

# How To Take Care Of Your **Dog's Health**



SELECTED TIPS  
80 PAGES

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF  
YOUR DOG'S HEALTH



80 Pages!

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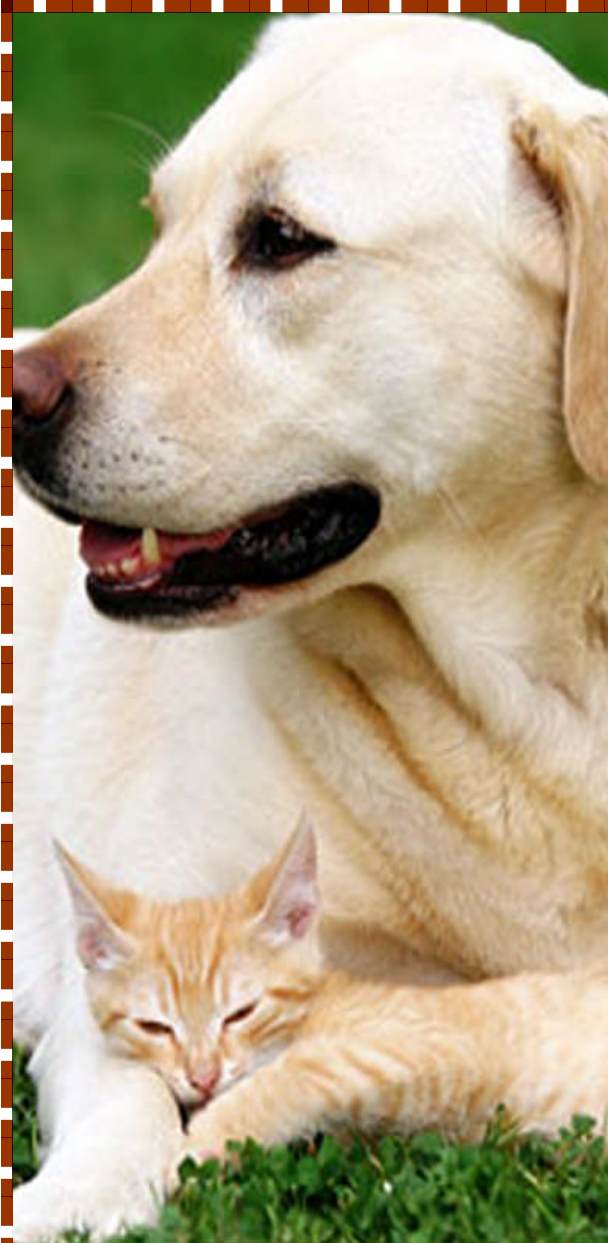
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## Dog Food: Read Labels

When selecting a dog food reach for a good food that is both nutritious and balanced. You will find out if the food is what you need by reading the label. When reading the label, be sure to do your homework. Keep in mind that most dog foods list their first ingredient as whole meal. Good as this sounds, this tells you that the meat has a high percentage of water and less nutritious.

You will also notice labels that contain chicken and chicken meal. Opt for the chicken meal as this means it has been baked to remove bacteria and toxins. Again, the ingredient chicken is 60% water, which means you are not buying good nutrition here.

When you feed your dog the best you can they are more apt to be healthy and happy. When you feed your dog inferior food he will become sick. He will stop being playful and will become lethargic.

## **Dog Food: Don't Go Cheap**

When you spend a little more on your dog food you are getting a superior product and isn't your dog worth it? Knowing you are buying the best to feed your dog for his best health is its own reward. Your dog will look great and be happy. This is what every dog owner wants.

Dog food ingredients are important to pay attention to. Many dog food manufacturers count on your purchasing your dog food at the local store or grocer because this is so convenient. Most people like to pick up their dog food where they purchase their food for the family each week. Some dog food manufacturers that are carried at the grocer feel they can get away with cutting corners on your dog's good health. Don't buy into that or you will have a very unhealthy pet.

Most important to remember is to check your labels! Look for protein listed first so that you are certain to get the optimal nutrition for your dog. Avoid labels that contain multiple by-products on the list as this is inferior nutrition and not the food you want to be feeding your beloved dog.

## **Dog Food: Go For Chicken**

Chicken is a great ingredient to feed your dog but don't be misled.

Commercial manufacturers will list chicken as both chicken and chicken meal. What are the differences of the two? The chicken meal is best because it is baked to remove the bacteria and toxins. The ingredient chicken contains some 60% water so you are not getting your monies worth or a meat that is most nutritious.

Next to continue is moisture level in dog foods. The moist dog foods are best because they contain more protein and less water when converted to dry matter.

## Dog Food: Buy Premium

Premium dog foods are the best foods for your dog. They do cost more because they are of high value and so pay off in the end both for your dog and for your pocketbook.

Premium dog foods do not contain harmful fillers and inferior ingredients. They are both sound and nutritious. There are no colors or preservatives so your dog will be fed nature's finest.

Learn how to calculate to convert to dry matter when reading labels. This is the best value for your dollar and the best nutrition for your dog.

Taurine is an excellent ingredient in some dog foods. It is an amino acid and works to benefit the dog's heart, kidneys and blood. It works to carry essential ingredients to and from cells.

You should read labels carefully to see if Taurine is included in your dog's food. Not all dog foods will. When so many dog food manufacturers are just in business for the buck, keep this in mind when you select your choice of dog food.

Some foods are poisonous to your dog. Every day table foods that you and your family enjoy, for example, can cause permanent damage to your beloved pet.

The only food that you should be feeding your dog is approved foods by your Veterinarian. These come complete with sound nutrition.

Don't think that you are doing your pet any favors by offering him a wee morsel of your own food. Doing this only now and then is forbidden and should never be entertained. After all, why would you want to feed your beloved pet something you know will harm him?

Feed your dog on a good schedule and limit the amounts. This is the best you can do for your dog and this is a responsible dog owner's job.

In order for your dog to be at his best health it is important to keep your dog's weight down. All of that extra weight is not healthy.

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Choose dog foods according to your dog's size, daily activity level and health conditions. When you are doing this you are doing the best you can to take proper care of your dog.

Avoid the cheaper brand dog foods as these are inferior choices for your dog's best interest and help.

Your dog is an individual and so his needs won't be exactly the same as your neighbor's dog. Take all of these factors into consideration and you will be proud to be a dog owner.

## Dog Food: Food Requirements

Understand the proper food requirements of your pet! The better dog foods are called Premium for they contain the best of everything nutritious and healthy. You can find these types of dog foods at your Vet or specialty stores. Some grocery stores will carry some of these brands, too, but read those labels. Cheaper brands of dog food are called Commercial and are found commonly in your corner store and grocery food store where you shop for the family food.

If you feel you must buy cheaply, keep in mind that you will purchase cheap ingredients. This includes cheap sources of protein, which you really should not be skimping on. They will include cheap by-products and fillers, which provide little to no nutrition for your dog.

Take your dog's health into consideration. When you feed him cheaper dog food he will not be able to maintain his good health so be careful when you select your brand of dog food.

Feeding your puppy takes special consideration. Your dog will grow significantly during the first 15 months so feeding him the optimal diet that they need is very important.

Protein is concern number one. Your puppy will require larger amounts of protein during this time. The balance of foods must be met too. Balanced ingredients are very important to a healthy puppy!

Different breeds of dogs have different requirements. Consult with your Veterinarian to find out which choice is best for your puppy according to breed.

Find out the suggested feeding guidelines, as well. Feeding your puppy right will mean a happy and healthy puppy and you will enjoy your time with him as he grows and matures.

You and your dog will have many life's challenges along the way, as well as many triumphs and joys. Send your dog on his way to enjoy his life with you by buying and feeding the best of nutrition for your pet.

## **Basic Dog Facts Every Dog Lover Should Know**

Most people like cuddly puppies and grown-up dogs. But before you welcome a new dog into your home, there are some things you need to think through to be sure both you and your new best friend are happy and healthy.

Remember that dogs, no matter what they are today, were predators in the past. Wolves, hyenas, dingoes, and foxes are carnivorous creatures who hunt to survive. Dogs were most likely domesticated from their wolf ancestors from 20,000 to 15,000 years ago. In fact, the many dog breeds have only proliferated in the last 200-300 years. Before that, a few breeds existed to meet their masters' needs for work.

When you own a dog, remember that the wolf is somewhere in there hiding. Depending on its breed and the way you treat it, that wolf could surprise you with a quick snip or a more vicious attack. Careful selection and training of your dog will assure that your best friend remains a best friend.

Before you select a dog, do your homework. Become familiar with dog breeds and personality traits, and compare these to your personal reasons for having a dog. Do you want a cute, cuddly friend to dress up and carry around? Do you want a champion at dog agility competitions or a champion show dog? Do you want a companion for your children? Or do you want a body guard and home protector? Do you need support to cope with a disability?

Each breed has characteristics that indicate what your life with your new friend will be like. If you aren't very patient or don't like a lot of noise, you probably shouldn't adopt a small, energetic dog with lots of demands for attention. If you want an affectionate loyal companion, you might want to consider a Golden or Labrador Retriever or a Collie. If you want to protect your property, you might take a look at a German Shepherd, a Rottweiler, or a Doberman Pincher.

If your household includes young children, your choice should be a careful one. Your new dog will have to be patient and tolerate with kindness having its tail pulled, being jumped on, and engaged in wrestling for hours on end. Bulldogs, American Eskimo dogs, Beagles, Retrievers, Setters, Sheepdogs, and many Terriers are among the many breeds good with children.

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Want a dog you can dress up and put in cute clothes? Then look for a dog that has plenty of hair (for those fancy hair-dos) and is small enough to carry around. "Designer dogs" like Poodles, Yorkies and Westies, Bichon Frises, Pomeranians, and the more exotic Shih Tzu are excellent candidates for this.

If you're looking for protection, be sure to look at breeds that aren't too friendly to strangers. Great Danes are huge and intimidating, but they're likely to fall in love with the first burglar they meet! Bulldogs are another breed that look fierce but come out kissing. German Shepherds are probably the most familiar and trainable guard dogs. Other breeds also protect your home and family: Rottweilers, Boxers, Doberman Pinchers, and Giant Schnauzers are among them.

There are a few breeds that were created for their ferociousness. Rottweilers and Pit Bull Terriers are notorious for vicious attacks. So if you are considering these breeds, you must be very clear about what to expect and very careful in training a well-behaved dog.

When you decide to bring a dog into your home, you need to be educated about what you need, what you want, and what breed will most likely fulfill your goals. When you adopt a dog, you are adding a member to your family - one for which you will be responsible for a lifetime. You should be committed to working through all the behavioral and training kinks and providing a stable, loving home. You'll not only have to train your dog, but you'll have to be trained in how to handle that dog.

