

Your Wire Fox Terrier

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



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Your Wire Fox Terrier

Wire Fox Terriers: 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 Wire Fox Terriers and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Alert, curious, and busy
- Energetic and playful
- Excellent watchdog
- Brave and ready for adventure
- Devoted, loyal, and protective
- Quirky, entertaining personality

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

- Needs a lot of activity and mental stimulation to avoid boredom vices
- Exhibits signs of separation anxiety if left alone too much
- Can be independent and strong-willed
- Has a tendency to escape, wander, and roam
- Likes to dig
- Can be wary of and bark at strangers if not socialized properly

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! She is enthusiastic, playful, and feisty. The Wire Fox Terrier is a lovable companion and family dog.

The Wire Fox Terrier originated in Britain during the 17th century. They were first bred to control mice and rats on farms and to hunt foxes by driving them from their underground dens. Wire Fox Terriers are fearless and courageous hunting dogs. Cheerful and scrappy, they are also highly trainable—Wire Foxes are skilled performers who love to learn new tricks! They enjoy and thrive on



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human attention but can be aggressive with other dogs. The Wire Fox Terrier is a generally healthy breed with an average lifespan of 13-14 years.

Your Wire Fox Terrier'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 Fox Terrier. By knowing about health concerns specific to Wire Fox Terriers, 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 Wire Fox Terriers 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 Wire Fox Terriers. 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 Wire Fox Terrier 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 Wire Fox Terrier

Dental Disease

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

Wire Fox Terriers 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 Wire Fox Terriers. 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 Wire Fox Terrier'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 Fox Terrier 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 Wire Fox Terriers

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, Wire Fox Terriers 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 Wirehaired Fox Terriers 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 Fox Terriers. 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.
- **Primary lens luxation (PLL)** is an inherited disease, common in Foxies, that causes the tiny fibers that hold the lens suspended within the eye to degrade and break. When these fibers break, the lens drops out of place. If the lens falls forward, it can block normal circulation in the eye and cause secondary glaucoma. Surgery to remove the loose lens may be needed to relieve your pet's pain.

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 Fox Terriers 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.

Knee Problems

Sometimes your Fox Terrier'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 Fox Terrier'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!

- Young Wire Fox Terriers 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.

Heart Disease

Heart failure is a leading cause of death among Wire Fox Terriers 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.

- Some Wire Fox Terriers may inherit a heart condition known as **pulmonic stenosis**. This disease causes a partial obstruction in the blood flow between the heart and ~~lungs~~ **lungs**, which means the heart must work extra hard to pump enough blood through the obstruction to the lungs. If the condition is severe, your dog may faint or seem to run ~~out of~~ **out of** energy during exercise. He may also have difficulty breathing, cough frequently, or have stunted growth. We'll test for this disease if your pet has any of these symptoms and discuss treatment options with you if the condition is indicated. Surgery is an option when symptoms are severe.



Megaesophagus

The esophagus carries food from the mouth to the stomach through downward contractions. If the esophagus isn't contracting properly, food may remain in the esophagus, stretching it to "mega" size. If your Fox Terrier is affected, he may throw up tube-shaped portions of undigested food. Special feeding postures, dietary modifications, and medications may be needed to manage this problem. Unfortunately, dogs with megaesophagus commonly inhale bits of food while eating and can develop severe pneumonia. If you notice any unusual eating behaviors or vomiting after eating, be sure to let us know. A quick, painless x-ray can help us determine if your pet has this condition.

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 Wirehaired Fox Terriers 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.

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 Wire Fox Terriers. 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.

Degenerative Myelopathy

[Degenerative myelopathy](#) is a neurologic condition, similar to ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease in people, that causes weakness and poor nerve function in the hind legs. It affects Fox Terriers more frequently than other breeds. If your dog has this disease, he will become increasingly weak and disabled in the hind legs, eventually suffering from paralysis in his hindquarters, which also leads to incontinence. Rehabilitation, exercise, acupuncture, and dietary supplements can be helpful, but there is no cure for degenerative myelopathy. A genetic test is available to determine whether your dog is at risk for this heritable disease.

