

CARING FOR YOUR DOG

FOOD & WATER

FOOD



For most dogs, dry dog food available at pet food stores will provide a well-balanced diet. Puppies should be fed puppy food until about one year old. Some dogs may require a special diet due to allergies or another medical condition. It's always best to talk to a veterinarian if you need help.

How much should you feed?

Follow instructions on the bag and split the daily portion into two meals per day.

Canned food is a good supplement and makes mealtime more delicious for picky eaters. If you use canned food, give a little less dry food.

TREATS

Dog treats are perfect for training and rewarding good behaviours. It's okay to feed treats but too many can cause health concerns. Try portioning out treats each day to help manage overfeeding.

HUMAN FOOD WARNING!!!

Some human foods are **dangerous to dogs**. This includes alcohol, chocolate, grapes/raisins, onions and garlic, seeds/pits from fruit, avocados, gum, candy or peanut butter with xylitol, and salty, greasy snacks.



WATCH THEIR WEIGHT!



Extra weight sometimes seems cute but it can be bad for your dog's health. Place your thumbs on the backbone of your dog and spread your fingers down their ribs: you should feel a layer of fat but easily feel their rib bones. If your dog is getting a little heavy, cut down on the food or if your dog is able, encourage them to be more active.



Keep your dog in the green zone!

MIX IT UP! EXERCISE OPTIONS

Walks are a great form of exercise and you can also add in activities like swimming, playing fetch or off-leash park time. Does your dog love to sniff? Try sniff walks where their nose leads the way! Puzzle feeders, snuffle mats or toys like Kongs will help increase activity levels as well.



TOO SKINNY?

Dogs can be too skinny too. You should not be able to see ribs through the skin or bones at the base of the tail sticking out. Hip bones and spine should not be seen or easy to feel beneath the skin.

WATER

Your dog should always have access to clean water. Change water daily and wash the bowl regularly.

CARING FOR YOUR DOG HOME ENVIRONMENT

Your dog needs a comfortable environment that is well ventilated and includes protection from heat, cold and damp.

Your home should include:

- A variety of places to rest (e.g., bare floor, beds, blankets, tile)
- The freedom to move about



KENNELS



This crate is the **RIGHT** size for your dog



This crate is the **WRONG** size for your dog



This crate is the **RIGHT** size for your dog



This crate is the **WRONG** size for your dog

When dogs are used to it, kennels can provide a safe and comforting place for your dog to hang out.

Make sure your dog can sit upright, stand and turn in the kennel. Wire kennels must have a flat tray to cover the bottom. Always offer soft bedding inside so that your dog has a choice.

You can choose to use a kennel during bedtime and when you leave your home. Kennels are also great for travel from place to place and the safest way to transport your dog in a car.

TETHERING

Never leave your dog tied up in your home alone. Your dog may get tangled up or hang themselves. Never tether a dog with a choke or prong collar on or with a rope or chord that is tied directly around your dog's neck.

DRUGS & PARAPHERNALIA

Puppies are curious, and some dogs love to chew. Watch your pet closely to see if they may have chewed, inhaled or swallowed drugs, used foils or cookers. **Keep paraphernalia out of reach of pets.**

Do not give your dog any human meds (like Tylenol, Advil, Aspirin, etc.) unless you have talked to a vet.

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR PET SAFER

- Get a plastic shoe box with a snap-on lid to store your drugs and stuff

Before you use substances

- Try using an x-pen or baby gate to keep your dog in a designated area in your home
- If your dog is crate trained, put your dog inside their crate



Has your dog gotten into drugs? Call a veterinarian or emergency clinic for advice. If you know your dog has gotten into opioids and see signs of poisoning, **naloxone can be given to dogs** and should be administered right away. If it's a stimulant or cannabis, you can't reverse this – take your dog to a vet immediately.