A final note: Cesar Milan, the Dog Whisperer, says, "There are no bad dogs. Only bad dog owners." No matter what breed you bring into your home, in the end, you are the one responsible for your dog's behavior. Learn all you can about the dog you hope to own, and learn all you can about yourself as a pack leader. Even the feared Pit Bull is a sweet loving dog in the right hands.

No matter what breed you think you want, you should know about the specific dog's parentage, personal history, and temperament before making the commitment to be his lifetime caretaker and friend.



## Caring For Dogs That Are Hypoallergenic For Humans

Hypoallergenic dog breeds are the most suitable for people who are allergic to dog dander and fur. Some of the more popular hypoallergenic dog breeds include terrier, basenji, bichon frise, poodle, Chinese crested, greyhound, havanese, Irish water spaniel, and shih Tzu.

While they do produce some dander, the dander of hypoallergenic dogs is little enough to create minimal discomfort for those who come in contact with them. There are many breeds of hypoallergenic dog. Many of them are miniatures or toys that have lots of energy and may have difficult temperaments for the more sedate dog owner.

Nonetheless, even the allergic dog owner can follow a few simple steps to limit discomfort and enjoy your life with your furry companion. These tips will also generally apply to any household welcoming a new dog into its family, especially the hypoallergenic dog breeds.

A new dog (no matter how old) may well be frightened during its first hours and days in your house. Hypoallergenic dog breeds tend to be a bit more nervous than others. It may not welcome human contact at first, so you should refrain from handling them too much the first few days. Be attentive, but don't smother them with affection. Let them acclimate to their new house. Just let your new dog roam around the house, sniff the furniture, and find its way around.

When your new hypoallergenic dog becomes accustomed to its new surroundings, begin a grooming routine to reduce the amount of dander and fur that might otherwise settle on your furniture, carpets, and clothing. In addition to reducing your danger of allergic reactions, regular brushing will reduce matting and knots that make your hypoallergenic dog uncomfortable and unattractive. A steel comb with wide teeth will help untangle knots and trap loose hair. It's important not to let your hypoallergenic dog's skin get too dry with all the brushing and grooming. You can find products at the pet store or through your veterinarian that will help reduce skin problems.

Giving your hypoallergenic dog plenty of exercise will also reduce your risk of allergic reaction. First, the fresh air will help keep its fur free of dander. Second, when your dog is tired and sleeps all night, it will be less likely to want your company while you sleep, spending less time

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on your bed to leave dander and fur on your bedspread and sheets. Regular, frequent cleaning of your sheets and bedspread will also reduce your discomfort.

Make sure your hypoallergenic dog has a special place of its own to sleep, day and night. A soft bed or an old blanket will give them a warm, secure spot for sleeping. Wash their pet bed often so that dander and fur don't build up to a dangerous level where it can easily transfer to your carpet or clothing.

You can't avoid some allergens from being present in your home, even with a hypoallergenic dog breed, so it's important to keep your home well-vacuumed and clean at all times to maintain your good health as well.

Regular grooming is perhaps more important for hypoallergenic dog breeds than for others, especially when you have allergies to your baby. Even dogs with short hair need regular professional grooming. For people with allergies, monthly baths are a must! This will not only protect you from allergies, but it will assure your hypoallergenic dog a long, happy, healthy life.

Remember that even hypoallergenic dog breeds can still cause allergy attacks now and then. Be sure you visit your doctor when you get your dog and continue to follow your personal preventive routine to prevent serious problems with your allergies.

## Caring For Your Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Pet Dog

First bred in Ireland as a farm dog and family companion, the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier is closely related to the Irish and Kerry Blue Terriers. He has a soft, silky coat, and he is a happy dog. He's not as feisty as other terriers but makes a good watch dog and protector. This medium-sized dog ranges from 20-40 pounds in adulthood and has a strong graceful gate. Most Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers are very good with children.

Many people think the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier is a high-maintenance animal because of its longer fur, and they do require a lot of grooming to maintain a healthy, matt-free coat. If you're thinking about bringing a Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier into your home and family, you should understand what it takes to care for and groom him.

A Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier's coat is perhaps the most distinguishing thing about him. His very name captures this outstanding feature. He has a long, abundant white to light-grey coat that falls loosely about his frame. A good breed for allergy sufferers, a well-groomed dog will not shed much at all. However, its coat requires regular, careful grooming.

Frequent grooming is necessary with the Soft Coated Wheaten Carrier. A daily comb (use a medium-toothed comb) is recommended over a brush for the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, and it should be used daily to prevent matting and to keep the coat soft, shiny, and tangle-free. You'll also want to have him trimmed now and then to preserve the traditional "terrier look" and allow for his new coat to grow. You'll be happier if you begin to acclimate your Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier to the grooming procedures while he's still a puppy. Make him learn to love the comb and trimmer, and he's more likely to be cooperative!

In addition to daily combing and occasional trimming, it's important to care for the eyes, ears, teeth, and nails of your Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier. Their abundance of fur makes it easy to get eye and ear infections, and brushing his teeth regularly can add years to his life. If you don't know how or are not able to do these tasks yourself, you can hire a professional dog groomer to handle it.

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It's important to begin socializing and training your Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier pet dog while he's still a puppy. Being a terrier, he has lots of energy and can become dog aggressive if it's not channeled properly. Your Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier will respond well to a training program that is characterized by a few well-picked keywords:

### **Consistency**

Always be consistent when you're training you Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier pet dog. Use the same hand signals, body language, and tone of voice for each command to avoid confusion and mixed behavior. And always be consistent with punishment and rewards so that your Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier pet dog will know what you expect when you want something of him.

### **Tone**

Soft coated wheaten terriers are sensitive to tone of voice. He'll be able to read you quickly, especially if you are not sensitive to how sensitive he is. For a consistent level of behavior, try to cultivate a calm, soft tone with him at all times.

### **Timing**

Your Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier will respond better if you correct and reward him immediately so that he associates his behavior with your response. If you sense he's about to make a mistake, correct him before it happens. Your terrier will have a sense of behavioral consequences if you react to him quickly and clearly.

There's considerable work involved in the care and training of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier pet dog. He is a bundle of energy, though not so much as other terriers. He's a good-sized dog with an enthusiastic nature and the ability to protect you and your children. He's a great playmate for the kids and a loving companion for you. But be aware that when you bring the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier into your home, you are making a commitment to provide regular, careful care and grooming.

## Crate Training Your Golden

You're going to have to get over your old idea that crates are punishment for dogs. The truth is that your Golden Retriever will love his crate. It's a safe place that satisfies his natural instinct for his den. All dogs are instinctively den-dwelling creatures, and his crate may be an excellent substitute that meets your Golden Retriever's genetic need for a warm, safe place, particularly when he's afraid or confused. At the same time, it's not a good idea to let your Golden stay in his crate for hours on end, as this could cause other behavioral problems that will be difficult to solve.

When you bring your Golden Retriever puppy home for the first time, the open crate should already be there in the spot you want it to be permanently. The crate should probably be located centrally in the house but not in a high-traffic area. Many people leave their crate near an outside door so that their Golden Retriever can go outside to potty when he needs to. Put a toy, a dog treat, or a blanket in the crate to provide a point of interest or comfort.

But don't take the puppy to the crate or put him in it. Just let him roam the house, sniffing everything and finding his way around. Your Golden Retriever puppy will find the crate, and he'll probably want to visit it often. When your Golden Retriever puppy finds and enters the crate, give him lots of praise. If the puppy seems to want to stay for a while, you can close the door to see how he'll react.

Stay nearby at first and, if the puppy whines, reassure him with gentle words. If he gets upset, excited or is barking, don't let him out of the crate. This will reward the puppy for bad behavior. Rather, leave your puppy in the crate until he calms down. Then opening the door will be a reward for good behavior. Once the puppy is comfortable with the crate, it'll be safe to leave him in it now and then, for example when you have to leave the house for a little while. After your Golden Retriever puppy gets used to his new home and family, you can leave the crate door open. He'll probably start to wander in and out of the crate. Remember, praise him while he's in the crate to reinforce the behavior.

It will take some time to crate train your new Golden Retriever puppy, but not nearly as long as you may think. Crates can be a safe haven for your puppy, so never use it as punishment or a

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"time out." Consistently show your Golden Retriever that his crate is his own private home, his place and his alone. Natural instinct and positive reinforcement will accomplish the desired behavior.

## Even Your Dog Should Maintain A Healthy Weight

Talk about weight and obesity is everywhere these days. In fact, being overweight is bad for your health. We know it's true for humans. Doctors tell us it's true. Overweight and obese humans suffer from heart disease, diabetes, and bone and joint problems. It's common knowledge.

But did you know what your dog can be overweight, too? In fact, every extra pound costs your dog in risks to its health. As a responsible and loving dog owner, you should do everything you can to maintain a healthy diet and weight for your beloved pet.

You need to know that weight gain for dogs is even more harmful than it is for humans. Pound-for-pound, weight gain is more dangerous for your dog. When you gain a pound or two, your clothes may get tight, but generally things stay the same. When your dog gains a pound or two, he's adding a significant amount. This extra weight costs him in energy, makes his heart work harder, and puts relatively more pressure on his bones and joints. And your dog can't tell you what it's doing to him. You may not learn about emerging serious health problems until the annual exam at your vet's office.

Physical problems resulting from obesity are just, if not more, serious for dogs as they are for people. Dogs can't give you information about how they feel, so they must be diagnosed by a vet. If they are ill, the cost of care may be much more than you had ever thought of spending. Yet, if you love your pet, you will spend what is necessary to avoid pain and early death. It stands to reason that keeping your dog healthy before problems begin is a good way to save a lot of heartache and a lot of money!

As with humans, being over-weight can significantly reduce your dog's chances of living a long life. It can also create health problems that reduce the quality of his life throughout. Loving pet owners take care to feed their dog a consistent, measured amount of nutritious food each day, provide regular exercise, and visit the veterinarian regularly.

If your dog looks a bit chubbier than he did a few weeks ago, or if his tummy is bulging, you may want to take him to see his physician - the vet. Regular visits will help you and your vet keep

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track of changes in his weight over time so that you catch tendencies to gain more quickly. It's much easier to prevent weight-gain in dogs than to reduce it. Most vets keep weight and growth records for their patients, and your vet can compare your dog's information with that of other dogs from the same breed. Your vet is the best source of information on your dog's current condition, his ideal condition, and what you can do to assure a long, healthy life for your best friend.

Because you feed your dog, you are ultimately responsible for your dog's weight. If he's obese, it's because you feed him too much or don't give him the proper nutritious diet. It may also mean you're not paying enough attention to his exercise routine. If your dog is gaining weight despite a well-monitored diet, you should investigate the cause. He may have a medical condition that needs attention, or perhaps someone in your family is feeding him scraps from the table. Your neighbor could even be sneaking him treats while you're not looking!

