

Your **Dachshund**

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



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Your Dachshund

Dachshunds:

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

- Energetic and playful
- Small, but sturdy
- Vigilant watchdog with a ready bark
- Bold, steady, and fearless
- Adaptable to a wide variety of living conditions
- Devoted, loyal, and protective

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

- Exhibits signs of separation anxiety if left alone too much
- Needs early socialization to accept other pets and strangers
- Likes to dig
- Can be independent and strong-willed
- Can be snappy when nervous
- Needs frequent attention from her family

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! The Dachshund is a small dog with a big personality. She is a loving and loyal companion with a tendency to be stubborn.

The Dachshund was originally bred to hunt badgers in Germany during the 1600s – that takes a fearless personality! The characteristic body shape, long and low, was developed so that Dachshunds could fit into underground dens. Doxies come in two sizes: standard or miniature, and three coat varieties: smooth, wirehaired, and longhaired. Dachshunds are protective and territorial, but



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they thrive on close human companionship. The Dachshund is a generally healthy breed with an average lifespan of 12-15 years.

Your Dachshund'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 Dachshund. By knowing about health concerns specific to Dachshunds, 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 Dachshunds 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 Dachshunds. 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 Doxie 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.

General Health Information for your Dachshund

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. Unfortunately, your Dachshund 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 Dachshund'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

Dachshunds 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 Dachshunds. 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 Doxie'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 Dachshund 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

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 Dachshunds

Back Problems

Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) is a common condition in Dachshunds. 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 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 experience sudden paralysis—he may drag his back feet or be unable to get up or use his back legs. If you see these symptoms, don't wait! Call us or an emergency clinic immediately! In many cases involving paralysis, we'll recommend surgical removal of the ruptured discs (within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms for the best results). For less severe cases, rest and medication may resolve the problem. And as with so many other diseases, weight control helps reduce the risk of IVDD. You should also provide ramps or steps for your pet from puppyhood on to prevent your dog from stressing his back by jumping on and off of the furniture.

Knee Problems

Sometimes your Dachshund'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 Dachshund'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!

Hip Necrosis

Young Dachshunds may be prone to a painful degenerative hip condition called **Legg-Calve-Perthes disease**. The exact cause of this condition is still not completely understood, but it is

thought to be caused by a reduced blood supply to the hip, which causes the femoral head (the top of the thigh bone) to become brittle and fracture easily. Usually occurring between six and nine months of age, LCP causes pain and lameness in one or both rear legs, and often requires surgery

Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's)

Cushing's Disease is a malfunction of the adrenal glands that causes them to produce too much steroid hormone. This is a common problem in dogs, and your Dachshund 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 followed later by a potbelly, thin skin, and hair loss. Treatment usually includes oral medications and requires close coordination with us to ensure correct dosing.

Heart Disease

Heart failure is a leading cause of death among Dachshunds in their golden years. Most heart disease in dogs is caused by the weakening or slow deformity of heart valves such that they no longer close tightly; blood then leaks back around these weakened valves, straining the heart. Pets with heart valve disease (sometimes called **mitral valve disease**) have a heart murmur. If your dog has a heart murmur or outward signs suggesting heart problems, we'll perform testing to determine the severity of the disease. The same tests will need to be repeated at least every year to monitor the condition. If heart valve disease is diagnosed early, we may be able to prescribe medications that could prolong your pet's life for many years. Veterinary dental care and fatty acid supplementation can also help prevent heart disease, and weight control can help diminish symptoms.

Liver Problems

Your Doxie is more likely than other dogs to have a liver disorder called **portosystemic shunt (PSS)**. Some of the blood supply that should go to the liver goes around it instead, depriving the liver of the blood flow it needs to grow and function properly. If your friend has PSS, his liver cannot remove toxins from his bloodstream effectively. To check for this problem, we'll conduct a liver function test in addition to a standard pre-anesthetic panel every time he undergoes anesthesia. If he develops symptoms such as stunted growth or seizures, we'll test his blood and possibly conduct an ultrasound scan of his liver. Surgery may be needed, but in some cases, we can treat with a special diet and medication.

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, Dachshunds 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 for concern.

- **Glaucoma**, an eye condition that affects Dachshunds 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 an 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 Dachshunds. 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.
- Dry eye, also known as **keratoconjunctivitis sicca** or KCS, is common in Dachshunds. KCS reduces the amount of fluid produced by the tear glands such that they are no longer able to keep the eyes moist. This results in sore, itchy eyes and infections. Symptoms of KCS include a dull, dry appearance or thick discharge from the eyes, squinting, and pawing at the eyes. KCS is a painful condition; please call us immediately if you notice any of these signs, and we'll conduct a tear test on your pet. If he has this disease, we'll prescribe ointment that you'll need to apply for the rest of your dog's life.

Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a fairly common disease in dogs. Any breed can be affected, but Doxies have an above average incidence. Dogs with diabetes are unable to regulate the metabolism of sugars in their bodies and require daily insulin injections. Diabetes 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

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 Dachshunds. 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.

Bladder or Kidney Stones

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

Juvenile Cellulitis

Juvenile cellulitis occurs more frequently in Dachshunds than in other breeds, and multiple puppies in a litter may be affected. Puppies with juvenile cellulitis will develop swelling and inflammation of the face and of the lymph nodes under the jaw, but the disease responds well to antibiotic and steroid therapy if treated right away.

Neurologic Problems

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

Epilepsy

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, and Dachshunds are commonly afflicted. If your friend is prone to seizures, episodes 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 efficacy. 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.

Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy is a sleep disorder sometimes seen in young Dachshunds in which the puppy has uncontrolled sleeping episodes. Affected pets may be in the midst of playing or eating when they suddenly fall asleep. This disorder is caused by a recessive gene for which a DNA test is available. Narcolepsy is not usually harmful to the pet, but affected dogs should not be allowed to operate motor vehicles.

Mange

Demodex is a microscopic mite that lives in the hair follicles of all dogs. Normally a dog's immune system keeps the mites in check, but some breeds, like your Dachshund, may develop an overabundance of these mites. In mild cases, pet owners may notice a few dry, irritated, hairless lesions. These often occur on the face or feet and may or may not be itchy. Secondary skin infections may also occur. Prompt veterinary care is important to keep the disease from getting out of hand. Many pets seem to outgrow the problem, while others require lifelong management.

Cancer

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

Taking Care of Your Dachshund 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 Dachshunds. 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 Doxie 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.
- ✓ Her grooming needs will vary based on her coat. Long haired Dachshunds will require trimming and all varieties require brushing. Your veterinarian can guide you further to your Dachshund's personal needs.
- ✓ Dachshunds 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. 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 can have a high prey drive, so she needs to be leashed walked and a sturdy fence is a must.
- ✓ She has short legs and a long back so be careful how you pick her up and don't let her jump down from furniture.
- ✓ 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 Dachshund 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
- ✓ Drinks and urinates more, eats more, potbelly, poor haircoat
- ✓ Slow or stunted growth; sometimes seizes after eating
- ✓ Increased hunger and thirst, weight loss
- ✓ Increasing hip pain at less than a year old
- ✓ Dry, scaly, sometimes itchy hairless patches on face or paws

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
- ✓ Coughing, especially at night or upon rising after sleeping; rapid breathing at rest
- ✓ General reluctance to run or play
- ✓ Any abnormal shaking, trembling, or excessive involuntary tremors

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 Health Genetic 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 Dachshund'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 <http://embarkvet.com>

Your Dachshund 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 Dachshund Healthy	Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years			
	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Dachshund-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	○	6–9 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Heart health check Skin and coat 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 Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Juvenile cellulitis Narcolepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	○	10–12 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Heart health check Skin and coat 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 Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Juvenile cellulitis and Demodicosis Narcolepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	○	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Heart health check Skin and coat exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss obedience and grooming	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Juvenile cellulitis and Demodicosis Narcolepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Discuss microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Juvenile cellulitis and Demodicosis Patellar luxation, Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Legg-Calve-Perthes Narcolepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	○	6 months to 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Heart health check 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 Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Demodicosis Patellar luxation, Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Legg-Calve-Perthes Narcolepsy and Epilepsy 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 Dachshund Healthy		(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Dachshund-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	Adult-Mature: 18 to 39 in People Years	○	1 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 Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss behavior and nutrition Schedule spay/neuter after 1 year	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Glaucoma and Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) Portosystemic shunt (PSS) and Mitral valvular disease Demodicosis Urolithiasis Cushing's disease and Diabetes Patellar luxation, Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) Narcolepsy and Epilepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years	○	10 years through 12 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 mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Glaucoma, Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS), and Cataracts Portosystemic shunt (PSS) and Mitral valvular disease Demodicosis Urolithiasis Cushing's disease and Diabetes Patellar luxation, Hip and elbow dysplasia, and Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) Narcolepsy and Epilepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	Golden Years: 60+ in People Years	○	13+ 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 Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Glaucoma, Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS), and Cataracts Portosystemic shunt (PSS) and Mitral valvular disease Demodicosis Urolithiasis Cushing's disease and Diabetes Patellar luxation, Hip and elbow dysplasia, and Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) Narcolepsy and Epilepsy Mast cell tumors, Anal sac adenocarcinoma, and Sebaceous gland tumors von Willebrand's disease (vWD)