BCSPCA

CARING FOR YOUR DOG HEALTH



SPAY/NEUTER

BENEFITS OF SPAY/NEUTER

- Generally, neutering can decrease aggressive behaviours
- Neutered dogs are calmer and less likely to bite, attack or get into dog fights
- Spaying ends the heat cycle in females, so you don't have to worry about diapers and pads
- Eliminates the risk of many cancers
- Studies show that fixed pets, on average, live longer

PREVENT UNWANTED LITTERS

Puppies can have puppies! Start keeping unfixed males and females apart at four months old. **GET YOUR PUP FIXED BY SIX MONTHS OLD.**

It's irresponsible to breed your dog. Without proper support from a veterinarian throughout the pregnancy, you put your dog's health at risk. When your dog gives birth, you need to be able to access an emergency clinic in case anything goes wrong. When the pups are born, they need proper monitoring and should see a vet by six weeks of age or sooner if any issues arise.

VETERINARY CARE



It's recommended that your dog should have a check-up once a year with a veterinarian. If not, watch out for lumps and bumps, changes to your dog's eating and washroom habits, and other changes in their behaviour. If you notice something different, get in touch with a veterinarian.

VACCINES

Vaccines protect your dog from getting diseases that are contagious and potentially fatal. Vaccinating your dog offers protection for your dog and dogs in the community. When you get your dog or when a puppy turns six weeks old, visit your veterinarian for a check-up and vaccine plan.

Puppies should start their vaccines at six to eight weeks of age and will need a series of vaccines before they reach four months old. Schedules for adult dogs may vary depending on lifestyle and vaccines needed.



COMMON DOG VACCINES

- Rabies
- DAPP combo (distemper, adenovirus, parvovirus and parainfluenza)
- Bordetella (kennel cough)
- Leptospirosis

DEWORMING

Dogs can get all sorts of different intestinal worms and it can be very uncomfortable for your dog. Some may even be transferred to humans! Talk to your veterinarian if you think your dog has worms.

CARING FOR YOUR DOG HEALTH

PARASITES

FLEAS

Fleas are tiny (1 to 3 mm) blood-sucking insects. They multiply quickly and can make your pet sick if left untreated. Fleas will bite people too!

How do I know if my dog has fleas?

Your dog will be itchy, and you might notice them scratch more than usual. Check your pet's belly where you might see fleas crawling. Gently pull apart the fur to expose the skin and look for what looks like pepper or coffee grinds – this is actually bits of dried blood!

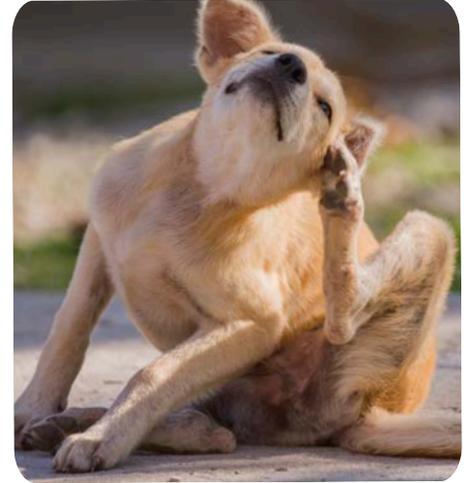
How do you treat fleas?

Flea collars and powders may help but are not very effective. A monthly pill or topical liquids applied to the skin prescribed by your veterinarian can help get rid of fleas.



WARNING: Flea medication

You can find flea treatments for dogs at pet stores that contain **permethrin**, which is okay for dogs but **poisonous to cats!** Do not share treatments with other pets.



WORMS (including tapeworms, whipworms and roundworms)

Worms in your dog can be transferred to people! **GROSS.** Wash your hands after picking up poop, hanging out outside and before you eat. It's important to look out for signs of worms in your dog.

What are signs of worms? You might see them in the poop or vomit. In some cases, you might see them crawling out of your dog's bum, or you might see eggs (clear, rice-shaped) in their bedding. But don't worry – there is a simple fix. Medication for worms can be obtained from your veterinarian.

TICKS

Ticks hang out on the ends of tall grass and attach themselves to a host. They bury their heads inside the skin to suck blood. They attach so firmly that the removal of a tick may require a two-step approach that removes the body and then the head from your dog.