Whatever the cause, it is very important that you control your dog's diet and maintain him at a healthy weight. Keeping your dog healthy will save you much money in the long run and give you a happy, healthy companion for years to come.



## Feeding Your Golden Retriever

Starting your new Golden Retriever puppy out on the right foot by feeding him properly will help him grow to be a happy, healthy adult. Puppies receive their nutrients from their mother until they're about 7 weeks old. But at about three weeks, it's time to start giving them puppy food that has been soaked and mixed to a thin paste that resembles the food they get from mom. The breeder should have started this process before you pick up your new Golden Retriever puppy.

Before you bring your Golden Retriever puppy home, be sure to find out exactly what food he's been given and the times he's been fed. Because puppy stomachs are very sensitive, it's important to continue the same regimen. When you begin to change to a more mature diet, gradually transition from 25% new mix with 75% of the old diet to the opposite (75% new and 25% old) over a ten-day period. This will give your Golden Retriever puppy time to adjust to the new diet without undue discomfort or digestive problems.

When your Golden Retriever puppy is at least 8 weeks old, it is acceptable to separate him from his mother and bring him home to meet his new family. At first, your new puppy may not show much interest in eating. Changes this big can be very stressful. Don't force him to eat. Once he figures out he doesn't have to fit his brothers and sisters to get his fair share, he'll become more curious and hungry. So don't worry if he only sniffs and nibbles at first.

Puppies need twice the nutrients that adult Golden Retrievers need to stay healthy. Don't be tempted to use too many treats with your Golden Retriever puppy, as they do not contain enough nutrients for his healthy growth. For the first few weeks, stick to the type of food and the same feeding schedule as he was getting from the breeder. It's hard for a new Golden Retriever puppy to adjust to changes, and maintaining a stable schedule with familiar food will be a nice balance to the shock of new surroundings and people. During the transition to the new food, watch closely for vomiting, loose stool or constipation. If these occur, slow down the transition until your Golden Retriever puppy adjusts and can eat without becoming upset or ill.

Professionals recommend that puppies should eat three times a day until they are about six months old. But it's a good idea to take the puppy to your vet as soon as you can. Get him

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checked out, and discuss diet and nutrition with your vet. Your vet will be able to give you tips on appropriate weights so that you can avoid over- or under-feeding your new Golden Retriever puppy.

The feeding schedule will, of course, be largely determined by your own schedule. But set regular times, and stick to them. Your new Golden Retriever puppy need stability, and sticking to a set schedule will help you with house-training, as his bathroom habits will be regular and predictable. Be sure to provide ample water during and after his meals. Set aside some quiet time for your Golden Retriever puppy after meals to avoid stomach problems. Expect your puppy to need to go to the bathroom within an hour or so. Ask the kids not to play with the puppy for the first hour to hour-and-a-half after he eats.

When your Golden Retriever puppy has learned to sleep through the night, make it a habit to take him outside for a potty break each morning. Then feed him, allowing for about an hour of quiet time afterward. Stick to your feeding schedule as much as you possibly can. You should schedule the last feeding at last an hour or so before you plan to go to bed so that you can give him a potty break before everyone settles in for a good night's rest. Until your Golden Retriever puppy is house-broken, provide puppy pads or newspapers near (not in) his sleeping area in case he can't wake you up for a trip outside.

By the time your Golden Retriever puppy is 8 to 10 weeks old, he should be on a diet of dry dog food. You can add a little warm water to make it more appetizing, but don't use canned or moist dog food. These are mostly water and not nearly as nutritious as the dry foods. The warm water will encourage your Golden Retriever puppy to eat all his food, though you may need to sit with him and add more warm water a little at a time. From three to six months, your Golden Retriever puppy will be teething. He may appear to be sick, but unless it lasts over two days, don't worry. It's growing pains.

Never feed your Golden Retriever puppy table scraps. They are likely to upset his stomach, and they are not the nutrition he needs at this stage of his growth. As your puppy grows, his stomach will grow, and he'll eat more. At about six months, you should begin to feed him twice a day, in the morning and at night, but continue to use a diet of puppy food. Being larger dogs, you may want to keep your Golden Retriever on puppy food well into his second year. But you should reduce feeding to once per day, always offering plenty of water during and after his

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meal. When you do switch to adult dog foods, be sure to select a quality brand with adequate nutrition for your Golden Retriever.

If you follow these guidelines and show your new Golden Retriever plenty of love and affection, you'll give him a great start to a long, happy, healthy lifetime with your family. He'll be a valuable and beloved member of your family for years.

## Grooming And Brushing Tips For Dogs That Are Hypoallergenic

Buying a hypoallergenic dog may be a great solution for reducing your allergic reactions to dog hair and dander, but you should know that these dogs have special grooming needs. Most hypoallergenic dogs have short fur that is more like human hair than dog fur. This means that they shed as much and need as many haircuts as their human companions.

Grooming is a very important part of caring for a hypoallergenic dog, and if you don't have time to do it yourself, plan on regular visits to the professional groomer. You should plan on daily brushings and monthly baths. If you don't have the time and can't afford to pay for this service, you may want to consider getting another breed.

Some of the more popular hypoallergenic dog breeds include terrier, basenji, bichon frise, poodle, Chinese crested, greyhound, havanese, Irish water spaniel, and shih Tzu. Most of these are smaller dogs, and many of them are quite temperamental. Until your dog has grown accustomed to the grooming routine, he may growl and snip at you.

If you can't cope with these temper tantrums, you may want to use the professional groomer to trim and bathe your hypoallergenic dog. Chain pet stores normally have a grooming department, and you'll be able to find many groomers in the yellow pages. Some groomers will even come to you in their mobile grooming vans. But while finding a groomer may be easy, finding one you can depend on may be more of a challenge.

The first time you trim your hypoallergenic dog's hair, you'll decide how long you want to leave the remaining coat. You may choose the show-dog cut, but you are not limited to that look. After the trim is done (whether by a groomer or you), inspect the job to be sure the cut is even and that the dog's skin is cut-, scrape-, and scratch-free. You may need to apply a small amount of antibiotic to any breaks in the skin as a precaution.

It's a good idea to have your hypoallergenic dog's face hair and nails trimmed at the same time as the regular cut. Most dogs do not like the pedicure but, with practice and patience, you can win their cooperation. It's important to regularly clip your dog's nails, as they can become a health

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hazard if they grow too long. Clip up to about 2 millimeters (1/16 inch) from the cuticle, and expect at least a little bleeding. Keep styptic powder handy just in case.

Most hypoallergenic dogs will enjoy the daily brushing, and it's important to maintain this habit to prevent shedding, matting, and "alien" debris from collecting in your dog's coat. If your long-hair hypoallergenic dog has persistent knots in his fur, you may want to brush it more often or maintain a closer trim.

Aside from the benefits of good hygiene and proper grooming, caring for your hypoallergenic dog this way gives you time to share physical affection and devoted attention to your hypoallergenic dog. Many people who are not comfortable with normal dogs will enjoy the company of a hypoallergenic dog, so you should maintain a beautiful healthy coat at all times. Your special hypoallergenic dog may be a bit of a prima dona, and the attention they receive from both friends and strangers will only confirm their valuable opinions of themselves.

Hypoallergenic breeds tend to be small, cute, and cuddly - if a bit nervous or temperamental. But if you have allergies or are sensitive to dog fur and dander, you may find a hypoallergenic dog to be the best friend you ever had. Show him how much you appreciate him by providing, regular thorough grooming and bathing. You'll be glad you did.

## Grooming Your Golden Retriever

Brushing your Golden Retriever regularly will help prevent shedding (especially important if you have allergies) and matting of his fur. Matting is not only unattractive, but it's uncomfortable for your dog as well. Brushing also helps you remove burs and other foreign matter that could threaten his health. Regular grooming will help maintain a shiny, healthy coat and enhance your Golden Retriever's quality of life.

Grooming your Golden Retriever is a time-consuming process. Grooming should be done at least once, preferably twice, every week. You can expect to spend about one-half an hour in the grooming process. The first step in the grooming process is a good brushing. Brush the entire body, from head to tail. When you've finished brushing, you can use a comb to remove any remaining loose hair and help distribute oils evenly throughout your Golden Retriever's coat. While you're accomplishing hair removal, you can also inspect your pet's roots and skin for ticks and fleas or skin irritations. This will also be a good time to inspect his ears to be sure they're clean and healthy and trim his nails.

You should give your Golden Retriever regular baths, too. Though it's a little complicated, the path will keep his coat and skin in good condition and reduce your exposure to allergens. After brushing to get rid of tangles and loose hair, bathe your Golden Retriever with a shampoo designed specifically for dogs. Human shampoos are too harsh for a dog's sensitive skin. You'll find that two baths a month will be sufficient to maintain your Golden's coat. If you do it consistently, your Golden Retriever's coat will be easier to brush and clean.

Because Golden's have longer fur, it is important to prevent matting. Daily brushing will accomplish this best, especially if you use metal combs or brushes. Taking the easy way by cutting the matts out is not advisable, as it could injure your pet, and it will certainly detract from his naturally beautiful coat. Avoid using scissors for grooming. Brushes and baths are the best way to prevent matting and maintain your Golden's health.

Trimming your Golden Retriever's nails regularly is also important. Too-long nails are bad for your dog's health. They can split and bleed profusely. They can change the shape of the foot

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and cause other joint problems if they force your Golden Retriever to walk so as to protect the too-long nails.

If you have never done it before, it might be wise to take your Golden to the vet to learn how to do it properly. Most dogs don't like having their nails clipped, and you may pick up some good hints on how to do it without a struggle. When you do clip your Golden's nails, you should be aggressive, trimming them about 1/16 inch or 2 millimeters, from the quick. You can expect to see some bleeding now and then, so keep some styptic power nearby. You'll probably need to undertake this task every few weeks.

Now, about your Golden Retriever's ears. Their ears are easily infected if you don't clean them regularly. Ear infections are very painful for dogs, and you'll want to assure your Golden is free of this health risk. Symptoms that may indicate ear infections include head shaking and scratching the ears, painful reactions when the ears are touched, discharges or foul odors coming from the ears, and blisters, swelling, or redness on or around the skin. If you notice any of these symptoms, you should take your Golden to the vet before the problems get worse or become irreversible.

You should clean his ears once a week using a commercial ear-cleaning solution to prevent infection. Many people don't realize that hair can grow inside and into dogs' ears. Use a hemostat to carefully remove any hair inside the ear canal. Then use cotton or a cloth with the cleaning solution to gently clean no further than one-half an inch into the ear. Do NOT use Q-tips or alcohol to clean your Golden's ears. And do not use water or a syringe to clean his ears. Leave this delicate and sometimes dangerous task to the vet. If you use tools like a hemostat, be sure they are sterile.

