

Your Basset Hound

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



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Basset Hounds: What a Unique Breed!

Your dog is special! She's your best friend, companion, and a source of unconditional love. Chances are that you chose her because you like Bassetts and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Even-tempered, affectionate, and happy-go-lucky
- Sweet, gentle, and sensitive
- Good with kids and other pets
- An excellent family dog that loves human companionship
- Has a short, easy-to-care-for coat
- Excellent hunting dog

However, no dog is perfect! You may have also noticed these characteristics:

- Needs regular exercise and diet regulation to avoid weight gain
- Early obedience training and socialization is recommended
- May have a tendency to bark excessively
- Likes to dig
- Passes a lot of gas, sheds, and drools
- Can have an unstable temperament if not bred properly, including excessive barking, hyperactivity, or aggression

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! She is a laid-back family companion with aspirations of being a lap dog.

The Basset Hound is a scent hound that was bred to track rabbits. They originated in France during the 16th century and their name is derived from the French word *bas*, meaning low. They have short legs and a strong nose, and they will run after any scent they catch. The Basset is a generally healthy dog with an average lifespan of 12 years.



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General Health Information for your Basset Hound

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. Unfortunately, your Basset Hound is more likely than other dogs to have problems with her teeth. Dental disease starts with tartar build-up on the teeth and progresses to infection of the gums and roots of the teeth. If we don't prevent or treat dental disease, your buddy may lose her teeth and be in danger of damage to her kidneys, liver, heart, and joints. In fact, your Basset Hound's life span may even be cut short by one to three years! We'll clean your dog's teeth regularly and let you know what you can do at home to keep those pearly whites clean.

Infections

Basset Hounds are susceptible to bacterial and viral infections — the same ones that all dogs can get — such as **parvo**, **rabies**, and **distemper**. Many of these infections are preventable through vaccination, which we will recommend based on her age, the diseases we see in our area, and other factors.

Obesity

Obesity can be a significant health problem in Basset Hounds. It is a serious disease that may cause or worsen joint problems, metabolic and digestive disorders, 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 leftover people food and doggie treats. Instead, give her a hug, brush her fur or teeth, play a game with her, or perhaps take her for a walk. She'll feel better, and so will you!

Parasites

All kinds of worms and bugs can invade your Basset's body, inside and out. Everything from fleas and ticks to ear mites can infest her skin and ears. Hookworms, roundworms, heartworms, and whipworms can get into her system in a number of ways: drinking unclean water, walking on contaminated soil, 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 canine 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 preventive medication as necessary to keep her healthy.

Spay or Neuter

One of the best things you can do for your Basset is to have her spayed (neutered for males). In females, this means we surgically remove the ovaries and usually the uterus, and in males, it means we surgically remove the testicles. 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 identify and address some of the diseases your dog is likely to develop. For example, if your pet needs hip X-rays or a puppy tooth extracted, this would be a good time—it's more convenient for you and easier on your friend too. Routine blood testing prior to surgery also helps us to identify and take precautions against

Your Basset Hound's Health

We know that because you care so much about your dog, you want to take good care of her. That is why we have summarized the health concerns we will be discussing with you over the life of your Basset. By knowing about health concerns specific to Basset Hounds, we can tailor a preventive health plan to watch for and hopefully prevent some predictable risks.

Many diseases and health conditions are genetic, meaning they are related to your pet's breed. 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. That does not mean your dog will have these problems; it just means that she is more at risk than other dogs. We will describe the most common issues seen in Basset Hounds to give you an idea of what may come up in her future. Of course, we can't cover every possibility here, so always check with us if you notice any unusual signs or symptoms.

This guide contains general health information important to all canines as well as the most important genetic predispositions for Basset Hounds. This information helps you and us together plan for your pet's unique medical needs. At the end of the booklet, we have also included a description of what you can do at home to keep your Basset looking and feeling her best. You will know what to watch for, and we will all feel better knowing that we're taking the best possible care of your pal.

common problems that increase anesthetic or surgical risk. Don't worry; we'll discuss the specific problems we will be looking for when the time arrives.

