

Your Dachshund

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Dachshunds:

What a Unique Breed!

Your dog is special! She's your best friend and companion and a source of unconditional love. Chances are that you chose her because you like dachshunds, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Lively, with a friendly personality
- Lovable, playful companion
- Brave and ready for adventure
- Good watchdog with a loud bark
- Loyal to those she trusts
- Small, but sturdy

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

- Needs to be supervised around children
- Can be aggressive, fearful, or snappy if not socialized properly
- Likes to dig
- Prone to separation anxiety and associated chewing behaviors
- Needs regular exercise and diet regulation to avoid weight gain
- Standoffish toward strangers
- Can be strong-willed and difficult to train

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

Your Dachshund's Health

We know that because you care so much about your dog, you want to take good care of him. That's why we'll tell you about the health concerns we'll be



**West Towne
Veterinary Center**



www.westtownevet.com 608.828.3737

For more information on breed specific wellness visit:

www.westtownevet.com/wellnessprevention-2/breed-specific-wellness/

Foundation site of breed specific wellness:

<http://www.upei.ca/~cidd/breeds.htm>

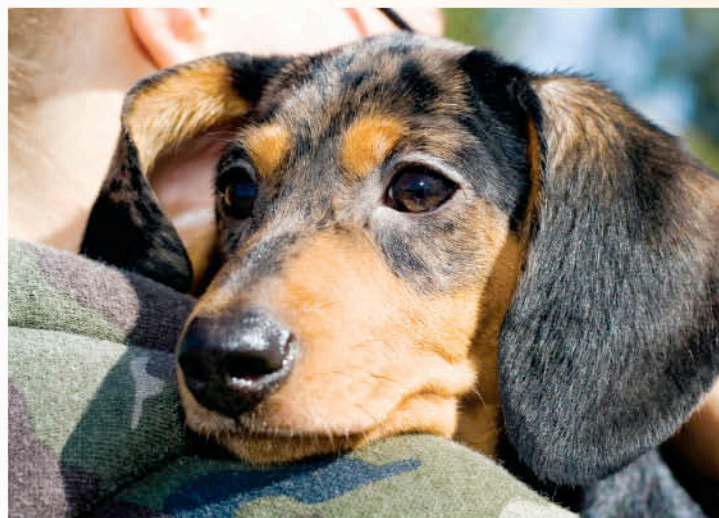
Dr. Ken's breed specific blog:

www.breedspecificwellness.blogspot.com

DNA/Genetic blood testing:

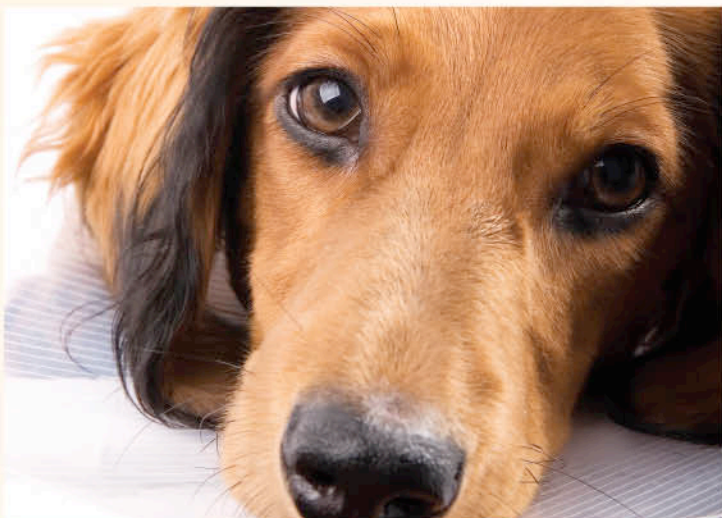
<http://www.facebook.com/DoggieDNA>

Your Dachshund



© 2010 VetThink, Inc. www.Genesis4Pets.com





discussing with you over the life of your doxie.

Many diseases and health conditions are genetic, meaning they're related to your pet's breed. That doesn't mean your dog will have these problems; it just means that he's more at risk than other dogs. We'll describe the most common issues for dachshunds to give you an idea of what may come up. Of course we can't cover every possibility here, so always check with us if you notice any unusual signs or symptoms.

This guide, and the health evaluation schedule it contains, helps us and you plan for your pet's health-care needs. At the end of this booklet, we've included a description of what you can do at home to keep your dachshund looking and feeling his best. You'll know what to watch for, and we'll all feel better knowing that we're taking the best possible care of your pal.

Back Problems

Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) is a genetically linked condition common in dogs with long backs and short legs, which includes your friend. The disease is caused when the jelly-like cushion between one or more vertebrae slips or ruptures, causing the disc to press on the spinal cord. If your dog suddenly is unable or unwilling to jump up or go up stairs, is reluctant to move around, has a hunched back, cries out, or refuses to eat or go potty, she is likely in severe pain. She may even drag her back feet or be suddenly paralyzed and unable to get up or use her back legs. If you see symptoms, don't wait. Call us or an emergency clinic immediately! For less severe cases, rest and medication may resolve the problem. In many cases involving paralysis, we'll recommend surgical removal of the ruptured discs (within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms to get the best results). You should also use ramps or steps from puppyhood on so that your dog doesn't spend a lifetime stressing her back by jumping on

and off of the furniture.