Good, regular grooming is essential to the health and well-being of your Golden Retriever. It takes some time from your daily routine, but it also helps you bond with your pet. If you don't have the time, you should take your Golden Retriever to a dog-grooming professional. Now matter how you do it, you must assure that your Golden receives regular grooming and baths.

## Heart Worm, Fleas And Other Parasites

We all want to make sure our dogs are protected from heart worms, fleas, and other parasites like hook worms, whip worms, round worms, lice, ticks, and other nasty critters that compromise a dog's health and happiness. There are many new products on the market designed to protect dogs.

Among one of the most difficult of pests is the flea. Fleas cause serious reactions that indicated by severe itching and scratching. This can lead to serious infections and dermatitis, which is difficult and expensive to treat. Fleas also move from pets to people and surroundings. Anyone who's had a flea-infected carpet or couch can testify to the challenge of getting rid of the pests. Flea infestations make it difficult dogs to lie down or sleep. In short, fleas make your precious pet miserable. Not even a dog deserves this life.

Ticks are a serious treat to your dog's health and happiness. Tick bites can lead to secondary bacterial infections, indicated by puss, swelling, and bad odors. Tick infestations can cause your dog to become anemic, to become weak and unable to resist other infections and diseases.

If you suspect your dog has fleas or ticks, inspect his fur and skin carefully. Fleas are small, but you'll be able to see them crawling and jumping around near the roots of the fur. Ticks become large and swollen with your dog's blood and are easy to spot on close examination. Your vet can also test for the presence these parasites.

If your vet diagnoses your dog with anemia, it may be caused by a variety of problems. Anemia is not a disease in itself. It is an indicator of disease. Symptoms of anemia are lethargy and loss of the pink color in your dog's gums. Normally, 30-35% of a dog's blood is red blood cells. When it falls below that, your dog is probably anemic.

To protect your dog, it is important to make sure he has regular exams at the vet's office. This should include analyses of fecal and blood samples to assure your dog is free from parasites like hook worms.



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Your vet can recommend any one of several new medications to deal with these conditions in a single dose. Products like ivermectin are effective and can be administered by injection, orally, or by application to the skin. Better yet, many of these drugs can be used as preventive measures to protect your dog before it falls prey to life-threatening parasites.

## Hypoallergenic Medium Sized Dogs

If you have both have allergies and love dogs, you may be happy with one of the "hypoallergenic dogs" that sheds less dog hair and dander than other dogs. There are many small breeds of hypoallergenic dogs that people with allergies can love for years. But if you like larger dogs better and have the living space for them, never fear! There are several medium-sized hypoallergenic dogs that will meet your needs as well.

### **Senor, Yo Quiero a Spanish Water Dog!**

Even a person who's allergic to dog hair and dander can find a big loveable shaggy, but medium-sized hypoallergenic dog! Great news! Spanish Water Dogs look a lot like the popular Looney Tunes sheep dog. Spanish Water Dogs are fun-loving, intelligent creatures that love to play, swim, and work. Properly socialized, they are wonderful playmates for your kids. This very intelligent dog was originally bred as a herdsman, hunter, or guardian, so it'll be more than happy to play an important role in your family or on your farm. This breed has a unique coat - curly and long, it almost appears to wear dreadlocks! It is a single-coat breed, meaning it doesn't have the undercoat that sheds once a year. They will need quite a bit of grooming, though their unusual coat is a delightful conversation piece! Due to their intelligence and work ethic, owners of this medium-sized hypoallergenic dog must be able to provide regular, consistent training, exercise, and interesting activities. Some Spanish Water Dogs have become effective search dogs, sniffing out bombs, narcotics, and people in disaster situations. They also make very good therapy dogs.

### **The Bouvier des Flandres Rules!**

Not everyone agrees, but some Bouvier des Flandres owners report the breed to be good for their allergies. This medium-sized hypoallergenic dog can grow to 90 pounds, and without early socialization and careful training may have some dominance issues. Originally meant to herd sheep and cattle, this breed makes an excellent work or guard dog. They are stars, too: American President Ronald Regan owned one. They have great, shaggy, thick hair that suits colder climates and outdoor work and play. Their thick hair (not fur) requires a considerable amount of grooming. Daily to weekly brushing are recommended, and they should be trimmed

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at least every six weeks. Due to its deep chest, the Bouvier des Flandres may suffer volvulus and bloat. While they are relatively calm and lazy indoors, the Bouvier des Flandres does best when it has a big yard to play in.

### **Viva the Xoloitzcuintle!**

Otherwise known as the Mexican Hairless, or Xolo, the Xoloitzcuintle comes in three sizes, the largest growing to as large as 60 pounds in some cases (though the average is more like 40 pounds). An extremely rare breed, they are almost completely bald and resemble the dogs found in Hieroglyphs from Ancient Egypt. Some Xolos do have a thin coat of hair or spots of hair on their bodies and heads. Rare and ancient, artifacts and pottery evidencing the Xolo in Aztec and Mayan tombs date back over 3000 years! These medium-sized hypoallergenic dogs are extremely intelligent, loyal, athletic, and loving. They bond closely with the people who train and feed them and need early socialization to become good with children. If you are not the pack leader, your Xolo will be! They are becoming more popular as service and agility dogs. Even those with a thin coat are easy to groom. While they've been recognized by Mexico's dog organization, they're not yet recognized by the American Kennel Club. Now, here's the down side. These dogs, and their breeders, are very rare. They were even thought to be nearly extinct until the 1950s. They are even hard to find in Mexico. One search revealed only three breeders in the Western United States and very few in Mexico. So if you want a Xolo, be prepared to wait patiently until the right one comes along.

## List Of Hairless Hypoallergenic Dogs

Called non-shedding dogs, there are many dog breeds that slough off less dog hair and dander and present less risk to people who have allergies. Many of them have long, silky coats appropriate for the show world. But if you want a dog that is both non-shedding AND unique, you might consider shopping for a hairless hypoallergenic dog.

While it's common to assume that these dogs are all tiny, barking pests, you'll find a range of sizes and temperaments in the hairless hypoallergenic dog category. True, there are more small hairless hypoallergenic dogs than larger sizes. But you can find a great medium-sized hairless hypoallergenic dog without too much work.

Four medium-sized hairless hypoallergenic dogs include the Mexican Hairless (also Xoloitzcuintie or Xolo), the American Hairless Terrier, the hairless Chinese Crested, and the Peruvian Inca Orchid (called the PIO). You may find it necessary to do your search for breeders online, as these hairless hypoallergenic dogs are relatively rare.

You may have a harder time finding a Mexican Hairless because there are few breeders worldwide. The Xolo has a short coat that doesn't need a lot of brushing or combing because its hair is so short. You won't have to worry about matting either since there's nothing to matt or tangle. You can find a range of sizes in the Mexican Hairless breed.

The popular American Hairless Terrier is not a true hairless dog, although it does have a short coat requiring little grooming. The first of this breed was an accident! Appearing in 1972 from nowhere in a litter of Rat Terriers, its Louisiana owners were able to reproduce the new hairless variety and have been doing so since the early 1980s. Like its Terrier cousins, the American Hairless is a friendly, outgoing, small husky dog who lives happily in a small apartment or townhome.

The Chinese Crested is available in two distinct varieties: the truly hairless and the Powder Puff. The hairless Chinese Crested still has shocks of hair on its head, tail, and feet that need regular grooming. The Powder Puff variety and has long fine hair resembling human hair. Both classified as hypoallergenic dogs due to their limited shedding.

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The Peruvian Hairless, or PIO, is a hairless dog. It is medium-sized, intelligent, and friendly. Being a bit more self-willed than other dogs, the PIO is not for people without experience in training and disciplining dogs. They need to be socialized early and should be trained in obedience.

Hairless hypoallergenic dogs generally need regular exercise, generous attention, and close companionship with their owners and family. Because they don't have the dog hair that normally protects the skin, they need extra protection outdoors to prevent sunburn and dry skin problems. They are more susceptible to dry skin rashes and acne, so you may find yourself using special skin creams to treat pain and itches associated with skin irritations and diseases.

Due to the limited number of hairless hypoallergenic dog breeders, you'll probably want to start your search on the internet. Be sure to check your breeder's credentials and references. Not all breeders of hairless hypoallergenic dogs are created equal. Be sure the breeder you choose has a passion for the dogs, rather than the money he gets.

It's a good idea to visit the breeder before selecting a dog from them. Inspect their facilities and spend some time with them to learn about their views and attitudes towards their dogs. If you know someone who already has a hairless hypoallergenic dog, you might want to spend some time with their pet to get a feel for what life will be like with this type of pet.

Owning a dog is a commitment of time and energy that repays you with tons of love and companionship. If you have problems with allergies to dog hair, choosing a hairless hypoallergenic dog may be the perfect solution. Take time to do the research to identify the breed that will make a perfect companion for you and your family. Accept the fact that you'll be grooming and bathing your new hairless hypoallergenic dog, and enjoy your new companion for years to come!

## **Medical Problems Of Golden Retrievers**

Because they have been so popular over the last 50 years or so, Golden Retrievers have been over-bred, resulting in a genetic predisposition to experience specific health problems. Unfortunately, as greedy breeders often fail to screen their breeding animals, additional hereditary health problems are introduced to the breed. If you have a Golden, or plan to bring one into your home, you should know about the more common hereditary problems that may reduce the quality or length of your Golden Retriever's life.

### **Health Problems Known to Be Inherited by Golden Retrievers**

**Hip and Elbow Dysplasia:** When growing hip joints don't form properly, juvenile and adult Retrievers may have an uneven gait or even severe lameness. This inherited disorder is common to many large dogs, and while is not usually noticeable in puppies, hip dysplasia will begin to show when your Golden is between four and nine months old. The severity of the condition varies greatly from dog to dog, but most Goldens with hip dysplasia will develop arthritis as they age. Moderate exercise, weight control, and inflammatory medications will help with the discomfort of this problem. Not all Golden Retrievers will show, or even know about, their hip dysplasia if it's a mild form. Golden's with hip dysplasia can live long, happy lives, but they should not be bred.

Like hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia is developmental problem in young dogs. It is not as common as hip dysplasia, but it can be aggravated by over-feeding and too much nutrition in early puppyhood. Care and treatment are the same as for hip dysplasia. And, of course, Golden Retrievers with hip dysplasia should not be bred.

**Eye Disease:** Golden Retrievers frequently suffer from hereditary cataracts. They can range from mild problems that do not interfere with your Golden's vision to severe cataracts that cause blindness as the dog ages. Eyelid and eyelash problems may be hereditary, though not all are. When the lids or lashes turn in, they may irritate the eyeball. Depending on the severity of this problem, surgery may be necessary. Because it's hard to tell whether eye diseases result from heredity or environment, it's best not to breed a Golden Retriever with frequent or chronic eye problems.