Genetic Predispositions for Basset Hounds

Bloat

Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus, also known as GDV or Bloat, usually occurs in dogs with deep, narrow chests. This means your Basset is more at risk than other breeds. When a dog bloats, the stomach twists on itself and fills with gas. The twisting cuts off blood supply to the stomach, and sometimes the spleen. Left untreated, the disease is quickly fatal, sometimes in as little as 30 minutes. Your dog may retch or heave (but little or nothing comes out), act restless, have an enlarged abdomen, or lie in a prayer position (front feet down, rear end up). Preventive surgery in which the stomach is tacked down or sutured in place so that it is unlikely to twist is an option. If you see symptoms, take your pet to an emergency hospital immediately!

Eye Problems

Not many things have as dramatic an impact on your dog's quality of life as the proper functioning of his eyes. Unfortunately, Basset Hounds can inherit or develop a number of different eye conditions, some of which may cause blindness if not treated right away, and most of which can be extremely painful! We will evaluate his eyes at every examination to look for any signs of concern.

- **Glaucoma**, an eye condition that affects Basset Hounds and people too, is an extremely painful disease that rapidly leads to blindness if left untreated. Symptoms include squinting, watery eyes, bluing of the cornea (the clear front part of the eye), and redness in the whites of the eyes. Pain is rarely noticed by pet owners though it is frequently there and can be severe. People who have certain types of glaucoma often report it feels like being stabbed in the eye with an ice pick! Yikes! In advanced cases, the eye may look enlarged or swollen like it's bulging. We'll perform his annual glaucoma screening to diagnose and start treatment as early as possible. Glaucoma is a medical emergency. If you see symptoms, don't wait to call us, go to an emergency clinic!
- **Cataracts** are a common cause of blindness in older Bassets. We'll watch for the lenses of his eyes to become more opaque—meaning they look cloudy instead of clear—when we examine him. Many dogs adjust well to losing their vision and get along just fine. Surgery to remove cataracts and restore sight may also be an option.
- Dogs have a third eyelid that contains a gland that produces about one-third of the 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. It's more common in puppies or young Bassets. If this happens to him, we may treat it with ointment first, but surgery is often the best option.

Neurological Disease

A genetically linked neurological condition that could occur in your Basset Hound causes a wobbly, drunken gait. This condition, known as wobbler disease or **wobbler syndrome**, happens because there is a narrowing of the vertebrae in the neck, which pinches the spinal cord and associated nerves. If the nerves do not send signals to the brain the way they are supposed to, your dog cannot feel his feet. The first signs you will often notice are unstable hind legs, stumbling, and sometimes falling. Medications, neck braces, rehabilitation exercise programs, and surgery are treatment options.

Heart Disease

Basset Hounds are especially prone to a life-threatening heart condition known as **dilated cardiomyopathy**, or DCM, in which the heart becomes so large, thin, and weak that it can no longer effectively pump blood to the body. As this problem advances, your pet may act weak or tired, faint or collapse, breathe in a labored way, or cough. We'll conduct a yearly electrical heart screening (ECG) and/or an echocardiogram to look for abnormal heart rhythms as early as one year of age. If indicated, treatment includes medication and dietary supplementation.

Hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's)

Addison's Disease is an endocrine system disorder that occurs when the adrenal glands fail to produce enough hormones to keep the body functioning normally. Left untreated, hypoadrenocorticism can be fatal. Symptoms often mimic many other diseases, but we can run a specialized blood test to check for this specific condition. Though this disease can occur in any type of dog, Bassets are more at risk. We'll be watching for clinical signs at every exam and will periodically check his electrolyte levels to screen for this problem.

