

Your **Boxer**

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Boxers: 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 boxers, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Energetic and playful
- Good with children, puppies, and smaller dogs
- An excellent family dog that loves human companionship
- Formidable guard dog
- Large, strong, and athletic, with lots of stamina in cooler climates
- Above-average intelligence and trainability when positive-reinforcement training methods are used
- Requires very little grooming

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

- Needs regular exercise to prevent chewing, digging, and other problems stemming from boredom
- Can be headstrong when negative-reinforcement training methods are used
- Territorial with larger dogs, especially of the same sex
- Suspicious of strangers

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

About **My Dog**

Your dog's name: _____

Date of your pet's birth: _____

Veterinary hospital's name: _____

Veterinarian's name: _____

Phone number: _____

Website: _____

Your **Boxer**





Your Boxer'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 boxer.

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 boxers 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 boxer 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.

Bloat

Gastric dilatation and volvulus, also known as bloat, usually occurs in dogs with deep, narrow chests. This means your boxer is more at risk than other breeds. When a dog bloats, the stomach twists on itself and fills with gas. Left untreated, the disease is quickly fatal, sometimes in as little as 30 minutes. Your dog may retch or heave (but nothing comes out), act restless, have a pot belly, or lie in a prayer position (front feet down, rear end up). If you see symptoms, take your pet to an emergency hospital immediately! Preventive surgery in which the stomach is tacked down or sutured in place so that it cannot twist is an option.

Cancer

Your boxer is especially susceptible to many different types of cancer. Half of all cancers are cured by surgically removing them, and some types are treatable with chemotherapy. Early detection is critical! We'll do periodic blood tests and look for lumps and bumps when we examine her. If your boxer is overweight, we'll discuss exercise and diet because obesity is a risk factor for some types of cancer.

Cherry Eye

Dogs have a third eyelid that contains a gland that produces about one-third of the tear fluid that bathes the eye. If the gland is sore or swollen, it looks like a red blob in the corner of the eye. This condition is called cherry eye, and it can occur very suddenly in one or both eyes. If this happens to your dog, we may treat it with ointment first, but it usually requires surgery because it tends to recur or get worse.

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. It starts with tartar build-up on the teeth and progresses to infection of the gums and roots of the teeth. Boxers are especially prone to dental disease, and they also develop hyperplastic gums, where the gum tissue grows swollen and lumpy as tartar builds on the teeth. Sometimes this excess tissue covers so much of the tooth that he can barely eat. 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 and damaged teeth by avoiding certain kinds of toys and treats, including chew hooves, tennis balls, bones, and ice cubes.

Digestive Disorders

There are several inherited conditions or tendencies that can cause recurrent or chronic vomiting, diarrhea, or weight loss in boxers. Some of these problems start very early in life. To help prevent symptoms, feed her a good quality pet food that we recommend. Most importantly, avoid snacks and table food. Treats that are high in fat (like pig ears), sodium, or artificial ingredients are bad for your buddy's digestion.

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, called a corneal ulcer. In boxers, these ulcers have a tendency not to heal. Don't let your dog ride in the car with his head out the window; this is a frequent cause of eye injuries. Call us right away if he has any problems with his eyes, especially if he 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.



Heart Disease

Boxers are especially prone to a heart problem known as dilatative cardiomyopathy, in which the heart becomes so large, thin, and weak that it can no longer effectively pump blood to the body. Your friend may also inherit a heart condition commonly known as aortic stenosis. This disease causes a partial obstruction of blood flow in the heart, which means the heart must work harder to pump enough blood. If your dog is acting weak or tired, fainting or collapsing, breathing in a labored way, or coughing, call us immediately. We'll conduct an annual heart health check, and if we find that your companion has heart disease, we'll treat it with medication.

Infections

In addition to the skin infections discussed below, your boxer is 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, her age, and other factors.

Ligament Tear

The cranial cruciate ligament is one of the four tough bands of tissue that hold each knee together. A torn cranial cruciate ligament is a common injury of active dogs, which includes your pal. If not surgically corrected, he will eventually suffer from severe arthritis. Ouch! Keeping him at the right weight, feeding a high-quality diet, and avoiding too much jumping (like playing Frisbee) are the keys to avoiding this painful injury.

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 boxer is prone to a form of skin infection called lip-fold pyoderma, which occurs because the folds of skin along the lower jaw are usually moist. Bacteria can readily gain a foothold and cause a reddened, smelly area that is uncomfortable for your dog. We will check for this condition upon examination, but let us know if you see signs. We'll recommend treatment with ointments and antibiotics when necessary. When symptoms are severe, the excess skin folds can be surgically removed.

Another painful condition that your boxer is susceptible to is pododermatitis, or skin infection of the feet. It causes blisters and ulcers between her toes. Ouch! The condition is especially common in pets with allergies, and boxers are also prone to those. If your dog licks her feet or is limping, check for this condition and make an appointment to see us right away. She will probably need antibiotics and possibly other kinds of therapy.

Spaying or Neutering

One of the best things you can do for your boxer 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 boxer 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 Boxer 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 boxers. 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 boxer live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Overweight boxers are more prone to cancer, ligament tears, 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.
- ✓ 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 in your boxer:

- ✓ 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 mouth
- ✓ Swollen or lumpy gums
- ✓ Blisters or sores between the toes

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 boxer 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 Boxers

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 boxer 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 Boxer Healthy

*Puppy to Adolescent:
Infant to 17 in People Years*

| | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | Age | Services We'll Provide | Boxer-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 | Adult teeth coming in properly Skin infections Tonsillitis Parasites |
| | <input type="radio"/> | 4–6 months | Head-to-tail physical examination Presurgical diagnostics for spay or neuter surgery Possible stomach tuck | Cherry eye Heart disease Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Prevention of bloat |
| | <input type="radio"/> | 1 year | Head-to-tail physical examination Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise | Dental disease Excessive weight gain Skin infections Eye abnormalities Behavioral problems Heartworms and other parasites |
| <i>Adult: 18 to 39 in People Years</i> | <input type="radio"/> | 2 years through 6 years | Head-to-tail physical examination Internal organ health check Heart health check Cancer screen Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations | Dental disease Skin infections Eye abnormalities Internal organ health and function Heart disease Signs of cancer Heartworms and other parasites |
| <i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i> | <input type="radio"/> | 7 years through 9 years | Head-to-tail physical examination Senior internal organ health evaluation Heart health check Cancer screen Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations | Dental disease Arthritis Skin infections Eye abnormalities Internal organ health and function Heart disease Signs of cancer Heartworms and other parasites |
| <i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i> | <input type="radio"/> | 10 years and older | Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Heart health check Cancer screen Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations | Dental disease Arthritis Skin infections Eye abnormalities Internal organ health and function Heart disease Signs of cancer 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.