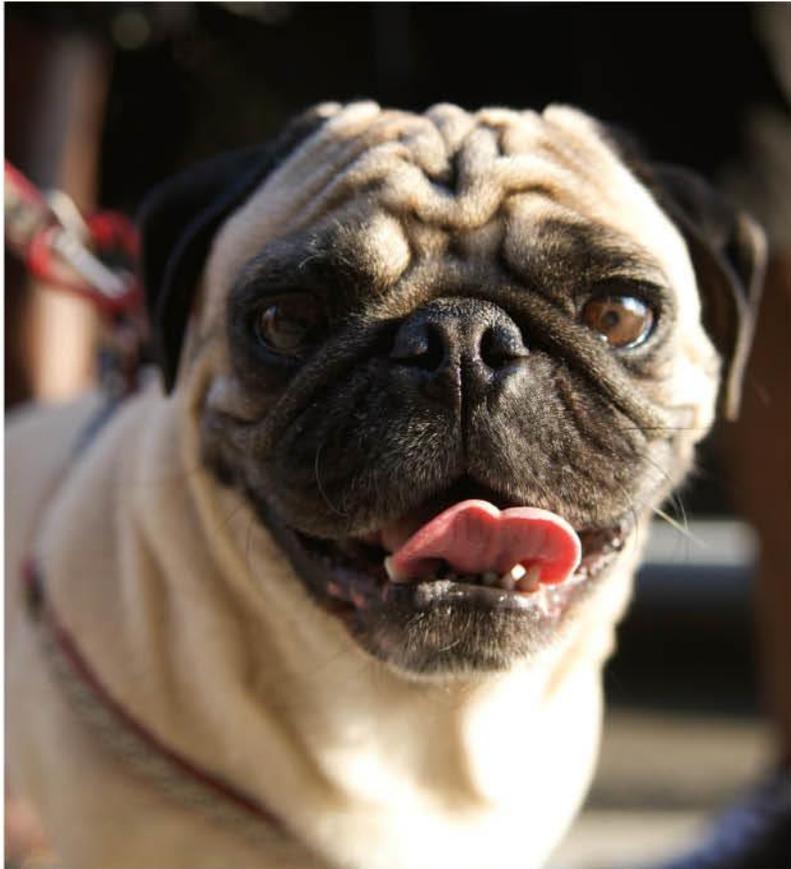


# Your Pug

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



## Pugs: 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 pugs, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Outgoing, playful personality
- Small, but sturdy
- Needs minimal exercise
- Even-tempered; adapts to a wide variety of environments
- Requires minimal grooming
- An excellent family dog that loves human companionship

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

- Independent and strong willed
- Prone to quite a few health problems
- Sheds quite a bit
- Makes a lot of snorting, snuffling, and wheezing noises, and she snores
- Difficult to housetrain

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

  
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VETERINARY HOSPITAL

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## Your Pug'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 pug.

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 pugs 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 pug 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.

### *Allergies*

Pugs can get "hay fever" just like humans, which is an allergy to pollen, mold, mildew, or dust (called atopy). Your dog will get itchy: usually in the face, feet, and ears, though some dogs are itchy all over. The good news is that there are many treatment options available for this condition.

### *Cancer*

Cancer is the most common cause of death of pugs in their golden years, and younger pugs are especially prone to mast cell tumors and oral melanoma (skin cancer of the mouth). 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 pug 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 pugs. 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. 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.

### *Dry Eye*

Dry eye, also known as keratoconjunctivitis sicca or KCS, is a disease common in pugs. 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.

### *Eye Injuries*

Because your pug has eyeballs that bulge, along with that distinctive shape of head, he is more vulnerable to eye injuries. The cornea is the clear window at the front of the eye, and it can be damaged by a scrape or puncture, or it can develop an open sore and become infected. Call us right away if he has any problems with his eyes. A damaged cornea is painful and should be treated immediately. Medication and sometimes surgery is required. To help prevent eye injuries, don't let your dog ride in the car with his head out the window.

### *Hair Loss*

Pugs 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.

### *Infections*

Pugs 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 pug'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 steps. If the problem is mild and involves only one leg, your pug 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.

### *Respiratory Distress Syndrome*

This disease, also known as brachycephalic syndrome, affects dogs with a short nose, like your pug. She has the same amount of tissue in her nose and throat as other dogs, but there's no place for it to go. Consequently, the soft palate, which is the soft part of the back of the roof of the mouth, is too long and hangs down into the airway. Also, a pug's nostrils are often too small, and sometimes the windpipe is narrow and undersized. Many pugs can barely breathe! Watch for exercise intolerance, loud breathing, coughing, bluish gums, and fainting. Ideally, we'll correct the problem surgically early on when we spay or neuter your dog, but we can also complete the surgery later in life.

With her short nose, she is also more likely to develop other problems, such as flatulence from excessive air intake, pneumonia from aspirating food, and heat stroke. Be very careful about how much exercise she gets, especially when it's hot and humid. Being overweight also increases the likelihood of breathing problems, so be sure to keep her on the trim side.

### *Skin Infections*

Your pug is prone to a form of skin infection called fold pyoderma, which occurs because the folds of skin at the base of the tail and behind the nose are likely to be moist. Bacteria can readily gain a foothold and cause a reddened, smelly area that is uncomfortable for your dog. We will check for this condition upon examination, but let us know if you see signs. We'll recommend treatment with ointments and antibiotics as necessary. When symptoms are severe, the excess skin folds can be surgically removed.

### *Spaying or Neutering*

One of the best things you can do for your pug 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. (Pugs are particularly likely to have difficulty birthing puppies, and we don't recommend breeding your dog.) Performing the spay/neuter surgery also gives us a chance, while your pet is under anesthesia, to evaluate and possibly address some of the diseases your pug 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 Pug 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 pugs. 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 pug live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Overweight pugs are more prone to cancer, back pain, 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.

### *What to Watch For*

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

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Itchy or smelly skin
- ✓ Hopping or skipping while running
- ✓ Gums that aren’t 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](http://www.Genesis4Pets.com).

Your pug 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 Pugs

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 pug 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 Pug Healthy

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

	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Pug-Specific Problems We're Looking For
<i>Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years</i>	<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 Knee evaluation Soft palate surgery	Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Knee problems Respiratory distress syndrome
	<input type="radio"/>	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 problems Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Adult: 18 to 39 in People Years</i>	<input type="radio"/>	2 years through 8 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Gait and lameness examination Internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Tear test Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Healthy weight Skin infections Knee problems Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Dry eye Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i>	<input type="radio"/>	9 years through 11 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Senior internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Tear test Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Healthy weight Skin infections Cataracts Arthritis Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Dry eye Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites
<i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i>	<input type="radio"/>	12 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Tear test Glaucoma screen Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Healthy weight Skin infections Cataracts 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.