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. And unfortunately, your doxie is more likely to have problems with his teeth than other dogs. It starts with tartar build-up on the teeth and progresses to infection of the gums and roots of the teeth. If we don't prevent or treat dental disease, your buddy will lose his teeth and be in danger of damaging his kidneys, liver, heart, and joints. In fact, your dachshund's life span may be shortened by one to three years! We'll clean your dog's teeth regularly and let you know what you can do at home to keep those pearly whites clean.

Eye Injuries

Because your doxie has eyeballs that bulge, she is more vulnerable to eye injuries. The cornea is the clear window at the front of the eye, and it can be damaged by a scrape or puncture, or it can develop an open sore and become infected. Don't let your dog ride in the car with her head out the window; this is a frequent cause of eye injuries. Call us right away if she has any problems with her eyes, especially if she is rubbing or scratching an eye or holding it closed. A damaged cornea is painful and should be treated immediately. Medication and sometimes surgery is required.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma, an eye condition that affects people too, is an extremely painful disease (people say it's like being stabbed in the eye with an ice pick!) that rapidly leads to blindness. Symptoms include squinting, watery eyes; cloudiness of the cornea (the clear window at the front of the eye); and redness in the whites of the eyes. In severe cases, the eye may look swollen or like it's bulging. We'll perform annual glaucoma screening for your pal to diagnose and treat it as early as possible. If you see symptoms, don't wait. Call us or an emergency clinic immediately!

Hair Loss

Your doxie is prone to pattern baldness. As with balding men, the hair gradually falls out and does not grow back. The hair loss does not cause itchiness, though the skin can sometimes be dry. Usually the areas affected are the throat, chest, belly, and insides of the legs. We'll do testing to rule out treatable problems that have hair loss as a symptom, such as too little thyroid hormone. If it is true hair loss (called alopecia), we can supplement a particular hormone, which may help somewhat. There is no cure for this disease.

Heart Disease

Heart failure is a leading cause of death in older



dachshunds, and 75% of the heart disease is caused by deterioration of a valve that regulates blood flow. We'll perform regular diagnostic tests to detect the presence and severity of the disease. If valve disease is diagnosed early, we can prescribe medications that may prolong your pet's health for many years. Proper dental care and weight control go a long way in preventing heart disease, too.

Infections

Doxies are susceptible to bacterial and viral infections—the same ones that all dogs can get—such as parvovirus, rabies, and distemper. Many of these infections are preventable through vaccination, which we'll administer to your dog based on the diseases we see in our area, his age, and other factors.

Obesity

Obesity is a significant health problem in dogs and a serious disease that may cause arthritis, some types of cancer, back pain, and heart disease. Though it's tempting to give your pal food when she looks at you with those soulful eyes, you can love her to death with human food and treats.

Parasites

All kinds of worms and bugs can invade your dog's body, inside and out. Everything from fleas to ticks to ear mites can infest his skin and ears. Hookworms, roundworms, heartworms, and whipworms can get into his system in any number of ways: drinking unclean water, eating or stepping on feces, or being bitten by an infected mosquito. Some of these parasites can be transmitted to you or a family member and are a serious concern for everyone. For your friend, these parasites can cause pain, discomfort, and even death, so it's important that we test for them on a regular basis. We'll also recommend preventative medication as necessary to keep him healthy.

Skin Infections

Your companion is susceptible to different kinds of skin infections and diseases. One causes the skin to become dark, leathery, and hairless, often in the groin or armpits. She may also develop a yeast infection, which, when it infects the ears, causes itching, redness, and an accumulation of brown waxy discharge. On the skin, it leads to greasy, hairless areas, especially on the neck and throat, with a characteristic yeasty odor. Another common skin disease called seborrhea can cause dry, flaky skin or greasy, oily skin. These diseases may make your pet itchy and uncomfortable. Depending on the problem, we may recommend fatty acid supplements, medication, or special shampoo. The earlier you call to have skin problems checked out, the less likely it is that you will end up with an itchy, bald, smelly dog to take care of. You don't want that, and neither does she!

Spaying or Neutering

One of the best things you can do for your dachshund is to have him neutered (called spaying in females). In males, this means we surgically remove the testicles, and in females, it means we surgically remove the uterus and ovaries. Spaying or neutering decreases the likelihood of certain types of cancers and eliminates the possibility of your pet becoming pregnant or fathering unwanted puppies. Performing this surgery also gives us a chance, while your pet is under anesthesia, to evaluate and possibly address some of the diseases your doxie is likely to develop. This is convenient for you and easy for your friend. Don't worry; we'll let you know what specific problems we'll look for when the time arrives.

