

Your Yorkshire Terrier

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Yorkshire Terriers: 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 Yorkshire terriers, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Brave and ready for adventure
- Energetic and alert
- Small and travels well
- Loving and loyal to her owners
- Excellent watchdog

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

- Determined and has a mind of her own
- Difficult to houstrain
- Long coat needs to be brushed regularly
- Suspicious of and aggressive toward strangers and other dogs if not socialized properly
- Has a tendency to bark quite a bit

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

Your Yorkshire Terrier'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 Yorkie.

Many diseases and health conditions are genetic, meaning they're related to your pet's breed. That



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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 Yorkshire terriers 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 this booklet, we've included a description of what you can do at home to keep your Yorkshire terrier 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.

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. And unfortunately, Yorkies and bad teeth go hand in hand. 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 her teeth and be in danger of damaging her 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.

Eye Problems

Yorkies are more likely to have problems with their eyes than other dogs, including cataracts, dry eye, and abnormal retinas. Cataracts can start as early as age five in Yorkshire terriers. What you'll notice is that the lenses of your dog's eyes look cloudy instead of clear. If your pal develops dry eye, it means his tear glands no longer produce enough tears to keep the eye moist. It's super painful—ouch! Please call us immediately if you notice a thick discharge, squinting, pawing at the eye, or a dull, dry eye. Another possible problem is abnormalities developing in the retina,

which is the lining at the back of the eye. When we examine him, we'll watch for signs of problems with the eyes and conduct a tear test as well. Depending on the condition and its severity, we may recommend medication or surgery.

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 Yorkshire terrier, and is often present when the skull bones do not fuse properly. Signs include seizures, difficulty training the puppy, dulled mental function, circling, and a spastic gait. We'll perform diagnostic tests if symptoms develop; sometimes surgery can alleviate the problem.

High Blood Pressure

Yorkies are more likely than other dogs to have high blood pressure (also called hypertension), which may or may not be caused by another disease. High blood pressure can cause blindness and strokes in dogs, just as it can in people. We'll test your friend's blood pressure every year and prescribe blood pressure medication as needed.

Infections

Yorkshire terriers 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 Stones

There are half a dozen different types of stones that can form in the kidney or in the bladder, and your terrier is more likely to develop them than other breeds. We'll periodically test for the presence of kidney and bladder stones; they are painful! Symptoms of urinary tract stones include blood in the urine, straining to urinate, or inability to urinate. If your Yorkie can't urinate or is straining to urinate, it is a medical emergency. Call us immediately!

Knee Problems

Sometimes a Yorkshire terrier'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 Yorkshire terrier 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.



Liver Disease

Your Yorkie is more likely than other dogs to have a genetically linked liver disorder called a portosystemic shunt, which prevents the liver from removing toxins from the bloodstream properly. To test for this problem, we'll conduct a liver function test in addition to a standard pre-anesthetic panel every time your dog goes under anesthesia, or if she develops symptoms. We may recommend surgery, but it's more likely that we'll treat your Yorkie with a special diet and medication.

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.

Spaying or Neutering

One of the best things you can do for your Yorkie 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. In addition, Yorkshire terriers are prone to a condition called retained testicle, or cryptorchidism, where one or both testicles do not descend into the scrotum. If this is the case for your little guy, we recommend surgical removal of both testicles. Performing the spay or neuter surgery also gives us a chance, while your pet is under anesthesia, to evaluate and possibly address some of the diseases your Yorkshire terrier is likely to develop. Don't worry; we'll let you know what specific problems we'll look for when the time arrives.

Spinal Cord Injuries

Your Yorkshire terrier is more likely than other breeds to have instability in the first two neck vertebrae (called the atlantal and the axial 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 her head when you pick her up, she is in pain. Call us immediately if your dog shows any of these symptoms! We'll control her pain with medication, and sometimes surgery is recommended. As with so many other diseases, weight control helps to prevent it. With Yorkies, it's important to use ramps or steps from the time your dog is a puppy so that she doesn't spend a lifetime stressing her neck by jumping on and off of the furniture.

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 Yorkshire terriers, 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 with medication as symptoms warrant. When symptoms are severe, surgery may be an option.

Taking Care of Your Yorkshire Terrier 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 Yorkshire terriers. 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 Yorkie live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Overweight Yorkies are more prone to cancer, arthritis, spinal cord injuries, heart disease, and other problems.

- ✓ Brush her coat at least weekly.
- ✓ Yorkshire terriers have serious problems with their teeth, so you’ll need to brush them 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 Yorkshire terrier:

- ✓ 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, or discharge in the ear
- ✓ Hopping or skipping while running

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 Yorkshire terrier 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 Yorkshire terriers

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 Yorkshire terrier happy and healthy. It may seem like she 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 Yorkshire Terrier 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	Shih Tzu-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 Heart murmurs Retained testicle 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 Presurgical diagnostics for spay or neuter surgery, including liver testing Knee evaluation	Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Retained testicle Liver disease Knee problems
○	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Gait and lameness examination Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Excessive weight gain Behavioral problems Knee problems Heartworms and other parasites
○	2 years through 8 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Internal organ health evaluation Blood pressure check Tear test Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Healthy weight Cataracts and other eye problems Internal organ health and function Kidney or bladder stones High blood pressure Dry eye Heartworms and other parasites
○	9 years through 11 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Senior internal organ health evaluation Blood pressure check Tear test Heart health check Cancer screen Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Healthy weight Cataracts and other eye problems Internal organ health and function Kidney or bladder stones High blood pressure Dry eye Heart disease Signs of cancer Heartworms and other parasites
○	12 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Blood pressure check Tear test Heart health check Cancer screen Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Healthy weight Cataracts and other eye problems Internal organ health and function Kidney or bladder stones High blood pressure Dry eye Heart disease Signs of cancer 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.