

# Your Beagle

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



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Your Beagle

## Beagles: 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 Beagles and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Affectionate, easygoing, and lovable
- Good with kids and other pets
- Alert, curious, and busy
- Intelligent, friendly, and easily won over
- Brave and ready for adventure
- Outgoing, playful personality

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

- Has a tendency to bark or howl when excited or faced with the unfamiliar
- Needs regular exercise and diet regulation to avoid weight gain
- Single-minded and determined, which can make training difficult
- Prone to separation anxiety and associated barking and chewing behaviors
- Has a tendency to escape, wander, and roam
- Likes to dig

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! She is lively, highly excitable, and known for her selective hearing, but with early training and socialization she will make a perfect companion for families with or without children.

The Beagle originated in Great Britain over 200 years ago. They were bred to track hare or rabbits in packs while the hunter followed on horseback; a true hunter at heart that lives to follow a scent. The melodic baying of a Beagle on the trail is music to a hunter's ear, but can cause problems with your neighbors. Beagles have one of the best-developed



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## General Health Information for your Beagle

### *Dental Disease*

**Dental disease** is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. And unfortunately, your Beagle is more likely than other dogs to have problems with her teeth. It 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 will lose her teeth and be in danger of damaging her kidneys, liver, heart, and joints. In fact, your Beagle's life span may 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*

Beagles 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 the diseases we see in our area, her age, and other factors.

### *Obesity*

**Obesity** can be a significant health problem in Beagles. 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 Beagle'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 Beagle 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. This is convenient for

senses of smell and a high food drive, helpful when trying to train this willful breed. The Beagle has consistently been one of the top-ten most popular US dogs since it was first registered with the American Kennel Club in 1885. Her convenient size, adaptability, and happy, loving nature make her a wonderful family companion. The Beagle is a generally healthy breed with an average lifespan of 13-15 years.

## Your Beagle'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 Beagle. By knowing about health concerns specific to Beagles, 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 Beagles 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 Beagles. 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 Beagle 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.



you and easy for your friend. Routine blood testing prior to surgery also helps us to identify and take precautions for 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 Beagles

### Back Problems

**Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD)** is a common condition in Beagles. 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, 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 many cases involving paralysis, we'll 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.

### 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, Beagles 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 Beagles 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 Beagles. 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.
- **Distichiasis** is a condition caused by extra hairs that grow inside of the eyelid and rub on the surface of the eye. This is one of the most commonly inherited diseases in dogs,

and your Beagle is more likely than other dogs to develop this painful condition. If untreated, these abnormal hairs can cause corneal ulcers and chronic eye pain. Several treatment options are available, and the prognosis is good once the hairs have been permanently removed.

### Diabetes

**Diabetes mellitus** is a fairly common disease in dogs. Any breed can be affected, but Beagles have an above average incidence. Dogs with diabetes are unable to regulate the metabolism of sugars and require daily insulin injections. It is a serious condition and one that is important to diagnose and treat as early as possible. Symptoms include increased eating, drinking, and urination, along with weight loss. If he shows signs, we will conduct lab tests to determine if he has this condition and discuss treatment options with you. Treatment requires a serious commitment of time and resources. Well regulated diabetic dogs today have the same life expectancy as other canines.

### Bleeding Disorders

Your Beagle is prone to a bleeding disorder called hemophilia. We'll conduct diagnostic testing to assess his blood clotting time before we perform surgery. This is an important test, as we may not know your pet has this disorder until severe bleeding occurs during surgery or after a serious injury.

### Neurologic Problems

Several neurologic diseases can afflict Beagles. Symptoms of neurological problems can include seizures, imbalance, tremors, weakness, or excess sleeping. If you notice any of these symptoms, please seek immediate veterinary care.

- A genetically linked neurological condition that could occur in your Beagle 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.
- There are three types of **seizures** in dogs: reactive, secondary, and primary. Reactive seizures are caused by the brain's reaction to a metabolic problem like low blood sugar, organ failure, or a toxin. Secondary seizures are the result of a brain tumor, stroke, or trauma. If no other cause can be found, the disease is called primary, or idiopathic epilepsy. This problem is often an inherited condition, with Beagles commonly afflicted. If your friend is prone to seizures, they will usually begin between six months and three years of age. An initial diagnostic workup may help find the cause. Lifelong medication is usually necessary to help keep seizures under control, with periodic blood testing required to monitor side effects and effectiveness. If your dog has a seizure: Carefully prevent him from injuring himself, but don't try to control his mouth or tongue. It won't help him, and he may bite you accidentally! Note the length of the seizure, and call us or an emergency hospital.



## Beagle Pain Syndrome

Beagle Pain Syndrome is a form of meningitis caused by inflammation of the blood vessels, called [polyarteritis](#). It is thought to be an autoimmune disorder in which the immune system attacks the blood vessels that go to the brain. It affects Beagle puppies 5-10 months old and causes fever, depression, and severe neck pain. Symptoms tend to wax and wane over several weeks and are treated with steroids. Responsible breeders recommend not using affected individuals for breeding.

## Liver Disorder

Some Beagles can develop a liver disorder called [Copper Hepatopathy](#). This disease causes toxic levels of copper to build up in his liver, leading to its failure if not treated early. Affected dogs usually show symptoms of jaundice (yellow eyes, gums and skin) by about two to four years of age. He should have liver testing done starting early in life to screen for any abnormalities.