Neurological Disease

A genetically linked neurological condition, known as [wobbler disease](#) or wobbler syndrome, causes a wobbly, drunken gait in affected pets. Wobbler disease is the result of a narrowing of the vertebrae in the neck that pinches the spinal cord and associated nerves. When pinched, the nerves do not send signals to the brain as they should causing the pet to be unable to feel his feet. The first signs you will often notice with wobbler disease are unstable hind legs, stumbling, and sometimes falling. Treatment options include medications, neck braces, rehabilitation exercise programs, and surgery.

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 Fox Terrier, 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.

Dental Abnormalities

Teeth abnormalities are often genetically induced and are relatively common in dogs, especially in purebred dogs like your Fox Terrier. 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 developing teeth closely. The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the specific dental problems your pet may encounter.

Cancer

[Cancer](#) is a leading cause of death in older dogs. Your Wire Fox Terrier 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. 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.

Deafness

Heritable deafness has been noted in some Wire Fox Terrier bloodlines, so if his ears are healthy and he's still ignoring you, a more thorough hearing workup may be needed, including brainwave analysis, if indicated. If you suspect he may not be hearing as well as he should, schedule an appointment with us right away as the problem could also be caused by a severe ear infection.

Taking Care of Your Wire Fox Terrier 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 Fox Terriers. 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 Wire Fox Terrier 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.
- ✓ Brush her coat as needed, at least weekly. Twice a year stripping is also required for maintaining her wiry double coat.
- ✓ Wirehaired Fox Terriers 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 has a strong chase instinct, so she needs to be leash walked and a fenced yard is a must.
- ✓ She is highly intelligent and can be taught to perform a variety of tricks to keep her mentally stimulated.
- ✓ 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 Wire Fox Terrier 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
- ✓ Easily startled, no reaction to unseen sounds

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
- ✓ General reluctance to run or play
- ✓ Coughing, especially at night or upon rising after sleeping; rapid breathing at rest



- ✓ Tubular vomit, undigested food
- ✓ Any abnormal shaking, trembling, or excessive involuntary tremors
- ✓ Dragging the hind toes or hind limb weakness
- ✓ Leg stiffness; reluctance to rise, sit, use stairs, run, or jump; “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 Fox Terrier'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 Wire Fox Terrier 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 Wire Fox Terrier Healthy	Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years			
	(√)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Wire Fox Terrier-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	○	6–9 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Oral health assessment Heart health check Internal organ health evaluation 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 Brachygnathism, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Pulmonic stenosis Megacosophagus Deafness von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	○	10–13 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation 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 Brachygnathism, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Pulmonic stenosis Demodicosis Megacosophagus Deafness von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	○	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss obedience and grooming	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Brachygnathism, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Pulmonic stenosis Demodicosis Megacosophagus von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Discuss microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Brachygnathism, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Pulmonic stenosis Demodicosis Megacosophagus Legg-Calve-Perthes disease von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	○	6 months through 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Brachygnathism, Oligodontia, and Prognathism Pulmonic stenosis Demodicosis and Allergies Megacosophagus Legg-Calve-Perthes disease, Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Patellar luxation 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 Wire Fox Terrier Healthy		Wire Fox Terrier-Specific Problems We're Looking For		
Adult-Mature: 18 to 39 in People Years	 	Age 1 years through 9 years	Services We'll Provide Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam 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, Cataracts, and Primary lens luxation Mitral valve disease Allergies Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Patellar luxation Epilepsy and Wobbler disease 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 Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Glaucoma, Cataracts, and Primary lens luxation Mitral valve disease Allergies Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Patellar luxation Epilepsy, Wobbler disease, and Degenerative myelopathy Cutaneous hemangioma, Fibroma, Perianal gland adenomas, and Transitional cell carcinoma
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 Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Glaucoma, Cataracts, and Primary lens luxation Mitral valve disease Allergies Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Patellar luxation Epilepsy, Wobbler disease, and Degenerative myelopathy Cutaneous hemangioma, Fibroma, Perianal gland adenomas, and Transitional cell carcinoma

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.