



5 ways to protect your new dog

Make sure your dog starts off on the right paw with these tips and guidelines to keep him happy and healthy.



1 Schedule a neuter/spay day.

Spaying or neutering doesn't just help with population control. It can also help minimize and prevent many serious health risks if done while the pet is still young.



2 Become BFFs with your veterinarian.

It's impossible to tell if your pooch is healthy just by looking at him. This is why veterinarians recommend biannual checkups—or, at the very least, annual exams. Talk to your new BFF, the veterinarian, about how often your dog should visit the hospital.



3 Weigh the food options.

If you can't easily feel your pet's ribs or you're able to grab a handful of fat off the stomach, your dog is probably overweight.

As a guideline, a 10-pound dog needs 300 calories, a 20-pound dog needs 500 calories, and 50-pound dog should eat 1,200 calories per day. The best—and easiest—way to make sure your dog is getting adequate nutrition is to talk to your veterinarian about a meal plan.



4 Don't forget to brush.

This goes for your dog's coat and teeth. Even if you don't have a longhaired pooch, regular grooming is still important to keep your pup clean from ticks and dirt. Consider calling on a professional groomer for help—or your veterinary hospital may even offer these services in-house.

When it comes to doggie dental care, find toothbrushes and toothpastes made for dogs. (No human versions allowed—they could be very dangerous to your pet!) And make sure the toothbrush fits your dog's mouth.

Pro tip: Be ready with a tartar control treat post-brushing session and your dog will love dental care.

Take steps to protect your wallet against unexpected costs and protect your savings in case of a pet accident or emergency. Many veterinary services are included in pet insurance and wellness plans—ask your veterinary team which plans they recommend.



5 Start a new exercise.

As much as you would like to, you just can't be with your dog 24/7. That's where dog sitters, boarding facilities, and dog daycares come into play. Whether you work long hours or need to leave for a weekend or two, it's important to find pet caregivers you trust to help take care of your little guy and give him the exercise and attention that he needs. Don't forget ask your veterinarian for recommendations, too!