

Your Friendly Fido

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Medium-Sized Mixed Breeds: They're Unique!

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 medium-sized dogs, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Well suited as a family dog
- Intelligent and easy to train
- People-oriented and eager to please
- Brave and ready for adventure
- Lively, with a friendly personality

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

- Easily bored and can find trouble
- Determined and has a mind of her own
- Needs regular exercise and diet regulation to avoid weight gain
- Prone to separation anxiety and associated chewing and digging behaviors

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

Your Mixed-Breed Dog's Health

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

Knowing your pal's genetic make-up is an important



**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 Friendly Fido



© 2010 VetThink, Inc. www.Genesis4Pets.com





step you can take to ensure his future health and happiness. Just because your pet looks like a miniature schnauzer doesn't mean he is a miniature schnauzer! And even if he is part miniature schnauzer, it doesn't mean he'll have the same behavioral tendencies or health problems as a miniature schnauzer. In fact, he could have inherited some of those traits from his parents or grandparents of entirely different breeds. We want to know which breeds your dog is so that we can tell you what to expect in terms of his behavior and health. That's why we recommend genetic testing for all mixed-breed dogs.

This guide, and the health evaluation schedule it contains, helps us and you plan for your pet's health-care needs. We walk you step by step through the health problems that are common in medium-sized dogs (between 21 and 50 pounds). At the end of booklet, we've included a description of what you can do at home to keep your dog looking and feeling his best. You'll know what to watch for, and we'll all feel better knowing that we're taking the best possible care of your pal.

Allergies

Your dog can get "hay fever" just like humans, which is an allergy to pollen, mold, mildew, or dust (called atopy). Your dog will get itchy: usually in the face, feet, and ears, though some dogs are itchy all over. Typically, you'll start seeing signs when your dog is between the ages of two and five, and the problem tends to get worse every year. The good news is that there are many treatment options available for this condition.

Cancer

Cancer is a common illness of dogs in their golden years. Medium-sized dogs outlive the larger breeds and are therefore more likely to get cancer as they age. Half of all cancers are cured by surgically removing them, and some types are treatable with chemotherapy. Early detection is critical! We'll perform periodic diagnostic tests and look

for lumps and bumps when we examine your pet. If she is overweight, we'll discuss exercise and diet because obesity is a risk factor for some types of cancer.

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. And medium-sized dogs tend to develop dental disease at a higher rate than larger 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, the disease may shorten your pet's life by one to three years! We'll clean your dog's teeth regularly and let you know what you can do at home to keep those pearly whites clean. It's also important to prevent broken or damaged teeth by avoiding certain kinds of toys and treats, including chew hooves, tennis balls, bones, and ice cubes.

Ear Infections

If your dog has floppy, hairy ears like a cocker spaniel, she may get ear infections, which are painful and annoying. The earlier we catch this, the less discomfort and pain she suffers. Be sure to call us if you notice that she is scratching or shaking her head, there is a foul odor about the ears, or her ears seem painful to the touch. By monitoring for ear infections and treating them early, we also reduce the likelihood of ear-drum damage that can lead to deafness. We'll pay special attention to her ears each time we see her. No one likes an ear ache!

Eating Weird Stuff

Your dog may eat things he's not supposed to—rocks, coins, plants, and socks, among others. Your pet carries the item in his mouth to check it out or play with it, or he thinks it's food. When swallowed, these objects often get stuck and have to be surgically removed. Some of what your dog eats is toxic and can poison him. If you notice that he is vomiting or acting lethargic, call us immediately.

Heart Disease

Heart failure is a leading cause of death in older dogs, and it affects smaller breeds mixed with miniature poodle, beagle, or miniature schnauzer more often than others. If your dog has a heart murmur or physical signs that suggest heart problems, we'll perform diagnostic testing to determine the severity of the disease. We'll repeat those same tests every year or so to monitor the condition. If the disease is diagnosed early, we may be able to prescribe medications that could prolong her life for many years. Remember that proper dental care and weight control go a long way in preventing heart disease.

Hip Dysplasia

You've probably heard of this inherited disease that causes the hip joints to form improperly and leads to arthritis.



Most people think of large dogs having this problem, but it is also common in some medium-sized breeds, such as the Pembroke Welsh corgi, the springer spaniel, and the Shetland sheepdog. You may notice that he has lameness in his hind legs or has difficulty getting up from lying down. We can treat the arthritis—the sooner the better—to avoid discomfort and pain. We'll take X-rays of your dog's joints to identify the disease as early as possible. Keep in mind that overweight dogs may develop arthritis two years earlier than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering. Good nutrition and proper exercise are also very important to help reduce bone and joint problems as a pet gets older. Surgery is sometimes a good option in severe and life-limiting cases of hip dysplasia.

