

Your English Bulldog

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



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Your English Bulldog

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

- Affectionate, easygoing, and lovable
- Quiet—not much of a barker
- Good with kids and other pets
- An excellent guard dog, courageous and dependable
- Adaptable to a wide variety of living conditions
- Outgoing and friendly personality

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

- Can be gassy and drool a lot
- Makes a lot of snorting, snuffling, and wheezing noises, and she may snore
- Can become overweight easily if not exercised regularly
- Can be rambunctious and rowdy, especially as a puppy
- Sensitive, matures slowly
- Can be possessive of toys and food, tending to show dominance

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! She is an intelligent and dependable companion that forms close human bonds. With early socialization and consistent leadership, she is a social and cheerful addition to any family.

The modern Bulldog, with a heavy, thickset, low body and massive head, originated in England after the elimination of bull baiting in 1835. The Old English Bulldog was crossed with the Pug to create a more docile and affectionate family pet. The Bulldog retained its protective and fearless nature, but aggressive and ferocious tendencies were removed from



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General Health Information for your Bulldog

Dental Disease

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

Bulldogs 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 Bulldogs. 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 English Bulldog'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 Bulldog 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 you and easy for your friend. Routine blood testing prior to surgery

the breed. Bulldogs serve as popular mascots, representing strength in the face of adversity for the US Marine Corps and more than 30 US Universities. Bulldogs are famous for their gentle nature, fondness of children, and clownish antics. The Bulldog is a generally healthy breed with an average lifespan of 10-12 years.

Your Bulldog'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 Bulldog. By knowing about health concerns specific to Bulldogs, 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 Bulldogs 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 Bulldogs. 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 English Bulldog 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.

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 Bulldogs

Bone and Joint Problems

A number of different musculoskeletal problems have been reported in Bulldogs. While it may seem overwhelming, each condition can be diagnosed and treated to prevent undue pain and suffering. With diligent observation at home and knowledge about the diseases that may affect your friend's bones, joints, or muscles you will be able to take great care of him throughout his life.

- 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 Bulldog'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 sometimes a good option in severe and life-limiting cases. Keep in mind that overweight dogs may develop arthritis years earlier than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering!
- When Bulldog puppies are allowed to grow too quickly, the cartilage in their joints may not attach to the bone properly. This problem is known as **osteochondritis dissecans** or OCD. If this occurs, surgery may be required to fix the problem. It's best to stick to our recommended growth rate of no more than four pounds per week. Don't overfeed him and don't supplement with additional calcium. Feed a large-breed puppy diet rather than an adult or a regular puppy diet. Weigh your puppy every three to four weeks.
- The cranial cruciate ligament is one of the four tough bands of tissue that hold each knee together. A torn cranial cruciate ligament is a common injury in active dogs, which includes your English Bulldog. Usually surgical correction is done to stabilize the knee and help prevent crippling arthritis. Physical therapy and multimodal pain management are necessary to get the best outcome. Keeping him at the right weight, feeding a high-quality diet, and avoiding too much twisting of the knees (like playing Frisbee) are key in avoiding this painful injury.

Spinal Deformities

Bulldogs 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 he is young to ensure that we identify problems early because symptoms can worsen with age, weight, and sometimes activity. During his life, if he develops symptoms of any back problems, we'll rule out any other causes, such as a slipped spinal disc or arthritis and may

prescribe medication, acupuncture, or rehabilitation.

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, Bulldogs 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.

- **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 Bulldog 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.
- **Entropion** is a condition where the eyelid rolls inward, causing the eyelashes to rub against the cornea (surface of the eyeball). This is an extremely irritating and painful condition that can ultimately lead to blindness. It can happen in any dog breed; however, your Bulldog is especially at risk for this heritable disorder. Surgical correction is usually successful if performed early.
- Dry eye, also known as **keratoconjunctivitis sicca** or KCS, is common in Bulldogs. The tear glands no longer produce enough tears to keep the eye moist, which results in sore, itchy eyes and infections. Ouch! Symptoms include a thick discharge, squinting, pawing at the eye, or a dull, dry appearance of the eye. This is a painful condition; please call us immediately if you notice any of these signs. We'll conduct a tear test when we examine him. If he has this disease, we'll prescribe ointment that you'll need to apply for the rest of your dog's life.
- 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 Bulldogs. If this happens to him, we may treat it with ointment first, but surgery is often the best option.

Bladder or Kidney Stones

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

Respiratory Distress Syndrome

This disease, also known as **brachycephalic syndrome**, affects dogs with a short nose, like your Bulldog. He has the same amount of tissue in his nose and throat as the longer-nosed dogs, but there's no place for it to go. As a consequence, the soft palate (the soft part at the back of the roof of the mouth), is too long and hangs down into the airway. The nostrils are often



encounter.

Multiple Skin Problems

Your English Bulldog is susceptible to different kinds of skin infections and diseases. One of them is caused by yeast (*Malassezia dermatitis*). When it infects the ears, it causes itching, redness, and an accumulation of brown waxy discharge. On the skin, it leads to greasy, hairless areas, especially on the neck and throat, with a characteristic odor. Another common skin disease called seborrhea can cause dry, flaky skin or greasy, oily skin. These diseases make your pet itchy and uncomfortable. Bathing with special shampoos and rinses may be helpful, and we'll treat any underlying problems such as allergies. The earlier you call to have his skin problems checked, the less likely it is that you will end up caring for an itchy, bald, smelly dog. The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the specific skin your pet may encounter.

Mange

Demodex is a microscopic mite that lives in the hair follicles of dogs. All dogs have them. Normally a dog's immune system keeps the mites in check, but some breeds, like your Bulldog, 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 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.