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Heart Disease: Golden Retrievers are known to inherit Subvalvular Aortic Stenosis (SAS) that may be hard to detect. Heart murmur is the best indicator, although it is not always present when the problem exists. Your veterinarian may be able to identify the problem by listening with a stethoscope or more invasive necropsy. If your Golden has SAS, consult with your veterinarian about the best treatments.

## Golden Retriever Health Problems Suspected To Be Inherited

**Epilepsy:** Characterized by seizures, epilepsy can result from environmental sources and viral infections. While watching your Golden Retriever go through a seizure is very uncomfortable, it may not be dangerous to your dog's long-term quality of life. You can get medications from your vet to control the seizures. Do not breed a Golden Retriever that has seizures to avoid the chance of passing the disorder on to its puppies.

**Skin Allergies:** The most common medical problem that Golden Retrievers experience is skin allergies, although it's difficult to know if they are genetic or environmental in nature. Your Golden may have skin allergies if it obsessively bites or scratches. It can even create bald spots in its coat if it goes untreated. Skin allergies are a natural reaction to flea, mite, and tick bites and can be reduced or avoided by regular grooming and shampooing with commercial flea and tick products. Your Golden could also be allergic to mold and other indoor air pollutants. Regular house-cleaning should reduce the problem. Diet can be very important to treating and avoiding allergic reactions in Golden Retrievers, so do your research to find the appropriate feeding regimen for your dog.

**Hypothyroidism:** Golden Retrievers affected by this failure of the thyroid gland to function properly may be obese or have problems maintaining a healthy coat. Some Golden's with hypothyroidism will also have seizures. However, most problems should resolve upon the administration of oral medicines. Assuring your Golden is generally healthy by providing a balanced nutritious diet, plenty of exercise, and a safe living environment will do much to prevent or reduce the impacts of hypothyroidism. Goldens with this problem may have more difficulty breeding than you'd expect, although it is recommended that you do not even try to breed a Golden Retriever with this or other hereditary conditions.

### **Tips on Selecting and Caring for Your Golden Retriever**

These are a few of the medical problems often found in Golden Retrievers. It's an unfortunate irony that the more popular a dog is, the more likely breeding is to bring out health problems specific to the breed. One way to avoid these problems is to be very careful in selecting the breeder, shelter, or pet store that supplies your dog. Insist on reviewing the dog's records, and



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inspect the facility. Knowing that the offerer has a passionate love for Golden Retrievers is one way to assure your Golden is not plagued by the problems that result from breeding and over-breeding unhealthy dogs.

No matter what symptoms your Golden Retriever exhibits, the careful pet owner does not jump to conclusions or make uneducated diagnoses. If you are concerned about your Golden, be sure to take it to the vet as soon as you can. Rely on the education and experience of a certified veterinarian in identifying health problems and treating them.

## Socializing Your Golden Retriever

How your Golden Retriever reacts to and behaves with other people and animals depends on how well he was socialized. Socializing dogs means getting them used to adults, children, other dogs, cats, rabbits, and the world in general.

Fortunately, for owners of Golden Retrievers, nature has already done half the work. Goldens are friendly, smart, energetic dogs who love to please. They are normally patient and loving with children, though there are exceptions. Most Goldens are friendly to strangers and good with other animals. However, you may find a Golden who is only comfortable with one sex, with adults but not children, or good with other Goldens but not with other dogs or cats. Socialization depends not only on the breed of the dog but on his early experiences.

Three factors contribute to how well your dog will become socialized: his genetically-inherited characteristics, his experience with his mother and siblings, and his early life experience. Though some over-breeding may have created exceptions, most Goldens are genetically-prone to be open and friendly.

As a newborn, your puppy learned how to behave and react from copying its mother and littermates. In addition to genetic pre-disposition to certain behaviors, its mother's example will help shape your Golden's reactions to the world. For this reason, it's important to make sure the breeder has selected animals with good, even temperaments for breeding. Of course, you can't know about an adult's past if you are adopting a rescue. But you can probably draw some pretty good conclusions by his behavior when you bring him home.

If your Golden Retriever puppy separated from his mother before age of seven weeks, he probably won't have had the chance to learn many of the acceptable social signals and responses. He may tend to be nippy or aggressive toward strangers, men only, women only, or children. He may not tolerate other animals very well. And although he may show aggression towards people, he may be timid around other dogs because he has not learned what to expect or how to behave.

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Some Golden Retrievers who have been physically or mentally traumatized by abuse or a fearful event. This leaves an emotional scar, a memory that the dog can't process and leave behind him. Most Golden Retrievers that have been traumatized carry the scar with them and require special attention throughout their lives. Their fear responses may be expressed as overt aggression or flight. While these situations are difficult to change, abundant love and careful discipline may help your Golden Retriever move beyond a traumatic event.

The best time to socialize your Golden Retriever is during his/her "adolescence" (from 8 weeks to 8 months). During this time, you should provide many opportunities for your Golden to be with other people and in different situations. Earlier than 8 weeks, your puppy is not capable of learning social skills. After 8 months, he may be too set in his ways to adjust rapidly to new situations. During that window of adolescence, you will have to offer plenty of reassurance and encourage your Golden to interact. He may be shy at first, but with loving encouragement and praise, he should become more adventurous.

Successful Golden Retriever socialization involves frequent contact and interaction with people (especially children), other dogs, and other animals in general. Your Golden will learn to feel comfortable with strangers as well as learn appropriate behaviors in social situations with other adults, children, and animals. As he ages, he'll carry these positive experiences with him. Golden Retrievers who are not given lots of opportunities for social interactions early in life may have behavior problems down the road, so it's very important that you take the right steps with your puppy to teach him how to behave in public. Your Golden Retriever will repay you with a lifetime of loving, happy companionship.

## So You Want To Be A Dog Breeder

Not everyone is cut out to be a good dog breeder. If you're willing to invest the time to learn how to breed healthy puppies and have a strong commitment to your animals, dog breeding is a heart-warming experience. In fact, it's a lot of fun!

The joys of dog breeding are limitless - waiting for the big day as the puppies develop in the womb, witnessing their entry into the world, and nurturing them through their first six to eight weeks of life can be a tremendously rewarding experience. But to be a really good dog breeder, you must care about more than the financial "bottom line." You have to have genuine love and concern for the animals you've taken into your charge. The best dog breeders create happy, healthy puppies for truly loving homes.

There's more to breeding dogs than one small article can cover. You have to know the best time of year for breeding and how to provide the best environment for mating, birth, and early care. Good dog breeders need to understand more than the dogs under their care: they must be able to maintain a successful small business. Most of all, good dog breeders are willing to invest the time and effort necessary to learn all the ins and outs of breeding before they begin.

Your most important building block in breeding happy, healthy puppies is your female dog. She must be in heat before she can breed. Typically, this happens every six to seven months. However, even though she may go into heat while she's young, she may not be physically mature enough to carry, deliver, and care for her new babies. You should wait until your dog is physically mature before breeding her. For some breeds, this may be two or more years of age.

Your veterinarian can help you decide when the time is right for dog breeding. Vets know about your animal, and they know how to perform and interpret the necessary tests and physical exams. It's best to wait until your vet tells you your female dog is ready to breed. If you don't give her enough time, you could lose both mother and her puppies.

Even when your vet has given you the go-ahead, you'll have to find the appropriate male to mate with your little lady. Be sure the dog you choose for her is healthy, and verify with his owner that he is of a pure bloodline, particularly if you want to register your puppies.

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Mating usually works best when you bring your female to the male because the male needs to be comfortable to perform his task. That usually happens in his own territory.

Most female dogs aren't fertile until they've been in heat about ten days, and they remain fertile for about four days. Fertility periods vary, so consult your vet to identify the most favorable times for mating. You'll also have to go through some trial and error to learn what works for your female dog.

Mating is only the beginning of a successful dog breeder's work. You'll have to be a dedicated nurse, mid-wife, and nanny for your dog and her puppies. And good dog breeders are very careful to find warm, loving homes for their precious ones. You can find lots of good advice and personal contacts to help you succeed through your vet, other breeders and, of course, through Internet websites dedicated to dog breeding.

## The Combination Approach To Feeding

You can feed your Golden Retriever high-quality commercial food, but the best way to provide a nutritious healthy diet is to combine both commercial food for dogs with fresh food for people. Whether dry or canned, most commercial dog food lacks the nutrients, vitamins, and minerals that come with fresh food. Vets agree that fresh food is good for your dog, providing practice use moderation. Golden Retrievers love fresh food. They can smell it a mile away, and if it smells good, they'll eat it!

Commercial dog foods are good sources of protein and vitamins, but fresh food contains more essential nutrients and a more varied diet. For example, fresh chicken and beef provide more protein and minerals than any commercial dog food on the market today. Fish also contains plentiful protein and helps your Golden Retriever maintain a healthy brain.

As long as you give a dog the proper nutrients and minerals, they can stay healthy. But Golden Retrievers love variety, and they are delighted when they receive the same food as they see people eating. To keep your Golden interested in his food, offer them a different food each day. Recommended people foods for dogs include chicken and chicken livers, kale, red beets, chickpeas, and peas. Avoid corn, wheat, and soy, as more dogs tend to be allergic to them. People also feed their dogs some fruits, vegetables, and grains without ill effect. These include apples and bananas, carrots and cauliflower, peaches, rice cakes, and tuna.

Play it safe. Don't make big changes in your Golden Retriever's diet at once. Add a little of a fresh food one day, and wait a day or two before doing it again. Dogs have reacted badly to sweeping diet changes, so you'll want to be cautious. There are also human foods that are poisonous to dogs, including chocolate, onions, garlic, and macadamia nuts. Don't give your dog fruit pits or potato peelings, foods with caffeine, broccoli, or raisins or grapes. Before you make changes in your Golden Retriever's diet, check out the internet for those foods that are safe and those that are not safe.

Be sure that your Golden Retriever gets plenty of animal protein in his diet. Dogs are not carnivorous animals. Unlike cats, who must have meat to survive, dogs can survive on a diverse diet of plant and animal products. They are omnivores and eat all types of foods. In the wild,

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they eat grasses, leaves, and other plants. Having said this, dogs do in fact thrive on animal-based diets. Although an all-meat diet is dangerous, dogs do need meat.

To be safe, you should give your Golden a combination of dog and people food to assure he gets all the nutrients he needs. Make sure his diet is about half animal protein, and spice things up by giving him different human foods each day. Be careful not to over-feed your Golden Retriever as you experiment with new diet combinations. You might want to weigh him once a week to be sure you catch any weight-gain trends as they happen. Also, observe your Golden Retriever's reactions to human food in case he should have an allergy you didn't expect.

If ever in doubt, do not hesitate in giving your vet a call. Your vet knows your dog and its medical history. They'll be able to recommend the best diet, including both commercial food for dogs and human foods, to maintain proper health and an appropriate weight.

## Dental Care For Dogs

Not many people understand the importance of dental care in maintaining the general health and well being of dogs. Just like humans dogs need regular dental care. It is the responsibility of owners to make sure that they get it. A responsible dog owner takes care of their dog's teeth.