Bleeding Disorders

There are several types of inherited bleeding disorders that occur in dogs. They range in severity from very mild to very severe. Many times, a pet seems normal until a serious injury occurs or surgery is performed, and then severe bleeding can result. **Von Willebrand's disease** is a blood-clotting disorder



frequently found in Basset Hounds. We'll conduct diagnostic testing for blood clotting times or a specific DNA blood test for Von Willebrand's disease and other similar disorders to check for this problem before we perform surgery.

Joint Disease

When Basset puppies are allowed to grow too quickly, the cartilage in their joints may not attach to the bones properly. This problem is known as [osteochondritis dissecans](#), or OCD. If this occurs, surgery may be required to fix the problem. Our recommended growth rate for Basset puppies is no more than four pounds per week. To maintain this rate, don't overfeed him and don't supplement with additional calcium. Feed a large-breed puppy diet rather than an adult or regular puppy diet, and weigh your puppy every three to four weeks to make sure he's on track.

Back Problems

[Intervertebral disc disease \(IVDD\)](#) is a common condition in dogs with long backs and short legs, which may include your Basset. The disease is caused when the jelly-like cushion between one or more vertebrae slips or ruptures, causing the disc to press on the spinal cord. If your dog is suddenly unable or unwilling to jump up or go up stairs, is reluctant to move around, has a hunched back, cries out, or refuses to eat or go potty, he is likely in severe pain. He may even drag his back feet or be suddenly paralyzed and unable to get up or use his back legs. If you see symptoms, don't wait. Call us or an emergency clinic immediately! For less severe cases, rest and medication may resolve the problem. In severe cases involving paralysis, we may recommend surgical removal of the ruptured discs (within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms to get the best results). As with so many other diseases, weight control helps to prevent this problem. You should also use ramps or steps from puppyhood on so that your dog doesn't spend a lifetime stressing his back by jumping on and off of the furniture.

Knee Problems

Sometimes your Basset's kneecap (patella) may slip out of place. This is called [patellar luxation](#). You might notice that your pet, while running, suddenly picks up a back leg or skips and hops for a few strides. He might then kick his leg out sideways to pop the kneecap back in place. These are common signs of patellar luxation. If the problem is mild and involves only one leg, your friend may not require much treatment beyond arthritis medication. When symptoms are severe, surgery may be needed to realign the kneecap to keep it from luxating further.

Hip and Elbow Dysplasia

Both hips and elbows are at risk for [dysplasia](#), an inherited disease that causes the joints to develop improperly and results in arthritis. Stiffness in your Basset's elbows or hips may become a problem for him, especially as he matures. You may notice that he begins to show lameness in his legs or has difficulty getting up from lying down. We can treat the arthritis—the sooner the better—to minimize discomfort and pain. We'll take X-rays of your dog's bones to identify issues as early as possible. Surgery is also sometimes a good option in severe and life-limiting cases. And keep in mind that overweight dogs may develop arthritis years earlier than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering!

Bone Pain

Growing Bassets can suffer from a painful inflammation of the long bones in the legs called [eosinophilic panosteitis](#), or pano or eo-pan for short. It usually starts around six to ten months of age and shifts from leg to leg. We'll look for this condition upon examination; if your pal exhibits pain when the area is squeezed or palpated, we'll take X-rays to diagnose the problem. Panosteitis usually causes no permanent damage, but requires pain medication. If your dog has this condition and develops an abnormal gait to compensate for the sore leg(s), rehabilitation exercises may be required.

Spinal Deformities

Basset Hounds are more likely than other canines to be born with spinal deformities, a condition called [hemivertebrae](#), which may lead to spinal cord damage, instability, or disability. We'll take X-rays when your pet is young to ensure that we identify problems early as symptoms can worsen with age, weight, and sometimes activity. During his life, if he develops back problems, we'll rule out any other causes, such as a slipped spinal disc or arthritis. If a deformity is diagnosed, we'll prescribe medication, acupuncture, or rehabilitation as needed.