Ticks are not as common in the city, but if you take your dog out for hikes in different areas or visit different parts of B.C., you will want to consider some preventative treatment for ticks. A veterinarian can help you with this.



EAR MITES & EAR INFECTIONS

Ear mites are teeny-tiny creatures that live inside your pet's ears. They are common and contagious. If one pet has ear mites, it's likely that they all do.

How do I detect if my dog has ear mites?

Your dog may rub their ears on the ground and shake their heads. You may even see a waxy or crusty buildup in your dog's ear. This could be ear mites or a bacterial or yeast infection.

Ear mites and infections can be diagnosed and treated with medication prescribed by a veterinarian.



CARING FOR YOUR DOG HEALTH

GROOMING

FUR

Your dog's fur should look clean and free from debris. Comb/brush your dog's fur. Mats (tangles) can build up and be very painful for your dog.



NAILS

Nails should be trimmed regularly (about once a month). When a dog stands, their nails should just touch or not touch the ground.

IDENTIFICATION (ID)

If your dog should ever get lost, make sure they have proper ID in the form of a collar and tags paired with a microchip or tattoo, which can be done by a veterinarian.



MYTH BUSTING

Does a microchip act like a tracker or global positioning device (GPS)?

ANSWER: NO! Microchips use radio frequency and are only activated when scanned by a special device. They only provide information stored in the microchip – your contact information to help get your dog back to you as soon as possible!



COLLARS & HARNESSES



Flat collars are great everyday collars. Find the right size and width that works for your dog.



Martingale collars stay loose around your dog's neck and tighten (but don't choke) when your dog pulls or tries to slip out of the collar.



Harnesses may take pressure off your dog's neck if they tend to pull. They come in a variety of designs that go over the head, your dog can step into, front clips, back clips and more. Choose something that your dog is comfortable with.

The BC SPCA does not support the use of collars and devices that cause anxiety, fear, distress, pain and/or injury.



Prong collars have metal spikes that dig into a dog's neck when they pull. They cause pain and that's only why your dog stops pulling.

Choke collars can cause pain and even serious injuries to your dog's neck, voice box and back.

Shock collars deliver an electric shock via a remote controlled by the owner.

CARING FOR YOUR DOG

EXERCISE & PLAY

EXERCISE

At minimum, your dog should get out three times a day for exercise and bathroom breaks. A younger, more energetic dog may require more trips out or longer periods of exercise. Types of exercise include walks, sniffing and supervised off-leash time.

Puppies in training need several potty trips a day.

PLAY

TOYS, TOYS, TOYS

Stuffies with squeakers, tug toys, puzzle feeders, balls, treat dispensers and more. With all the options, which ones should you choose? Select toys based on your dog's size, age and chewing level.

For chew toys and treats, remember the **Knee Knock Rule**: if you wouldn't knock yourself in the knee with it, don't give it to your dog! Broken teeth are extremely painful and costly to treat.

HAVE FUN AND STAY SAFE!

Keep toys fun by **always monitoring your dog** during play and chew time.

Some dangers include:

- Eating chewed-off pieces of toys
- Eating the squeaker inside

AVOID

- Rawhide and other edible chews – can be a choking hazard
- Raw or cooked bones – they can break teeth or splinter
- Toys that are too small for your dog
- Tennis balls – the fuzz can wear down your dog's teeth (go with a good rubber ball instead)



Put toys away and rotate them so your dog thinks they have new toys all the time!



GAMES

Hide treats around your home and encourage your dog to sniff them out. There are also lots of puzzle toys available to dogs.

You can turn a **towel into a treat mat**. Lay out a towel, sprinkle kibble or treats onto it and then either roll the towel up or spiral it and let your dog sniff and hunt for the kibble! *This may not work for dogs who start to chew, shred or eat the towel!*

Play **one-on-one games** like tug-of-war with your dog. Just don't forget to let your dog win sometimes or they will become frustrated with the game. **Teach your dog tricks.**

Fetch can be a great form of exercise and fun for you and your dog.

SOCIALIZATION

Set up play dates for your dog to play with a dog friend. If your dog is good with other dogs (and is spayed/neutered), take them to the dog park for play with other dogs.