Food residue can accumulate on your dog's teeth just as it does on your own teeth. It quickly leads to tartar and plaque build up causing tooth decay and gum disease. All the things you know about dental care in humans applies to your dog too.

If you neglect your dog's dental care it can lead to pain for the dog. The pain will stop them eating and their health will suffer as a result. An even more serious result of tooth decay are diseases and ulcerated gums that can cause blood poisoning if left untreated.

Even if you avoid giving your dog sweet treats they are at risk of dental decay. So it is important to pay attention to dental hygiene when caring for your dog. Dental care is vital to maintaining your dog's health.

Brushing is essential. A small soft brush is best. You can get a specially designed canine brush from your veterinarian or dog food supplier.

Remember that a dog's sense of smell and taste is far more acute than ours so don't use toothpaste that is intended for human beings. It is too strongly flavored and would distress a dog. Canine toothpaste usually has a meaty flavor that your dog will like.

Begin your dental care regime when your dog is a puppy. They get used to having their teeth brushed and regard it as part of their regular grooming routine. Start with small sessions at first. You must build up your dog's trust in order to let you clean their teeth.

Your choice of food is also important. Dog's need to crunch and chew their food. In the wild they are used to crunching bones. It is important to allow them to have a bone or chew toys. It is a valuable part of your dog's dental care.



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Dry food and biscuits are better than canned dog meat for dental care. They help to keep the teeth clean and do not build up on the teeth allowing bacteria to multiply. Some biscuits are specially designed for cleaning a dog's teeth. These make a good treat for good behavior. You will know that you have taken care of your dog's dental health and your dog will feel rewarded.

If your dog has dental problems you will get a face full of bad breath every time he greets you. Eventually you will get a massive bill from your veterinarian. Dog dentistry is seriously expensive. What is more it is dangerous because it needs an anesthetic. So avoid it if you can be paying attention to your dog's dental care.

## Famous Cartoon Dogs

The American love of dogs is expressed nowhere better than in the cartoons. Since cartoons were first drawn dogs have featured in them. Dogs in the cartoons express something very fundamental about the popular American psyche.

Long before films made cartoons universal dogs appeared in the cartoon strips that newspapers ran. That is where the cartoon dog first began to develop its characteristic traits and become an iconic figure.

Little Orphan Annie had her faithful dog Sandy. The cartoonist Harold Gray used Sandy as a side kick for his feisty female lead character. Whether she was fighting Nazis or investigating haunted houses Sandy was never far away. Every strip ended with Sandy's trade market "Arf!"

Sandy never had much to say. He could not be said to have been a fully delineated character. That was never the case with the Snoopy. Snoopy is a more recent addition to the cartoon strip hall of fame. He is Charlie Brown's dog in Schulz's "Peanuts" cartoon strip. He first appeared in the syndicated strip in 1950. He has since made the transition to television and big screen.

Snoopy always dominated the "Peanuts" cartoons and seemed to lead a much richer imaginative life than the children who were supposed to be the main characters of the cartoon. The little beagle could invariably be found on top of his kennel writing his novel. When not doing that he was dressed as a World War I fighter ace fighting the Red Baron. Unusually for a dog, even in the cartoons, he owned an original Van Gogh and a Van Wyeth. The Van Gogh was sadly destroyed by fire in one episode.

A completely different take on the dog character in cartoons is Odie in the Garfield comics. Odie never had anything to say. All he did was to slobber. The intellectual part of the partnership was Garfield the cat. Even that sometimes abusive relationship between the cartoon cat and dog reflects something of the conflicted relationship that is often seen between family pets. At a deeper level perhaps the cartoon also has something to say about sibling rivalry.

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Today's leading cartoon dog has to be Santa's Little Helper who appears in the Simpsons. He is principally Bart's dog and their relationship encapsulates the special place that is accorded to the child/dog pairing in American popular culture. There is an innocence of sentiment in the bond between the boy and the dog that captures the way in which childhood is envisaged in the USA. For the city kid of the late 20th and early 21st century that is a condition that is all too often unattainable but the cartoon image of the dog maintains the myth.

## Heartworms In Dogs – What They Are & What To Do

As their name suggests heart worms live in the heart of a dog where they can do a lot of damage. It is important for a dog owner to be aware of the dangers of the parasitic heart worm. A responsible dog owner must be alert to the risk of a heart worm infestation and take preventive measures. If an infection is suspected you must seek treatment from your veterinarian.

Heart worms are also known by the Latin name of "Dirofilaria immitis." They normally live in the right ventricle of the heart where they float freely near the blood vessels. They are transmitted by mosquitoes that pass them from dog to dog in their saliva when they bite an animal. So even your dog does not come into contact with other dogs it is at risk. Cats are also prone to them.

An infestation of heart worms goes through four stages. The treatment prescribed by a veterinarian will depend on what stage the dog has reached.

In the first stage a dog that has been infected with heart worms by a mosquito bite will not show any signs of infection. The heart worms will not even show up in a blood test. This is why prevention is important. Speak to your veterinarian about heart worm prevention when your dog is still a puppy. A dog that is older than seven months can have an adverse reaction to treatment. So tackle the issue before it reaches that age.

The worms have to mature and make their way to the heart before they can be spotted by any tests. This is the second stage of the disease. By then the signs of a heart worm infestation can be detected by x-ray. The heart worms damage the blood vessels around the dog's heart and lungs and this can be picked up on an x-ray. The dog may also be short of breath and coughing.

The rate at which damage takes place depends on the number of worms. But it is rare for a dog to be infected by only one worm. A heavy infestation will rapidly cause a blockage of blood flow. This is the third stage. The dog may be showing signs of weight loss. Tests may reveal liver and kidney damage. This is the third stage of the disease.

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As the blockage to the blood flow becomes more severe the dog may exhibit symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, lethargy and hypertension. The dog may even faint. A heart attack is possible.

In the fourth and most serious stage the dog experiences what is known as Vena Cava Syndrome. The dog is in a state of shock and dying. The only possible intervention at this advanced stage is surgery to physically remove the worms. Success is by no means guaranteed.

## Hepatitis In Dogs

Hepatitis is a serious illness in dogs for which there is no cure. It is therefore important to immunize the dog while it is still a puppy. Immunization is very safe and effective. A series of vaccinations are need to ensure immunity. Make sure that your dog completes the whole course of vaccinations to ensure complete immunity.

Widespread vaccination has considerably reduced the prevalence of hepatitis in Western Europe and North America. But it is important to get you puppy immunized all the same because unless a high proportion of dog owners do so the disease will make a come back. Vaccination is the responsible action on the part of a dog owner who is concerned about animal welfare.

Hepatitis in dogs is caused by the virus CAV-1. This virus is unique to dogs and does not cause infection in humans. An infected dog cannot transmit the hepatitis to you or your children. Human hepatitis is caused by a different virus.

CAV-1, like other hepatitis viruses first establishes itself in the lymph nodes from where it replicates and spreads to the bloodstream. It causes damage to major organs including the liver, kidneys and eyes.

In a puppy or young dog hepatitis can be fatal. In an older dog it is unlikely to be fatal but can produce extreme discomfort and pain. Some dogs may show little sign of infection.

Once a dog is infected with CAV-1 there is no treatment or cure. That is why early vaccination is vital to prevent hepatitis in your dog.

In some cases hepatitis is not caused by CAV-1. This is known as idiopathic or periportal hepatitis. The cause of this type of hepatitis in dogs is not known. It is usually seen in dogs that are five or six years old.

The symptoms of both types of hepatitis are similar. They include weight loss, jaundice, vomiting, diarrhea, depression and weakness. There is no specific treatment but your

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veterinarian will attempt to alleviate the dog's symptoms. Antibiotics may be used to prevent secondary opportunistic infections.

All that you and your veterinarian can do is to try and keep the dog as comfortable as possible. You simply have to wait until the dog recovers from the disease. Adult dogs will usually survive, but in puppies hepatitis can be fatal.

Some breeds are more likely to suffer from hepatitis than others. Doberman Pinchers and some types of terrier are most susceptible. They may develop chronic hepatitis and suffer from the disease all their lives. No one knows the reason for this.

## Hip Dysplasia In Dogs

Hip dysplasia is a painful and debilitating condition in dogs that can sometimes result in the animal becoming completely crippled. There is no cure for it.

The best thing a dog owner can do is to choose a pet carefully. Hip Dysplasia is a genetic condition. That is to say it is passed on from the parents to the offspring. In some cases it can be the result of injury to a dog's hips while it is a puppy or while it is being born. But this is a comparatively rare cause.

While there may be some genetic component in most diseases hip dysplasia is in effect 100% genetic. You must therefore make sure that you examine the parents dogs when you buy a puppy. If they have sound hips the puppy is less likely to suffer from hip dysplasia. Question the vendors carefully about the pedigree of the puppy. Ask if there is any history of hip dysplasia in the family line.

Responsible breeders will have breeding dogs x-rayed to check for any sign of hip dysplasia. They should not breed from a dog that shows any signs of hip dysplasia. A dog may not exhibit any outward symptoms but have a tendency to hip dysplasia that only manifests itself in its offspring. A dog that shows signs of hip dysplasia should be neutered or spayed to make sure that it does not pass on the trait.

Some breeds of dog seem more prone to hip dysplasia than others. German Shepherds, in particular, often suffer from it. This may be because they have been bred for a stance that places the back hip at an unnatural angle.

Hip dysplasia may not show up in a puppy. It often only develops as the dog matures. This is because the back hips are misaligned and malformed. The joint is loose and that may lead to difficulty in walking and running or discomfort and pain.

Wear and tear on the joints gradually produces dislocation and damage. A hip joint that is damaged in this way can become arthritic. An owner may not know about the hip dysplasia and think that the dog has developed arthritis as it got older. But the root cause of the arthritis is the



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damage that the weak joint has suffered during the dog's lifetime. Large dogs are especially susceptible because of the weight that their joints must carry.

Your veterinarian cannot offer any treatment for the dysplasia but will be able to prescribe pain killers. In bad cases the dog will have pain when walking and running. Its mobility may become limited. This can be a contributory factor in other health conditions because the dog cannot take normal exercise. Swimming may be one means of maintaining mobility and ensuring that the dog can exercise. The dog's weight is taken by the water and it experiences less pain.

In extreme cases the dog's hindquarters may become completely immobile. The dog will have a very poor quality of life and chronic pain.

## Hollywood Dogs

From Rin Tin Tin and Old Yeller to Frazier's Eddie, dogs occupy a special place in American movie and television history. Their breeding and training is a multi-million dollar industry in its own right. Getting the right dog for the part can make the difference between a film or show succeeding or being a disastrously expensive flop. Rin Tin Tin is credited with single handedly, or four-pawedly, saving Warner Brothers Studios from bankruptcy. Dogs are as important as any human stars to the Hollywood machine in that respect and they are treated accordingly.