Bleeding Tumor

[Hemangiosarcoma](#) is a type of bleeding tumor that affects Basset Hounds at greater than average incidence. These tumors commonly form in the spleen, but can form in other organs as well. Unbeknownst to a pet owner, the tumor breaks open and internal bleeding occurs. Some tumors can be volleyball-sized or larger before signs of sickness show. We often find clues that one of these tumors is present during senior wellness testing, so have his blood tested and an ultrasound performed at least yearly.

Bladder or Kidney Stones

There are a few different types of stones that can form in the kidney or in the bladder, and Basset Hounds are more likely to develop them than other breeds. We'll periodically test his urine for telltale signs indicating the presence of kidney and bladder stones, which in addition are very painful! If your buddy has blood in his urine, can't urinate, or is straining to urinate, it is a medical emergency. Call us immediately!

Allergies

In humans, allergies to pollen, mold, or dust make people sneeze. In dogs, rather than sneezing, allergies make their skin itchy. We call this skin allergy "[atopy](#)", and Bassets often have it. The feet, belly, folds of the skin, and ears are most commonly affected. Symptoms typically start between the ages of one and three and can get worse every year. Licking the paws, rubbing the face, and frequent ear infections are the most common signs of allergies. The good news is that there are many treatment options available for these conditions.

Skin Infections

Your Basset Hound 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 and yeast can readily thrive here and cause a reddened, smelly area that is uncomfortable for your dog. We will examine him for this problem often (let us know if you see signs as well), and we'll



recommend treatment with antibiotics as necessary. When symptoms are severe, the excess skin folds can also be surgically removed.

Taking Care of Your Basset Hound 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 her diet, make sure she gets plenty of exercise, regularly brush her teeth and coat, 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 her. This is when we’ll give her the necessary “check-ups” and test for diseases and conditions that are common in Bassets. Another very important step in caring for your pet is signing up for pet health insurance. There will certainly be medical tests and procedures she will need throughout her 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 Basset live longer, stay healthier, and be happier during her lifetime. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a proper diet and exercise routine.

- ✓ Supervise your pet as you would a toddler. Keep doors closed, pick up after yourself, and block off rooms as necessary. This will keep her out of trouble and away from objects she shouldn’t put in her mouth.
- ✓ She has low grooming needs. Brush her coat as needed, at least weekly.
- ✓ Basset Hounds generally have good teeth, and you can keep them perfect by brushing them at least twice a week!
- ✓ Clean her ears weekly, even as a puppy. Make sure to keep her floppy ears dry. Don’t worry—we’ll show you how!
- ✓ Check her eyes often. Her droopy eyes can collect debris.
- ✓ She’s a very smart dog with lots of energy, so keep her mind and body active, or she’ll get bored. That’s when the

naughty stuff starts.

- ✓ Always walk your Basset on a leash, as she has a tendency to run off after interesting smells.
- ✓ 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, but don’t overdo it at first.

What to Watch For

Any abnormal symptom could be a sign of serious disease or it could just be a minor or temporary problem. The important thing is to be able to tell when to seek veterinary help and how urgently. Many diseases cause dogs to have a characteristic combination of symptoms, which together can be a clear signal that your Basset Hound needs help.

Office calls

Give us a call for an appointment if you notice any of these types of signs:

- ✓ Change in appetite or water consumption
- ✓ Tartar build-up, bad breath, red gums, or broken teeth
- ✓ Itchy skin (scratching, chewing, or licking); hair loss
- ✓ Lethargy, mental dullness, or excessive sleeping
- ✓ Fearfulness, aggression, or other behavioral changes

Emergencies

Seek medical care immediately if you notice any of these types of signs:

- ✓ Scratching or shaking the head, tender ears, or ear discharge
- ✓ Inability or straining to urinate; discolored urine
- ✓ Cloudiness, redness, itching, or any other abnormality involving the eyes
- ✓ Dry heaving or a large, tight, painful abdomen
- ✓ Unwilling to jump; pain, hunched back, paralysis
- ✓ Fainting, collapse; breathing issues, cough
- ✓ General listlessness, droopy facial expression; vomiting, diarrhea
- ✓ Pale gums, labored breathing, weakness, or sudden collapse
- ✓ General reluctance to run or play