## Heart Disease

Beagles are prone to multiple types of heart disease, which can occur both early and later in life. We'll listen for heart murmurs and abnormal heart rhythms when we examine your pet. When indicated, we'll perform an annual heart health check, which may include X-rays, an ECG, or an echocardiogram, depending on your dog's risk factors. Early detection of heart disease often allows us to treat with medication that usually prolongs your pet's life for many years. The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the specific heart problems your pet may encounter. Veterinary dental care and weight control go a long way in preventing heart disease.

## Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's)

[Cushing's Disease](#) is a malfunction of the adrenal glands causing them to produce too much steroid hormone. This is a common problem in dogs, and your Beagle is more likely than other dogs to be affected. The condition usually develops slowly, and the early signs are easily missed. Symptoms include drinking and urinating more than normal, increased appetite and reduced activity level. Later, a potbelly, thin skin, and hair loss are characteristic. Treatment usually includes oral medications, and requires close coordination with us to ensure correct dosing.

## Cancer

Cancer is a leading cause of death in older dogs. Your Beagle will likely live longer than many other breeds and therefore is more prone to get cancer in his golden years. Many cancers are cured by surgically removing them, and some types are treatable with chemotherapy. Early detection is critical! We'll perform periodic diagnostic tests and look for lumps and bumps when we examine your pet. The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the specific cancers your pet may encounter.

## Hip Dysplasia

You've probably heard of [hip dysplasia](#), an inherited disease that causes the hip joints to form improperly and leads to arthritis: it is common in Beagles. 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 joints to identify the disease as early as possible. Surgery is sometimes considered in severe and life-limiting cases of hip dysplasia. Keep in mind that overweight dogs may develop arthritis years earlier than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering.

## Amyloidosis

[Amyloidosis](#) refers to a disorder where protein characteristics change causing them to deposit in unwanted places.

Unfortunately this condition occurs more often in Beagles. In humans, amyloid deposits in the brain cause Alzheimer's disease. In pets, they can cause kidney, liver, adrenal gland or pancreatic disease. In some breeds deposits of amyloid in the skin can cause a high fever and swollen joints. Symptoms can include poor appetite, increased urination and thirst, vomiting, diarrhea, and weight loss. Symptoms usually start in young adulthood. While there is no cure, symptomatic treatment of fever, pain and nausea can improve his quality of life.

## Allergies

In humans, an allergy to pollen, mold, or dust makes people sneeze and their eyes itch. In dogs, rather than sneeze, allergies make their skin itchy. We call this skin allergy "[atopy](#)", and Beagles often have it. Commonly, the feet, belly, folds of the skin, and ears are most 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. The good news is that there are many treatment options available for this condition.

## Bladder or Kidney Stones

There are a few different types of stones that can form in the kidney or in the bladder, and Beagles 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; they are 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!

## Taking Care of Your Beagle 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 Beagles. 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 Beagle 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.
- ✓ Beagles often have serious problems with their teeth, so you’ll need to brush them at least three times 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!
- ✓ She’s a 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.
- ✓ She has a strong chase instinct, so she needs to be leash walked and a fenced yard is a must.
- ✓ 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 Beagle 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
- ✓ Increased hunger and thirst, weight loss
- ✓ Bruises easily or bleeds a lot from a small wound
- ✓ Depression, poor appetite, yellowing of the eyes
- ✓ Coughing, exercise intolerance, rapid breathing at rest
- ✓ Drinks and urinates more, eats more, potbelly, poor haircoat
- ✓ Leg stiffness, reluctance to rise, sit, use stairs, run, jump, or “bunny hopping”



## 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 Beagle'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](http://www.embarkvet.com)

Your Beagle 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 Beagle Healthy		(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Beagle-Specific Problems We're Looking For
Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years		○	6–8 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Dental alignment, heart murmur, hernia Distichiasis Pulmonic stenosis and Mitral valve dysplasia Hemophilia
		○	10–12 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth and ears at home	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis Pulmonic stenosis and Mitral valve dysplasia Hemophilia
		○	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Schedule spay/neuter surgery Cancer screen	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis Pulmonic stenosis and Mitral valve dysplasia Hemophilia
		○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Spay/neuter surgery Discuss bloat, stomach tack, and microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis Pulmonic stenosis and Mitral valve dysplasia Hip dysplasia Hemophilia
		○	6 months through 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis and Glaucoma Pulmonic stenosis and Mitral valve dysplasia Allergies Amyloidosis Hip dysplasia Epilepsy and Beagle pain syndrome Hemophilia  All major diseases important in the breed with diagnostic plan

# Adult to Golden Years Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Beagle Healthy		(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Beagle-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 Distichiasis, Glaucoma, and Cataracts Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) and Mitral valve disease Allergies Urolithiasis Amyloidosis and Diabetes Hip dysplasia and Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) Epilepsy, Beagle pain syndrome, and Wobbler syndrome Hemophilia
	Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years	○	7 years through 10 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 Distichiasis, Glaucoma, and Cataracts Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) and Mitral valve disease Allergies Urolithiasis Amyloidosis, Diabetes, Copper Hepatopathy, and Cushing's disease Hip dysplasia and Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) Epilepsy and Wobbler syndrome Mast cell tumors and Transition Cell Carcinoma (TCC)
	Golden Years: 60+ in People Years	○	11 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 Distichiasis, Glaucoma, and Cataracts Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) and Mitral valve disease Allergies Urolithiasis Amyloidosis, Diabetes, Copper Hepatopathy, and Cushing's disease Hip dysplasia and Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) Epilepsy and Wobbler syndrome Mast cell tumors and Transition Cell Carcinoma (TCC)

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.