A dog on the screen will instantly focus the attention of viewers. Almost anyone can empathize with a dog. A dull film can be enlivened, poor acting can be eclipsed by canine appeal, and a bad script has no effect on a dog that just does what comes naturally.

The kind of roles that dogs have played in Hollywood films and American television express something of the place of the dog in popular imagination. In the early films that featured dogs the scene is always a rural one. These films are almost an off-shoot of the Western movie and contain many of the same themes.

Dogs like Rin Tin Tin, Old Yeller and Lassie express what philosophers and theologians have often regarded as the permanent things of human morality. They embody the virtues of loyalty, devotion, love, justice, bravery and self-sacrifice which are so often absent in modern society. They seem to take the viewer back to simpler time when these values were upheld.

A more knowing audience raised on horror films and choreographed violence was thought to be immune to the charms of the "dog movie." When Joe Camp pitched the idea of a film with a dog as the main character the studios dismissed his idea. It would never work they told him. Today's audiences just would not buy it.

So instead he made his film "Benjii" himself. It was a reshaping of the old theme with an edgier, urban dog who is rescued from an animal shelter. This lovable cross breed spoke to the issues of a more troubles society. The film became huge success. Benjii went on to stardom and the backers reaped a fortune out of merchandising "Benjii" toys.

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With Eddie the canine character in the television show "Frazier" we see another take on the movie dog. Frazier the sophisticated psychiatrist is brought back to the old verities of home and family loyalty by the little terrier. The dog acts a foil silently critiquing the behavior of the urbane intellectual. His pomposities are punctured and his humanity is revealed in his relationship with the dog.

Doubtless the "dog movie" will morph into to further manifestations of the genre in the future. Hollywood knows when it is on to a money spinner.

## How To Control Incessant Dog Barking

Dogs bark because it is one of their primary means of communication. They are social animals that have evolved to live in packs. But barking is only one means by which they communicate to one another not the only one. It is an extreme signal that expresses joy or fear. If a dog is barking incessantly then something is wrong. It is not natural for a dog to bark all the time.

A dog owner has to think like a dog to control incessant barking. You have to work out what your dog is trying to tell you. It may be your dog is barking because you have not heard his other signals. It is the equivalent of shouting to make yourself heard.

Perhaps your dog is lonely. A dog that is left alone all day will bark to attract attention. A dog needs its pack and for a domestic dog that is you. If you have to be out at work or school then consider finding a dog walker.

It is possible that a dog is not a suitable pet for you if you need to spend long periods out of the house. A cat or a lizard might be better for your needs. Dogs are intensely social. They get anxious when they alone.

If the dog barks incessantly when you are there it is asking for your attention. That may be for a good reason. It may want to go outside to attend to a call of nature. It may even be warning you about something. Dogs have woken their owners and saved them from burning houses. Your house may not be burning down but the dog may sense something in your behavior that is not quite right. Helper dogs are trained to warn epilepsy sufferers when an attack is imminent. They are highly sensitive to changes that you may not notice. A dog will often respond to depression in a family member. A dog can be like the canary in the mine it can detect psychological and social tensions in the household.

If there is no obvious reason for the dog to bark incessantly then it may be possible to train it not to bark so much. Training collars are often helpful in this respect as they are in other forms of behavior. A collar that delivers a small electric shock when a dog barks may be enough to prevent excessive barking. There are also collars that deliver a burst of citronella when a dog

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barks. Either can be useful. Long haired dogs may not feel the sting of an electric shock and short haired or small dogs might find it too sharp. Be guided by your veterinarian in this matter.

Perhaps the best form of training is your attention. A kind word or look from you is the dog's best reward. When your dog engages in inappropriate behavior stand still and do not respond. Say "No" firmly when he barks but do not make any other response. Sometimes dogs bark because they have learnt that it gets them attention.

## Lesser-Known Dog Breeds

Dogs come in many shapes and sizes. They are one of the varied species on the planet. All these different kinds of dog originated from the wolf. It is almost impossible to believe it but the Pekinese is more closely related to the wolf than is the German Shepherd.

This great variety of dogs results from selective breeding over millennia. For centuries human beings have been choosing those characteristics in dogs that they found desirable for some reason. Dogs have been selected for their small size so that they fit down badger hole or make lap dogs. They have been selected for their large size so that they can act as guard dogs and shepherd dogs. They have been selected for thick coats in cold climates or to be almost hairless.

The dog is one of the oldest of domesticated animals and over the many centuries that they have lived and worked with humans they have played many roles. Consequently, there are innumerable breeds of dog. They have been bred to meet the requirements of different occupations and to meet the aesthetic standards of different societies.

Often toy breeds have been developed from working dogs. The Affenpinscher is an example of this. It is a toy version of the pinscher and schnauzer family. It makes a good family pet because of its affectionate nature. This is a highly intelligent dog that is highly trainable. The coat is wiry and usually dark in color.

The Anatolian Shepherd is less well known than the familiar German Shepherd. But its strong build and courageous nature makes it an ideal security or hunting dog.

The Basenji or African Hunting Dog is a silent dog. It has been bred to have no bark so that it does not disturb game. It is not a particularly affectionate animal but will become accustomed to people if handled from an early age.

A very different kind of dog is the Bouvier des Flandres. This dog was bred as a herd dog in France. It looks somewhat like a terrier. But it has a placid nature. The coat is rough and

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usually dark in color. They are often used in police work or as a guide dog for the visually impaired. They are intelligent and respond well to training.

The Ovtcharka from Central Asia is a large dog that has been used for herding. It has a fearless nature and is very brave. They usually have their ears and tails docked when they are puppies.

From Poland comes the Owczarek Nizinny which is a medium sized dog. Its coat is long and often covers its eyes. They make excellent pets but hate to be left alone for long as they are very social.

## Non-Shedding Dog Breeds

All dogs shed their coats just like humans shed their hair but some dogs shed less hair than others. If you find dog hair on the carpet is a nuisance or you have an allergy then one of the breeds of dog that are regarded as non shedding may be the one for you.

There are a number to choose from. One of the best known and most popular is the poodle. They come in a number of sizes but they all the same breed. The full-sized poodle is a magnificent animal especially when their coat is cut in the traditional style. They were originally bred as hunting dogs. Their curly coat was an advantage when they went into the water. They are bold, courageous animals at their best. They like lots of exercise and should be professionally clipped. If you dislike the pom pom style of poodle clipping then you can let the coat grow naturally. But it is still best to clip them around the eyes or they can get infected. Their coat will also need clipping in warm summer weather because it can become uncomfortable hot.

The smaller poodles may be better if you have limited space. The large ones need lots of exercise. A toy or miniature poodle is an ideal house dog. Their coats can be clipped in the same as way as the large poodles. All poodles get excited by noise and commotion. They can be highly strung around children especially if they have not become accustomed to them from an early age.

Another good option for a non shedding dog is the cockapoo. This is a cross between the American spaniel and the poodle. They are usually good with children and are very playful and loyal. But they need a lot of grooming. This is an intelligent, small dog that makes a good family pet. It does not need as much exercise as a large dog.

The Italian greyhound is a good choice for anyone who wants a non shedding dog. They are a small version of the racing greyhound and very elegant. They have a gentle nature but tend to be timid. They prefer a quiet household with no children. Since their coat is sleek they require very little grooming. Despite their athletic build they do not need as much exercise as some dogs.



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A more rambunctious choice for a lively family dog might be the Airedale terrier. These dogs have a short, wiry coat. They are extremely active dogs that love to play with children so long as the children have been taught to treat them with respect. They are very loyal and will defend their families to the death. While they respond to training they are very self-willed and need firm discipline. Like all terriers they are highly intelligent which makes them great pets in the appropriate context.

## The Many Sizes Of Poodles

Poodles are an enormously popular breed of dog and rightly so. They have enormous advantages as a pet.

The poodle is an intelligent animal that enjoys the company of human beings and adapts well to urban life. Perhaps its main advantage for the modern pet owner is that it comes in a wide range of sizes. A toy poodle can be the ideal for an apartment dweller who needs a small dog.

As a result the poodle has become the archetypical lap dog. But in fact the poodle is an ancient working dog. Records suggest that it many have been first bred in Ancient Egypt where it was used as a herd dog and hunting dog.

Images survive from Egypt which show poodles participating in drag net hunting, retrieving birds for hunters and herding cattle. The Ancient Egyptians may even have begun to breed different sizes of poodle. So the great variety of poodle sizes may go back a long way in history.

Small poodles are not necessarily a recent innovation. That may be why they keep so much of the character of the larger dogs. They are brave, bright animals that learn quickly, but quickly get bored. This is still the profile of working animal rather than a lap dog.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) recognizes three sizes of poodle: the standard, the miniature and the toy. The types are determined by the dog's shoulder height. A standard poodle should be more than fifteen inches high at the shoulder. Miniature poodles must be less than 15 inches but more than ten inches at the shoulder. Toy poodles should be under ten inches high at the shoulder.

Some breeders have recently begun to offer what they call teacup poodles. These grow to about eight inches in height. They are not yet recognized by the AKC but they are proving to be very popular with dog owners. They are much sought after and command high prices. They suit the modern trend for very small dogs. Dogs of this size can be easily carried about town. They have become something of a fashion statement.

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Many people are attracted to poodles in the first place because they are a nonshedding dog. That is to say they do not leave hairs all over the house. They shed some hairs but not as much as other breeds of dog. This is an advantage to allergy sufferers in particular. It can also be advantage if a dog owner does not want the hassle of constant cleaning of carpets and upholstery.

Poodles also appeal to many people because their coats can be clipped into a variety of attractive forms. All Sizes of poodle can be clipped in the same way. Poodles were first clipped in this way when they were used as gun dogs that would leap into the water after ducks that had been shot by hunters.

There are various styles of clip. Some are suitable for the show dog and require a lot of maintenance. Others are suitable for the general pet owner and are more practical.

## How To Prepare Your Home For A New Puppy

If you've never owned a puppy before or have not owned one for a long time than introducing a puppy into your home can be a bit of shock to your established routine. A small puppy is a lively and curious small mammal that is learning all the time. It can get into scrapes that an older and more experienced dog would avoid. You have to puppy-proof your home just as you would toddler-proof it.

The first thing to be aware of is that puppies chew things. In fact puppies chew anything and everything. They will chew your shoes, clothing, carpets, telephone cables and electric wires, their basket or whatever else you can think of.

If you have things that are too valuable to risk getting chewed then make sure they are kept out of the puppy's way. Make sure the kids do the same. Fix wires and any loose edges of carpets down carefully so they are not tempting. If you have expensive rugs then roll them up and put them in a room that is closed to the puppy.

