



## BACKGROUND

**SIZE:** XS-XL, from tiny 4-pound tea cup Poodles to 3-foot-tall Irish Wolfhounds

**LIFESPAN:** 8-16 years, depending on breed type, size, genetics & care

**COST PER YEAR:** \$580-\$875, depending on size

**GOOD WITH KIDS?:** Young children may unwittingly mishandle or hurt puppies or small dogs, who are particularly vulnerable to injury. Children ages 6 & up can share simple pet care duties.

**WHERE TO GET A DOG:** Your best option? Adoption! There are great

dogs at shelters and small-animal rescue groups all across the country. Go to [www.aspc.org/adoption/shelters](http://www.aspc.org/adoption/shelters) to find a shelter near you and visit websites like [Petfinder.com](http://Petfinder.com).

If you are committed to getting a specific breed, contact the local chapter of the breed's rescue group or locate a responsible breeder.

Note: Make sure you have all your supplies (see checklist) *before* you bring your dog home.

## FOOD

- Puppies 8 to 12 weeks old need 4 meals a day.
- Feed puppies 3 to 6 months old 3 meals a day.
- Feed puppies 6 months to one year 2 meals a day.
- When your dog reaches his first birthday, one or two meals a day are recommended.
- For some dogs, including larger breeds or those prone to bloat, it's better to feed 2 small meals.
- Feed your adult pooch a commercial brand of dry food that meets nutritional requirements and provides a well-balanced diet. You can mix in water or canned food. Your dog may enjoy small amounts of cottage cheese, cooked egg, fruits and vegetables, but these additions should not total more than 10 percent of his daily intake.
- Feed your dog the amounts recommended by your veterinarian or the manufacturer to avoid obesity, a common problem in dogs today.
- Feed your puppy a commercial brand of puppy food. Limit "people food," because it can cause a variety of problems including very picky eating habits and obesity.
- Fresh water should be available at all times, and be sure to wash food/water dishes frequently.

## BEDDING/HOUSING

- Your dog needs a warm, quiet place to rest, away from all drafts and off the floor. A training crate is ideal. You can buy a dog bed, or make one out of a wooden box. Place a clean blanket or pillow inside the bed. Wash bedding often.
- If your dog will be spending a lot of time outdoors, be sure she has access to fresh water, is protected from drafts and inclement weather (rain), has access to shade in hot weather, and a warm, dry covered shelter when it's cold.

## EXERCISE

- Exercise burns calories and helps avoid boredom, which can lead to destructive behaviors. Supervised fun and games will satisfy your dog's instinctual needs to dig, herd, chew, retrieve and chase.
- Individual exercise needs vary based on breed or breed mix, sex, age and health status. If your dog is a 6- to 18-month adolescent, or if she is

an active breed or mixed-breed from the sporting, herding, hound or terrier groups, her requirements will be relatively high. If your dog is older and has medical problems, a short 10 minute walk may be best. Follow the recommendations of your veterinarian.

## GROOMING

- Help keep your dog clean and reduce shedding with frequent brushing.
- Most dogs don't need to be bathed more than a few times a year. Before bathing, comb or cut out all mats. Thoroughly rinse your coat after shampooing. Be sure to check and trim your dogs nails periodically.

## HANDLING

- To carry a puppy or small dog, place one hand under the dog's chest, with your forearm or other hand supporting the hind legs and rump. Never attempt to lift or grab your puppy or small dog by the forelegs, tail or back of the neck.
- If you have to lift a large dog, lift from the underside, supporting his chest with one arm and his rear end with the other.

## LICENSING & ID

- Follow your community's licensing regulations. Attach the license, along with an up-to-date ID tag, to your dog's collar.
- We recommend permanent ID, such as a microchip, to help secure your dog's return should she become lost. Be sure to update owner registration information as needed.

## BEHAVIOR

- A well-behaved dog is a joy. Teaching your dog the basics (Sit, Stay, Come, Down, Heel, Off and Leave It) will improve your relationship with both your dog and your neighbors.
- If you have a puppy, start teaching her manners as soon as possible! Use bits of food as a lure and reward. Puppies can be enrolled in obedience courses when they have been adequately vaccinated. Contact your local shelter or SPCA for training class recommendations.
- Keep your dog on a leash in public. Be sure your pet will come to you at all times. A disobedient or aggressive dog is not ready to play with others.

FOR EXPERT ADVICE ON COMMON BEHAVIOR ISSUES FROM BARKING TO HOUSETRAINING, VISIT THE ASPCA VIRTUAL PET BEHAVIORIST AT [ASPCABEHAVIOR.ORG](http://ASPCABEHAVIOR.ORG)

## HEALTH

- Your dog should see a veterinarian for a full physical examination every year. At this time it can be determined which vaccines and diagnostic tests are necessary. If he is sick or injured, seek help immediately.