Laryngeal Paralysis

Older Bulldogs may develop [this disease](#), in which the vocal cords become paralyzed and hang down into the airway. Watch for noisy breathing, especially when exercising or in hot, humid weather. In severe cases a pet can collapse and have difficulty breathing. Mild cases can be managed with changes at home and possibly medication. Bring him in right away if you notice signs because you don't want this problem to become a surgical emergency!

Cancer

Cancer is a leading cause of death in older dogs. Your English Bulldog 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.

Dental Abnormalities

Teeth abnormalities are often genetically induced and are relatively common in dogs, especially in purebred dogs like your Bulldog. An overbite or underbite is called a malocclusion, or a bad bite. Oligodontia is a condition where only a few teeth are present. Misaligned teeth can also occur and cause lots of problems, but can usually be corrected with braces or extractions. (Yes, dogs can get braces!) We want to keep your buddy's teeth healthy so we will be watching his

too small, and sometimes the trachea, or windpipe, is narrow and undersized. All of these things lead to a narrow and obstructed airway. Many of these dogs can barely breathe! Watch for exercise intolerance, loud breathing, coughing, bluish gums, or fainting. With his short nose, he is also more likely to develop other problems, such as flatulence from excessive air intake, pneumonia from aspirating food, or heat stroke. In severe cases, surgical correction may be recommended.

Bleeding Disorders

There are several types of inherited bleeding disorders which 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 Bulldogs. We'll conduct diagnostic testing for blood clotting time or a specific DNA blood test for Von Willebrand's disease or other similar disorders to check for this problem before we perform surgery.

Reproductive Difficulties

Breeds with a large head and small pelvis are more prone to difficulties during the birthing process. Her pelvis is just too small to pass puppies and a C-section is often required for her health and that of her puppies. If you are interested in breeding your English Bulldog, speak with us first. We can help you make an informed decision based on body conformation of both sire and dam.

Heart Disease

Bulldogs 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. Veterinary dental care and weight control go a long way in preventing heart disease. The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the specific heart conditions your pet may

developing teeth closely. The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the specific oral problems your pet may encounter.

Taking Care of Your Bulldog 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 Bulldogs. 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 English Bulldog 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.
- ✓ Bulldogs 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!
- ✓ Her deep wrinkles need to be cleaned and dried often to prevent infections.
- ✓ As an adult she can have a tendency to be lazy, so you must ensure she receives adequate exercise by providing a daily walk.
- ✓ She is sensitive to temperature extremes; avoid any prolonged exposure and be very alert to the signs of heat stress.
- ✓ 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 Bulldog 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
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Loud breathing, tires easily at exercise
- ✓ Coughing, exercise intolerance, rapid breathing at rest
- ✓ Louder than normal panting, especially when hot or after exercise
- ✓ 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 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 English Bulldog'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 Bulldog 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 English Bulldog Healthy

Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years

(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Bulldog-Specific Problems We're Looking For
○	6–9 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam 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, Entropion, and Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Brachycephalic syndrome, Cleft palate, Supernumerary teeth, and Wry mouth Pulmonic stenosis, Ventricular septal defect, and Subaortic stenosis Lymphedema and Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo Hemivertebra von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
○	10–13 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth and ears at home	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis, Entropion, and Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Brachycephalic syndrome, Cleft palate, Supernumerary teeth, and Wry mouth Pulmonic stenosis, Ventricular septal defect, and Subaortic stenosis Lymphedema and Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo Hemivertebra von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
○	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss obedience and grooming	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis, Entropion, and Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Brachycephalic syndrome, Cleft palate, Supernumerary teeth, Wry mouth, and Laryngeal paralysis Pulmonic stenosis, Ventricular septal defect, and Subaortic stenosis Lymphedema, Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo, and Demodicosis Hemivertebra and Elbow dysplasia von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Discuss microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis, Entropion, and Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Brachycephalic syndrome, Cleft palate, Supernumerary teeth, Wry mouth, and Laryngeal paralysis Pulmonic stenosis, Ventricular septal defect, and Subaortic stenosis Lymphedema, Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo, and Demodicosis Hemivertebra, Elbow dysplasia, Hip dysplasia, and Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
○	6 months to 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis, Entropion, and Prolapsed gland of the eyelid (Cherry eye) Brachycephalic syndrome, Cleft palate, Supernumerary teeth, Wry mouth, and Laryngeal paralysis Pulmonic stenosis, Ventricular septal defect, and Subaortic stenosis Lymphedema, Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo, and Demodicosis Hemivertebra, Elbow dysplasia, Hip dysplasia, and Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) 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 English Bulldog		(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Bulldog-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	Adult-Mature: 18 to 39 in People Years	○	1 years through 8 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss behavior and nutrition Schedule spay/neuter after 1 year	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) Brachycephalic syndrome and Laryngeal paralysis Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo and Seasonal flank alopecia Urolithiasis Elbow dysplasia, Hip dysplasia, and Cranial cruciate tear von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years	○	9 years through 10 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) Brachycephalic syndrome and Laryngeal paralysis Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo and Seasonal flank alopecia Urolithiasis Elbow dysplasia, Hip dysplasia, and Cranial cruciate tear Lymphoma and Mast cell tumor
	Golden Years: 60+ in People Years	○	10+ years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) Brachycephalic syndrome and Laryngeal paralysis Skin fold pyoderma/Intertrigo and Seasonal flank alopecia Urolithiasis Elbow dysplasia, Hip dysplasia, and Cranial cruciate tear Lymphoma and Mast cell tumor

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.