Infections

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

Obesity

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

Parasites

All kinds of worms and bugs can invade your dog's body, inside and out. Everything from fleas to ticks to ear mites can infest her skin and ears. Hookworms, roundworms, heartworms, and whipworms can get into her system in any number of ways: drinking unclean water, eating or stepping on feces, or being bitten by an infected mosquito. Some of these parasites can be transmitted to you or a family member and are a serious concern for everyone. For

your friend, these parasites can cause pain, discomfort, and even death, so it's important that we test for them on a regular basis. We'll also recommend preventative medication as necessary to keep her healthy.

Spaying or Neutering

One of the best things you can do for your pup 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 dog is likely to develop. This is convenient for you and easy for your friend. Don't worry; we'll let you know what specific problems we'll look for when the time arrives.

Taking Care of Your Mixed-Breed Dog 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 medium-sized, mixed-breed dogs. 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

Build her routine care into your schedule to help your dog live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime.

- ✓ Supervise your pet as you would a toddler. Keep doors closed, pick up after yourself, and block off rooms as necessary. This will keep her out of trouble and away from things she shouldn't put in her mouth.
- ✓ If she has floppy, hairy ears, clean her ears weekly, even as a puppy. Don't worry—we'll show you how!
- ✓ Medium-sized dogs tend to have problems with their teeth, so you'll need to brush them at least three times

a week!

Diet and Exercise

We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Overweight dogs are more prone to cancer, arthritis, and other problems.

- ✓ Keep your dog's diet consistent, and don't give him people food.
- ✓ Feed a high-quality diet appropriate for his age.
- ✓ Exercise your dog regularly, and don't overdo exercise.
- ✓ Don't let your dog chew on bones, ice cubes, hooves, or tennis balls.

What to Watch For

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

- ✓ 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
- ✓ A foul odor about the ear
- ✓ Unusual behavior when you touch or rub the ear

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 dog counts on you to take good care of her, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that she lives a long and healthy life. Our goal is to ensure that your pal has the best health care possible: health care that's based on her size, lifestyle, and age. And remember, we can help you manage your dog's health more effectively once we've identified her breeds through genetic testing. Please contact us when you have questions or concerns.

Health Evaluation Schedule for Medium-Sized Mixed-Breed Dogs

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 dog 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. Medium-sized mixed-breed dogs are actually some of the healthiest dogs out there! 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 mixed breeds 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 medium-sized mixed-breed dogs.



How We'll Keep Your Dog Healthy

Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years

(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Medium-Sized Mixed-Breed-Specific Problems We're Looking For
○	7-10 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Internal parasite test and/or deworming Vaccinations based on lifestyle Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care Heartworm, Flea & Tick Prevention (Monthly)	Heart murmurs Hernias Proper dental alignment Parasites
○	10-13 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Deworming (if necessary) Heartworm, Flea & Tick Prevention (Monthly) Vaccinations based on lifestyle	Proper growth rate Behavioral problems Proper dental alignment Parasites
○	13-16 weeks	Physical examination Vaccinations based on lifestyle Discuss obedience training, nail trimming, and grooming Discuss Dental Homecare and/or dental issues	Adult teeth coming in properly Skin infections Tonsillitis Parasites Nutritional Consultation
○	5-7 months	Presurgical & Dental Examination Presurgical lab testing for spay or neuter surgery Hip evaluation Optional DNA/Genetic blood testing Info at: http://www.facebook.com/DoggieDNA	Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Hip dysplasia Breed composition Breed specific diagnostics
○	1-1 1/2 year(s)	Annual physical examination Baseline wellness testing Hip evaluation Heartworm test & tick disease panel (3 species) Internal parasite check (fecal sample) Vaccinations based on lifestyle Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Ear infections Ideal weight Behavioral problems Hip dysplasia Heartworms and other parasites
○	2 years through 7 years	Annual physical examination every 6 months Knee evaluation Hip evaluation Age & Breed specific wellness testing Internal organ health evaluation Internal parasite check (fecal sample) Heartworm test & tick disease panel (3 species) Vaccinations based on lifestyle	Dental disease Ideal weight Pain Score and Muscle Condition Score Ear infections Cataracts Knee problems Hip dysplasia Internal organ health and function Heartworms and other parasites
○	8 years through 10 years	Annual physical examination every 6 months Age & Breed specific wellness testing Hip evaluation Senior internal organ health evaluation Heart health check Internal parasite check (fecal sample) Heartworm test & tick disease panel (3 species) Vaccinations based on lifestyle	Dental disease Ideal weight Pain Score and Muscle Condition Score Ear infections Cataracts Hip dysplasia Internal organ health and function Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites
○	11 years and older	Annual physical examination every 6 months Age & Breed specific wellness testing Cancer screen Glaucoma screen Heart health check Internal parasite check (fecal sample) Heartworm test & tick disease panel (3 species) Vaccinations based on lifestyle	Dental disease Ideal weight Pain Score and Muscle Condition Score Ear infections Cataracts Arthritis Internal organ health and function Signs of cancer Glaucoma Heart disease Heartworms and other parasites

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