

Dog Care



Scientific name: *Canis familiaris*

Size: XS, S, M, L, XL!! Dogs range in size from tiny four-pound tea cup poodles to Irish wolfhounds, the tallest dogs at almost three feet high.

Lifespan: As a rule, smaller dogs tend to live longer than larger ones. A compact Chihuahua can live to be 16, while giant breeds like bull mastiffs usually live to be about eight years old. And somewhere in the middle, the average, All-American mixed-breed pooch has a lifespan of about 12 to 14 years.

Colors/varieties: There are more than 400 different breeds of dogs—spotted Dalmatians, shiny black Labrador retrievers, brindle-coated boxers...to name just a few! But the most popular pooches of all are non-pedigree—that includes shaggy dogs, dogs with hairy ears, dogs with all-white socks, dogs with fluffy tails, and everything in between. You may have heard people call these dogs "mutts," but we prefer *one-of-a-kind!*

Chow Time

Your dog is an omnivore, and needs a diet of meat and veggies to stay healthy. Whether you feed him moist food or dry food or a combination of both, make sure it's good quality. And never feed cat food to your dog—it is not properly balanced for canines.

It's a good rule of thumb (or should we say "rule of paw"?) to feed your adult dog once a day. For some larger dogs, it's better to feed two smaller meals a day. If you've got a puppy, the guidelines are:

- 8 to 12 weeks of age: 4 meals a day
- 3 to 6 months of age: 3 meals a day
- 6 months to one year of age: 2 meals a day

Is your pooch an action hero or a couch potato? If you can't feel Rover's ribs, he may need to shed a few pounds. Ask your vet for a doggie diet-and-exercise program.

Snack time! Treats are terrific for dogs, but don't go overboard. Most packaged treats contain lots of sugar and fat, which can pack on the pounds. Some dogs love to eat people foods, like cottage cheese, cooked egg and vegetables. Your dog can have these treats on occasion, but they shouldn't make up more than ten percent of his total daily intake.

Fill 'er up! Your dog should have a bowl of fresh, clean water available at ALL times. Refill his bowl at least once a day.

Memorize this list of No-Nos for your pooch:

- Chocolate
- Bones

- Milk
- Avocado
- Coffee
- Raisins and grapes
- Moldy or spoiled food
- Salt
- Garlic
- Onions, onion powder

Home, Sweet Home

House rules! You and your family will need to decide on a set of rules for your dog—for example, no jumping on people or chasing the cat. It's up to you to make sure he understands the rules. You do this through simple commands such as "Come," "Sit," and "Stay!" You may even want to ask your parents if you can enroll in a basic obedience class with your pooch. It's like dog school—cool!!

Zzzzzz... Make sure your dog has a special pooch-sized bed or cozy blanket to curl up on. But when he's fast asleep, don't wake him suddenly.

You're on safety patrol! Be alert for common items in your home that could hurt your pet. Keep cleaning fluids, paint and other chemicals out of his reach, and make sure the lid on your garbage can is always secure. If he gobbles up what's in there, he could get sick. Keep him away from poisonous plants and trees, like azaleas, lilies, English ivy and rhododendron.

While he's being housebroken, your puppy may have an accident inside the house. Be sure to clean it up right away with disinfectant and odor remover. If he can still smell it, he may have another accident in the same spot! If your grown-up, housebroken dog has an accident, tell an adult—this could mean that your dog may be sick.

If your dog's going to be spending a lot of time outside, make sure he can get to a shady place when it's hot, and a warm, dry, covered shelter when it's cold.

Fun and Games

Frisbee? Fetch? Find-the-biscuit? No matter what your dog's favorite game is, you should play it with him for at least 20 minutes every day. You're his personal trainer, after all! Added bonus: If your dog gets enough exercise, he'll be less likely to chew your livingroom to bits or dig holes in the lawn—or trample through Mom's flower beds!

Keep Fido on a leash or a fenced-in area when you are outside. It's the leash you can do!

Picture this: You're walking your dog, and you see another pooch approach. Your pet will probably want to get to know this interesting stranger with a good long sniff. This is how he makes furry friends. But be sure to lead him away if you hear any growling, or if either dog seems upset. And when you're on walks, remember that you're on clean-up crew. Bring a baggie or newspaper to pick up poop. (Don't forget to throw it out, of course!)

Let your fingers do the talking when you give your pet a massage. Gently rub his shoulders and back.... Mmmm, that feels good!

Did you know that your dog has his own personal hairdresser—you! It's a good idea to brush him once a week. If he has a long or curly coat, you'll need to brush him daily. He'll probably love the attention so much that this is one appointment he won't want to miss. Your grooming session is a great time to check under your

canine's fur for lumps, bumps, flakes and scabs. Keep an eye out for flea dirt, which looks like teeny specks of black pepper.

Rub-a-dub-dub! Most dogs don't need a bath more than a few times a year. Be sure to get an adult to help, and start by combing any mats from your companion's coat. Use a special dog shampoo, and make sure to rinse all the soap out.

Handle with care! If you want to pick up a pup or a small dog, place one hand under his chest with your forearm or other hand supporting his hind legs and bottom.

Chew, chew, train! Chewing on toys helps Rover relieve stress, and it helps keep his teeth clean.

Have you hugged your dog today? Companion canines love affection!