Genetic/DNA Testing

DNA analysis is a rapidly advancing field in healthcare for people and pets. Luckily, technologies exist to screen for hundreds of inherited diseases in pets, just like in people. By screening each pet for as many genetic diseases as possible, we will be better prepared to care for your pet throughout life. This is an important step in caring for your pet because it's always better to know your pal is at risk for a genetic disease before the problem is untreatable.

In an effort to screen for as many genetically linked diseases as possible, we may recommend the **Embark Genetic Health Screen** to screen for more than 150 genetic mutations that cause disease.

Each **Embark Health Genetic Screen** Screens for

- ✓ Over 30 Musculoskeletal Problems
- ✓ Over 30 Metabolic Conditions
- ✓ Over 30 Eye Conditions
- ✓ Over 25 Blood and Clotting Disorders
- ✓ Over 10 Immune System Diseases
- ✓ Over 10 Urinary Tract Problems
- ✓ 10 Skin and Hair Conditions
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Dental Disease
- ✓ Drug Metabolism
- ✓ Heart Problems
- ✓ Hormonal Conditions
- ✓ Liver/Gastrointestinal Diseases
- ✓ Midline Defect
- ✓ Neuromuscular Diseases
- ✓ Reproduction Problems
- ✓ Respiratory Conditions

This one-time test is one of the best decisions you can make for your Basset Hound's medical care. With less than a few drops of blood, we'll have a lifetime of information to assist us in providing the very best care of your friend's unique and individual needs throughout her life!

For more information about genetic testing, visit www.embarkvet.com

Your Basset counts on you to take good care of her, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that she lives a long and healthy life. Our goal is to provide the best health care possible: health care that's based on her breed, lifestyle, and age. Please contact us when you have questions or concerns:

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Puppy to Adolescent Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Basset Hound Healthy		Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years			
(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Basset Hound-Specific Problems We're Looking For		
○	6–8 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Dental alignment, heart murmur, hernia Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo Hemivertebrae Wobbler Syndrome von Willebrand's Disease (vWD)		
○	10–13 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth and ears at home	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo Hemivertebrae Wobbler Syndrome von Willebrand's Disease (vWD)		
○	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Schedule spay/neuter surgery Discuss obedience and grooming	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo Hemivertebrae Wobbler Syndrome von Willebrand's Disease (vWD)		
○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Spay/neuter surgery Discuss bloat, stomach tack, and microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo Hemivertebrae and Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) Wobbler Syndrome von Willebrand's Disease (vWD)		
○	6 months through 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo and Allergies Hemivertebrae, Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD), Panosteitis, Patellar luxation, Hip dysplasia, and Elbow dysplasia Wobbler Syndrome von Willebrand's Disease (vWD) All major diseases important in the breed with diagnostic plan		

Adult to Golden Years Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Basset Hound Healthy		(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Basset Hound-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	Adult: 18 to 39 in People Years	○	2 years through 6 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss behavior and nutrition	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Glaucoma Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo and Allergies Urolithiasis Addison's Disease (Hypoadrenocorticism) Patellar luxation, Hip dysplasia, and Elbow dysplasia Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) von Willebrand's Disease (vWD)
	Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years	○	7 years through 9 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Glaucoma Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo and Allergies Urolithiasis Addison's Disease (Hypoadrenocorticism) Patellar luxation, Hip dysplasia, and Elbow dysplasia Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) Hemangiosarcoma
	Golden Years: 60+ in People Years	○	10 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Glaucoma Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo and Allergies Urolithiasis Addison's Disease (Hypoadrenocorticism) Patellar luxation, Hip dysplasia, and Elbow dysplasia Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) Hemangiosarcoma

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.