Thyroid Problems

Your dachshund is prone to a common condition, called hypothyroidism, where the body doesn't make enough thyroid hormone. Your friend may develop it relatively early in life, at age two to six years. Weight gain, lethargy, and skin problems are the most common signs of the disease. We'll do a blood screening test annually to test for it. Treatment is usually simple: replacement hormones given in the form of a pill.

Taking Care of Your Dachshund at Home

Much of what you can do to keep your dog happy and healthy is common sense, just like it is for people. Watch his diet, make sure he gets plenty of exercise, regularly brush his teeth, and call us or a pet emergency hospital when something seems unusual (see “What to Watch For” below). Be sure to adhere to the schedule of examinations and vaccinations that we recommend for him. This is when we’ll give him the necessary “check-ups” and test for diseases and conditions that are common in doxies.

Another very important step in caring for your pet is signing up for pet health insurance. There will certainly be medical tests and procedures he will need throughout his life, and pet health insurance will help you cover those costs.

Routine Care, Diet, and Exercise

Build her routine care into your schedule to help your dachshund live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Overweight doxies are more prone to cancer, back pain, heart disease, arthritis, and other problems.

- ✓ Brush her teeth at least three times a week.
- ✓ Keep your dog’s diet consistent and don’t give her people food.
- ✓ Feed a high-quality diet appropriate for her age.
- ✓ Exercise your dog regularly, and don’t overdo exercise.

What to Watch For

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

- ✓ Vomiting or chronic diarrhea
- ✓ Weight loss or weight gain
- ✓ Lumps, bumps, and moles
- ✓ Lethargy, mental dullness, or excessive sleeping
- ✓ Fearfulness, aggression, or other behavioral changes
- ✓ Limping or lameness
- ✓ Hair loss
- ✓ Coughing or difficulty breathing
- ✓ Episodes of weakness
- ✓ Pot-belly appearance
- ✓ Inability or straining to urinate
- ✓ Cloudiness, redness, itching or any other abnormality involving the eyes
- ✓ Itchy skin (scratching or licking)
- ✓ Change in appetite or water consumption
- ✓ Scratching or shaking the head, or discharge in the ear
- ✓ Unwillingness to jump up or go up stairs
- ✓ Skin that is dry, flaky, dark, oily, or greasy

Partners in Health Care

DNA testing is a rapidly advancing field with tests being developed to help diagnose conditions before they become problems for your friend. For the most up-to-date information on DNA and other screening tests available for your pal, visit www.Genesis4Pets.com.

Your dachshund counts on you to take good care of him, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that he lives a long and healthy life. Our goal is to ensure that your pal has the best health care possible—health care that’s based on his breed, lifestyle, and age. Please contact us when you have questions or concerns.

Health Evaluation Schedule for Dachshunds

Now that you’ve read about the health issues we’ll be monitoring, we wanted to give you an at-a-glance summary of what services we’ll provide to keep your doxie happy and healthy. It may seem like your pet is prone to quite a few problems, but don’t worry; we’ll take the lead in keeping her healthy for a lifetime. We’ll review these health-care steps with you in more detail, but please feel free to ask questions or voice concerns at any time.

Studies to determine the frequency of inheritance or disease in this breed either have not been completed or are inconclusive. There is a general consensus among canine genetic researchers and veterinary practitioners that the conditions we’ve described herein have a significant rate of incidence and/or impact in this breed.



How We'll Keep Your Dachshund Healthy

Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Dachshund-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	<input type="radio"/>	6–8 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Internal parasite test and/or deworming Vaccinations Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care	Heart murmurs Hernias Proper dental alignment Parasites
	<input type="radio"/>	10–12 weeks	Brief physical examination Heartworm prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth at home	Proper growth rate Behavioral problems Parasites
	<input type="radio"/>	14–16 weeks	Brief physical examination Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss obedience training, nail trimming, and grooming Schedule spay/neuter surgery	Skin infections Adult teeth coming in properly Tonsillitis Parasites
	<input type="radio"/>	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Presurgical diagnostics for spay or neuter surgery	Skin infections Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery
Adult: 18 to 39 in People Years	<input type="radio"/>	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Heart health check Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Skin infections Back pain Excessive weight gain Behavioral problems Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites
	<input type="radio"/>	2 years through 8 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Internal organ health check Heart health check Glaucoma screening Thyroid testing Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Healthy weight Back pain Internal organ health and function Heart disease Glaucoma Thyroid function Heartworms and other parasites
Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years	<input type="radio"/>	9 years through 11 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Senior internal organ health check Cancer screen Heart health check Glaucoma screening Thyroid testing Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Healthy weight Back pain Arthritis Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Heart disease Glaucoma Thyroid function Heartworms and other parasites
Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years	<input type="radio"/>	12 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health check Cancer screening Heart health check Glaucoma screening Thyroid testing Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Healthy weight Back pain Arthritis Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Heart disease Glaucoma Thyroid function Heartworms and other parasites

Note: We recommend twice-a-year examinations so that we may diagnose problems sooner.
This approach also gives you the budget-friendly option of spreading preventive testing over two visits rather than one.