Get the puppy a dog bed. Plastic is the best kind because it can be washed and is economical. Traditional wicker baskets look nice but will quickly reduced to a ruins by a chewing puppy. Line the bed with washable bedding. This will all get chewed but it can be replaced.

Make sure that you puppy cannot get into any cupboards and utility rooms where household chemicals are stored. Child safety locks can be fitted to kitchen cupboards.

Outside the house make sure that the puppy is not exposed to any chemicals that might be used on the lawn, plants or path. Keep the puppy away from treated areas. This applies to newly chipped bark mulch. This can be harmful to dogs.

Make sure you have a suitable puppy harness and leash for your puppy. A harness is often better for a puppy in the first weeks than a conventional collar. It gives you something to grab hold of if the puppy makes a run for it and it is more comfortable for puppy. Get your puppy used to a collar gradually.

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You new puppy will need several short walks every day. It does not need long walks. Some breeds of dog have joints that are particularly susceptible to damage and they should not walk too far when they are young. The main purpose of the walks at this stage is to accustom the puppy to going to the toilet outside. Always go equipped with a pooper scoop so that you can clean up afterwards. Dog feces can transmit worms that are harmful to children.

Inside the house you may consider getting a puppy pen. This is somewhat like a plan pen for puppies. It will help keep the puppy out of danger when you are cooking or doing other household tasks. It also offers the puppy a quiet place to rest away from the hurly burly of family life.

## How To Select Your New Dog

The dog that is right for you is not the same as the dog that is right for someone else. Before you chose a dog consider what your needs really are.

Perhaps you are looking for a family dog. The children have been pestering you for a dog and finally you have decided that you will get one. Under these circumstances you should consider a puppy because a puppy will adapt to your children. It will grow up with them. As far as the dog is concerned they are slightly larger puppies.

But chose the breed carefully. Some dogs may be too dominant to live happily with children. Make sure you see the puppy's parents. If they have a calm temperament then the puppy probably will too.

If possible see the whole litter of puppies with their mother. Puppies should not be taken away from their mother too soon. If a puppy is deprived of its mother too soon it will not be stable in its behavior.

The puppy that hangs back shyly is always appealing. But it may not be the best one to chose. It is usually the runt of the litter. If you have a quiet home then it may be a good dog for you. Such a puppy may thrive when it is the centre of attention and has constant reassurance. In a family with children a shy puppy may feel overwhelmed and develop neurotic behavior.

The puppy that comes running to meet you confidently is the one for you if you have children. Watch the mother's reaction. She should be watchful of her puppies but will greet you with a wag of her tail. Her calmness will have communicated itself to her puppies.

A puppy's eyes should be bright and clear and not runny. Its nose should be wet and cold. Check for any signs of loose bowel action.

It may be that a puppy is not the best choice for you. Maybe you don't want to go through the hassle of toilet training, broken nights and chewed shoes. Perhaps an older dog would be a better choice.

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Older dogs can be particularly good for older people. Even pedigree breeds can be found in rescue centers. But cross breeds can make excellent pets. They seem to share the best characteristics of both their parents. What is more you will have the benefit of knowing that you are doing a good deed by giving a home to an abandoned animal.

Rescue centers often have puppies but they have many adult dogs that need good homes. They can also offer the new dog owner good advice on pet care. Their dogs are usually vaccinated against common canine diseases and spayed or neutered.

When choosing an adult dog the temperament and size of the animal are important factors to consider. A lovely natured dog that is too large will be no use to you if you live in an apartment. An overly assertive dog will be a constant problem if you are a shy retiring person. A dog that might make a wonderful security dog would be unsuitable for a family pet.

So take your time and find the dog that matches your personality and needs.

## Understanding Your Dog's Anal Gland

All dogs have anal glands. They are located on either side of the anus. Behind the anal gland is a sac that secretes a strongly smelling substance. The dog uses its anal glands to mark its territory every time it excretes.

The scent that the dog deposits conveys information about the sex of the dog and its health. This is important for other dogs since they are territorial animals. That is why dogs smell one another's anal glands and deposits of feces. They are checking for a male competitor or a female on heat.

When they function well a dog's anal glands are no problem. But they can become blocked and that can lead to problems. A responsible dog owner should now how to express their dog's anal glands to move the blockage and prevent problems.

You may notice your dog dragging its rear end across the grass. This means that they are itchy and can be a symptom of blocked anal glands.

If you do not know how to express the dog's anal glands then consult your veterinarian who will do it for you. It is a good idea to take the opportunity of learning to do this yourself because it will save future vet's bills and is comparatively easy.

What you need to do is to hold the dog's tail up pointing towards its head. Then take a paper towel and press the left side of the left gland with your thumb and your forefinger on the right side of the right gland. Squeeze firmly and gently. The glands should issue a brownish yellow substance.

If the glands have become seriously impacted the method described above may not work. You will then need to put on some surgical gloves. Lubricate them with KY jelly and remove the blockage manually.



## How To Take Care Of Your Dog's Health

You must insert your forefinger into the dog's rectum and squeeze each gland in turn. This may prove harder than simple expression and the substance that comes out will be darker in color and foul smelling.

If your dog's anal glands become impacted they can get infected. You will notice bloody pus when you try to express them. In that case you need to treat the dog with antibiotics. It is better to keep the anal glands clear then you will avoid that scenario altogether.

Expressing your dog's anal glands may seem an unpleasant chore but it is important in maintaining your dog's general health. The itching that results from a blocked anal gland can be very uncomfortable for the dog. If the blockage gives rise to an infection that can have important health implications.

Infections can generally be treated easily with antibiotics but it is best to avoid antibiotics if possible. The overuse of antibiotics is leading to many resistant strains of bacteria. Antibiotics should be used only when necessary.

A simple expression of the anal glands will prevent complications and save you some heavy veterinary bills in the future. It is the work of a few minutes once you know how.

## Choosing A Toy Dog

A toy dog has the huge advantage that it is small. This often makes it an ideal dog for urban living or for older people with limited mobility. A toy dog does not need long walks. It will not take over a small apartment. A toy dog fits into the modern lifestyle of many people today.

There are a huge variety of toy dogs. They all have different characteristics just as larger breeds of dog do. It is important to get to know the what each kind of toy dog is like before you make your choice. Toy dogs are not all alike.

It is thought that the breeding of toy dogs first began in Asia but varieties of toy dog can now be found from every part of the globe. They were bred for a variety of purposes. That still influences the characteristics of the breed and will affect which one is right for you.

Perhaps the most well known type of toy dog is the poodle. When any one mentions a toy dog this is the kind of dog that most people think of. Toy poodles were bred from larger dogs that were used for hunting. Even the smaller toy poodles retain some of the characteristics of the larger hunting dogs. They are bold, intelligent dogs that can be readily trained. But they can be highly strung and are not necessarily suitable for household with young children.

Somewhat similar in appearance is the Bichon Frisbee. They tend to look like an unclipped toy poodle. But their temperament is somewhat different. They are a boisterous small dog that interacts well with children. They are said to have been bred as lap dogs in pre-revolutionary France but after the revolution they had to get by on the streets and did not very successfully. They are a street-wise lap dog. They will chase every rabbit and squirrel they see.

The Chihuahua comes originally from Mexico where it was bred as a source of meat. They have now become a favorite toy dog. Their fine, smooth coat means that they do not need a lot of grooming. They do not tolerate children well and can be snappish. But they are often loyal and devoted to their owners.

## How To Take Care Of Your Dog's Health

The Maltese is a toy dog that was bred as a lap dog for the wealthy. It is still popular in that role and is a fashionable lap dog that models and film stars like to carry in their oversize handbags. It is not good with children however and tends to bark at strangers.

The Pekingese was once one of the most sought after toy dogs because they were so rare. Only a few had been imported from China. They are now well known in the West. They can be difficult to train but mellow with the years. They are seldom tolerant of children or other animals. Their coat requires a lot of attention since their ears can easily become matted and infection may result. Their short noses can become a problem. They always snuffle but can sometimes become badly blocked. They make good guard dogs and can therefore be a good dog for an elderly and infirm person since they do not need a lot of exercise.

Pugs have recently become very popular having been seen accompanying various fashionable starlets. They look like tiny bull dogs with their hanging folds of skin. They can have similar nasal problems to those of Pekingese because of their small nasal passages. But they make excellent pets. They do not need a lot of exercise. They are usually placid and will happily play with children. They are seldom aggressive with other pets. They are intelligent dogs that respond well to training.

## How To Treat Your Dog For Dehydration

Dehydration is caused by the excessive loss of fluids. The condition must be treated by the replacement of fluids. It can result from a dog being kept in hot conditions for too long or from illness. Vomiting and diarrhea or a high fever will all cause dehydration.

When a dog becomes dehydrating the electrolytes in the dog's bodily fluids get out of balance. The electrolytes are mineral salts such as sodium, potassium and chloride. This can result in damage to organs such as the kidneys and liver. Ultimately this can prove fatal.

Dogs do not have sweat glands like humans so they cool themselves by panting. This can lead to dehydrations just like excessive sweating can lead to dehydration in humans.

A dog must always have access to clean, fresh water. Keep a bowl of water accessible to the dog at all times in the house, yard and dog pen. If you use a dog pen in the house make sure there is water available there too. Change the water in all the dog's bowls at least every day.

Never let the dog become overheated. Do not let it stay out in the yard in hot weather unless it has shade. But it is better to bring it indoors especially if you live in a warm climate. Dogs with a heavy coat are very prone to overheating. It may be best to have them clipped for summer.

Dogs should not be left in cars. Even with the window open slightly a car can quickly overheat. This can happen even in winter because the car acts like a greenhouse. So if you need to leave the dog, when you go into a store say, tether it somewhere shady. Encourage local stores to have a dog tethering spot at which water is available.

When you take your dog for a walk and especially if you take it jogging with you make sure it has access to water. Many dogs will happily lap water poured from your own water bottle. You can pour some into your hands if the dog can't drink from a jet of water. It's a good idea to keep some water and a bowl in the car.

## How To Take Care Of Your Dog's Health

Dried food is best for a dog's dental health but always make sure it has plenty of water too. If your dog is drinking from the toilet bowl this is not a good idea because there can be unpleasant chemical cleaners used in the bathroom. Give the dog more water in its own bowl.

If your dog becomes seriously dehydrated you will notice that its nose is dry, its eyes look sunken and its skin lacks elasticity. A good test is to press the gums and if the color comes back quickly after you release the pressure then the dog is hydrated. But if the color comes back only slowly then the dog may be dehydrated.

A seriously dehydrated dog should only be allowed to drink water in small amounts slowly. Too much water all at once and it will vomit which will only add to the problem.

The same electrolyte solutions that are used for children can be used for dogs and puppies. This can be useful in cases where the cause of dehydration is illness.

If there is no obvious cause of the dehydration such as heat and exertion or a known illness for which the dog is already undergoing treatment then consult your veterinarian.

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