

# Your Bulldog

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



## About My Dog

Your dog's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of your pet's birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinary hospital's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Bulldog

## Bulldogs: What a Unique Breed!

Whether she's an English or French bulldog, she is special! She's your best friend and companion and a source of unconditional love. Chances are that you chose her because you like bulldogs, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Docile and devoted
- Doesn't need much exercise
- Good with children
- Protective of family; good watch dog
- Requires minimal grooming

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

- Can seem stubborn
- Not active
- Doesn't respond to training quickly
- Doesn't do well in the heat
- Prone to several health problems

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

## Your Bulldog'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 bulldog.

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 bulldogs 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, along with 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 bulldog 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.

### *Bleeding Disorders*

Your bulldog is prone to several bleeding disorders. We may not know anything is wrong unless severe bleeding results during surgery or if your pet has a serious injury. We'll perform diagnostic testing for blood clotting time before we perform surgery to test for this problem.

### *Cancer*

Cancer is the most common cause of death of older dogs, and bulldogs are especially prone to lymphoma and mast cell tumors. 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 your pet. If your bulldog 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. It starts with tartar build-up on the teeth and progresses to infection of the gums and roots of the teeth. 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.

### *Eye Problems*

English and French bulldogs can inherit a number of different eye conditions, including dry eye (the eye doesn't produce enough tears), cataracts, cherry eye (the third eyelid is swollen and red), and corneal ulcers (sores that don't heal). In other words, your bulldog's eyes can cause her all kinds of problems, and they can be painful! 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. Many of these eye conditions are painful and should be taken care of immediately. Medication and sometimes surgery is required.

### *Hip Dysplasia*

You've probably heard of this inherited disease that causes the hip joints to form improperly, and English bulldogs are more likely to develop it than other breeds. 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 bones to identify the disease as early as possible. Surgery is sometimes a good option in severe and life-limiting cases of hip dysplasia. Keep in mind that overweight dogs may develop arthritis two years earlier than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering.

### *Infections*

Bulldogs 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, her age, and other factors.

### *Kidney Stones*

There are half a dozen different types of stones that can form in the kidney or in the bladder, and bulldogs are more likely to develop them than other breeds. We'll periodically test for the presence of kidney and bladder stones; they are painful! Symptoms of urinary tract stones include blood in the urine, straining to urinate, or inability to urinate. If your bulldog can't urinate or is straining to urinate, it is a medical emergency. Call us immediately!

### *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 dogs with short twisty legs (a condition called chondrodysplasia). If the ligament tear is not surgically corrected, your buddy will eventually suffer from severe arthritis. Ouch! Keeping him at the right weight and feeding a high-quality diet will help prevent 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.

### *Respiratory Distress Syndrome*

This disease, also known as brachycephalic syndrome, is a genetically linked condition in dogs with a short nose, like your bulldog. She has the same amount of tissue in her nose and throat as other dogs, but there's no place for it to go. As a consequence, the soft palate—the soft part of the back of the roof of the mouth—is too long and hangs down into the airway. In bulldogs, the nostrils are often too small, and sometimes the trachea, or windpipe, is narrow and undersized. All these things lead to a narrow and obstructed airway. Many of these dogs can barely breathe! Watch for exercise intolerance, loud breathing, coughing, bluish gums, and fainting. The problem may be corrected surgically early on when we spay or neuter your dog, or sometimes later in life.

With her short nose, she is also more likely to develop other problems, such as flatulence from excessive air

intake, pneumonia from aspirating food, and heat stroke. Being overweight also increases the likelihood of breathing problems, so be sure to keep her on the trim side.

### *Skin Infections*

Your bulldog is prone to several different forms of skin infection, including fold pyoderma, which occurs because the folds of skin are usually moist. Bacteria can readily gain a foothold and cause a reddened, smelly area that is uncomfortable for your dog. Another painful condition that your bulldog is susceptible to is pododermatitis, or skin infection of the feet. It causes blisters and ulcers between his toes. Ouch! We will check for these conditions upon examination, but let us know if you see signs. We recommend treatment with topical ointments and medications. When symptoms related to fold pyoderma are severe, the excess skin folds can be surgically removed.

### *Spaying or Neutering*

One of the best things you can do for your bulldog is to have her spayed (called neutering in males). 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 address some of the diseases your bulldog is likely to develop.

### *Spinal Deformities*

Your bulldog is more likely than other breeds to be born with a deformed spine (a condition called hemivertebra), which may cause spinal cord damage and disability; the effects can worsen with age. His short screw tail also predisposes him to urinary incontinence. We'll take X-rays when your pet is young to ensure that we identify problems early on. We'll rule out any other causes, such as a slipped spinal disc, and may prescribe rehabilitation.

## Taking Care of Your Bulldog 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 bulldogs. Another very important step 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 bulldog live longer, stay healthy, and be happier during her lifetime! We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine. Overweight bulldogs are more prone to cancer, hip dysplasia, arthritis, heart disease, 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.
- ✓ Don’t overdo exercise, especially in the heat!
- ✓ 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 bulldog:

- ✓ 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 or skin lesions
- ✓ Exercise intolerance, loud breathing, coughing, bluish gums, or fainting
- ✓ Episodes of weakness
- ✓ Pot-belly appearance
- ✓ Inability or straining to urinate
- ✓ Cloudiness, redness, itching or any other abnormality involving the eyes
- ✓ Itchy or smelly skin
- ✓ Change in appetite or water consumption
- ✓ Scratching or shaking the head, or discharge in 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](http://www.Genesis4Pets.com).

Your bulldog 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 Bulldogs

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 bulldog 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 Bulldog Healthy

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

*Adult: 18 to 39 in  
People Years*

*Senior: 40 to 59  
in People Years*

*Senior: 60 to 59  
in People Years*

	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Age	Services We'll Provide	Bulldog-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 X-rays of spine if there are any gait or reflex abnormalities Soft palate examination/surgery Hip evaluation Blood clotting time test	Cherry eye Internal organ health prior to spay/neuter surgery Spinal deformities Respiratory distress syndrome Hip dysplasia Bleeding disorders
	<input type="radio"/>	1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip evaluation Heartworm test Internal parasite check Vaccinations Discuss diet, weight, and exercise	Skin infections Eye abnormalities Excessive weight gain Behavioral problems Hip dysplasia Heartworms and other parasites
	<input type="radio"/>	2 years through 7 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip evaluation Internal organ health evaluation Tear test Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Eye abnormalities Healthy weight Respiratory distress Hip dysplasia Internal organ health and function Kidney and bladder stones Dry eye Heartworms and other parasites
	<input type="radio"/>	8 years through 10 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Hip evaluation Senior internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Heart health check Tear test Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Eye abnormalities Arthritis Respiratory distress Hip dysplasia Internal organ health and function Kidney and bladder stones Signs of cancer Heart disease Dry eye Heartworms and other parasites
	<input type="radio"/>	11 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Golden years internal organ health evaluation Cancer screen Heart health check Tear test Internal parasite check Heartworm test Vaccinations	Dental disease Skin infections Eye abnormalities Arthritis Respiratory distress Internal organ health and function Kidney and bladder stones Signs of cancer Heart disease Dry eye 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.