## SPAYING AND NEUTERING

- Female dogs should be spayed (the removal of the ovaries and uterus) and males neutered (removal of the testicles). This surgery can be safely done as early as 6 to 8 weeks of age.

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- Spaying before maturity significantly reduces the risk of breast cancer, a serious disease of older female dogs. Spaying also eliminates the risk of an infected uterus, a potentially fatal problem in older dogs that requires surgery and intensive medical care. Neutering males prevents testicular cancer and reduces the occurrence of prostatic enlargement, some hernias and certain types of aggression.

## VACCINATIONS

- Puppies should be vaccinated with a distemper combination vaccine beginning at 6-8 weeks and repeated monthly until they are 16-24 weeks, and then once annually. This vaccine protects against distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus and parainfluenza. A puppy's vaccination program cannot be finished before 4 months of age; some breeds, including Rottweilers, American Staffordshire and pit bull terriers, should be vaccinated until 5 months of age.
- If you have an unvaccinated dog older than 4 or 5 months, he will need a series of 2 vaccinations given 3 to 4 weeks apart, followed by a yearly vaccination.
- Puppy vaccination and socialization should go together. Many veterinarians recommend that new owners take their puppies to socialization classes, beginning at 8 to 9 weeks of age. At this age, they should have received at least their first series of vaccines.
- Rabies vaccination is required by law in most areas. In most cases, the vaccine is given beginning at 3 months of age, one year later and then every 3 years. Since laws vary, contact a local veterinarian for more information.
- Other vaccines for dogs are appropriate in certain situations. Your veterinarian can tell you about them.

## TOOTH CARE

- Bad breath is the most common indicator that your dog is in need of a dental check up. Keep your pet's teeth and gums healthy by brushing her teeth once or twice a week. Use dog toothpaste on a child's soft toothbrush or a gauze pad.
- Some dogs are prone to periodontal disease, an infection between the tooth and gum. This serious condition that can result in tooth loss and spread infection to the entire body requires veterinary care.

## FLEAS AND TICKS

- Daily inspections of your dog for fleas and ticks, especially during the warm seasons, are important. Use a flea comb to find and remove fleas.
- There are several methods of flea and tick control. The environment must also be treated. Speak to your veterinarian about these options.

## HEARTWORM

- This parasite lives in the heart and is passed to dogs by mosquitoes. Although many dogs who are infected with heartworms can appear healthy, heartworm disease can be fatal. Your dog should have a blood test for heartworm every spring—this is crucial for detecting infections from the previous year.
- Your veterinarian will develop an effective heartworm prevention plan (including preventive medication) based on your dog's lifestyle and the region of the country you live in.

## MEDICINES AND POISONS

- Never give your dog medication that has not been prescribed by a veterinarian. For example, did you know that one regular-strength ibuprofen tablet can cause stomach ulcers in a 10-pound dog? Keep rat poison and other rodenticides away from your pet.
- For information about potentially toxic substances that can harm your dog, visit [www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control](http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control).

IF YOU THINK THAT YOUR PET MAY HAVE INGESTED A POTENTIALLY POISONOUS SUBSTANCE, CALL THE ASPCA ANIMAL POISON CONTROL CENTER AT (888) 426-4435

A \$65 consultation fee may be applied to your credit card

## INTERNAL PARASITES (WORMS)

- Make sure your pet is screened annually for internal parasites! Dogs are commonly exposed to worms and other microscopic parasites (even in urban areas). Some parasites may cause disease in humans so proper screening and treatment are essential for the health of both you and your pooch.
- All puppies should be dewormed by a veterinarian. Most pups, even from healthy mothers in good homes, can carry roundworms or hookworms.
- The key to treatment is correct diagnosis, which is most often obtained by a microscopic examination of your dog's feces by your veterinarian. Your veterinarian can then prescribe the appropriate medication.

## DOG SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- ✓ Commercial brand of dog food and treats
- ✓ Food dish
- ✓ Water bowl
- ✓ Toys, toys & more toys, including safe chew toys
- ✓ Brush & comb for grooming, including flea comb and nail trimmer
- ✓ Collar with license and ID tag
- ✓ Leash
- ✓ Carrier (for smaller dogs)
- ✓ Training crate
- ✓ Dog bed or box with warm blanket or towel
- ✓ Dog toothbrush

## THE NO-NO LIST

Do not feed your dog:

- ✓ Alcoholic beverages
- ✓ Chocolate
- ✓ Coffee, macadamia nuts
- ✓ Grapes, raisins and avocados
- ✓ Moldy or spoiled food
- ✓ Onions, garlic & chives
- ✓ Poultry bones
- ✓ Salt & salty foods
- ✓ Tomato leaves, stems & unripe fruit
- ✓ Yeast dough
- ✓ Human medications unless prescribed by your veterinarian.



The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
424 East 92nd Street, New York, NY 10128-6804  
212-876-7700 • [www.aspc.org](http://www.aspc.org)

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