

# Your **Miniature Schnauzer**

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



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Your Miniature Schnauzer

## **Miniature Schnauzers: 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 Mini Schnauzers and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Highly intelligent, playful, and energetic
- Vigilant watchdog with a ready bark
- Hypoallergenic coat that sheds very little
- Friendly and eager to please
- Docile and devoted
- Small, but sturdy

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

- Can be snappy when nervous
- Standoffish toward strangers
- Does not tolerate harsh reprimands or negative-reinforcement training
- Easily bored and will find her own fun
- Likely to attack other small animals, including cats
- Likes to dig

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! She is highly spirited, active, and affectionate. With confident, patient leadership, Schnauzers make for fun-loving and attentive family members.

The Miniature Schnauzer originated in Germany during the 19th century as a small farm dog able to rid her family's property of vermin. Mini Schnauzers are clever and comedic, but can be mischievous. They are highly social and thrive on close and frequent interaction with their families. The Mini Schnauzer is spunky and playful, but can also be reliable, loyal, and sensitive. The breed is highly trainable and does well in both country and city environments. With a natural ability to learn and a constant desire to chase, Minis



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## General Health Information for your Miniature Schnauzer

### *Dental Disease*

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

Miniature Schnauzers 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 Miniature Schnauzers. 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 Mini Schnauzer'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 Mini Schnauzer 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

are well suited for dog sports such as agility, earth dog trials, and flyball. The Miniature Schnauzer is a generally healthy breed with an average lifespan of 14 years.

## Your Miniature Schnauzer'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 Mini Schnauzer. By knowing about health concerns specific to Miniature Schnauzers, 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 Miniature Schnauzers 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 Miniature Schnauzers. 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 Mini Schnauzer 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.



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 Miniature Schnauzers

### *Diabetes*

**Diabetes mellitus** is a fairly common disease in dogs. Any breed can be affected, but Mini Schnauzers 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.

### *Liver Problems*

Your Mini Schnauzer 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.

### *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 Schnauzer 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.

### *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. Mini Schnauzers are particularly prone to some relatively rare diseases of the blood.

- **Hemolytic anemia** and **thrombocytopenia** occur when the

immune system goes haywire and starts attacking the pet's own red blood cells or platelets. If the immune system destroys red blood cells, your dog quickly becomes anemic, weak, and lethargic. His gums will look whitish or yellow instead of a normal bright pink color. If the immune system destroys platelets, his blood won't clot properly and he'll have bruises or abnormal bleeding. We'll perform diagnostic testing for blood clotting to check for these problems before we perform any surgeries. To slow or stop the immune system's destruction of cells, we'll prescribe steroids and other immune-suppressive drugs. Sometimes an emergency transfusion of red blood cells or platelets is needed.

- **Von Willebrand's disease** is a blood clotting disorder frequently found in Mini Schnauzers. 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.

### *Heart Disease*

Miniature Schnauzers 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 can prolong your pet's life for many years. Veterinary dental care and weight control also go a long way in preventing heart disease.

- Heart failure is a leading cause of death among Miniature Schnauzers 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.
- **Sick sinus syndrome** is a condition in which the sinus node, the part of the body's electrical system that signals the heart to beat, doesn't function properly. If your Schnauzer has this condition, he will have a very low heart rate and may faint with exercise. Mild cases can be treated with medication though if his symptoms are more severe, more advanced care may be needed. We'll perform an ECG test of the electrical activity of his heart each year and before he undergoes anesthesia to provide the best care for your friend.
- Mini Schnauzers are susceptible to a condition called





patent ductus arteriosus, or PDA, in which a small vessel that carries blood between two parts of the heart does not close as it should shortly after birth. This results in too much blood being carried to the lungs, causing fluid build-up and strain on the heart. Outward signs may be mild or severe, including coughing, fatigue during exercise, weight loss, shortness of breath, and weakness in the hind limbs. We listen for a specific type of heart murmur to diagnose this problem during your pet's examinations. If your pal has this condition, we may recommend surgery to close the problematic vessel.

### *Bladder or Kidney Stones*

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

### *Kidney Disease*

**Glomerulonephropathy** is an inherited disease that slowly damages your Mini Schnauzer's kidneys, causing them to fail, often at an early age. Because damaged kidneys leak protein, we may be able to diagnose this disease by annually testing your pet's urine for excessive protein. Early detection leads to a happier pet and an easier, more affordable treatment plan. We may also recommend a special diet as part of his therapy.

### *Digestive Disorders*

Several inherited conditions can cause recurring vomiting, diarrhea, or weight loss in your Mini Schnauzer. These conditions include pancreatic or intestinal disease, food sensitivities, and food allergies. Some of these problems may begin very early in life. To help prevent these conditions, feed only a high-quality pet food (we can help you choose the right diet) and, most importantly, avoid snacks and table food. Treats that are high in fat, sodium, or artificial ingredients (like people food) are particularly bad for your buddy's digestion.

- 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 Schnauzer 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.

- Some dogs, like your Mini Schnauzer, are prone to developing pancreatitis, or inflammation of the pancreas. Because the pancreas produces insulin as well as digestive enzymes, symptoms of pancreatitis include vomiting, diarrhea, belly pain, fever, lethargy, and dehydration. This is a very serious disease—pancreatitis can be fatal, or it can lead to long term health problems like diabetes. It's also quite painful! Most cases require hospitalization for intensive care, pain management, and fluid support. Please call us or an emergency clinic if your pet develops these symptoms.
- Most commonly seen in small and toy breeds like your Mini Schnauzer, **hemorrhagic gastroenteritis**, or HGE, is a serious and sometimes fatal disease in dogs that is characterized by bloody diarrhea, vomiting, and severe dehydration. Extensive treatment may be necessary for dogs suffering from hemorrhagic gastroenteritis, and some dogs may not survive the disease, particularly if they are not promptly treated. There are many causes of gastrointestinal disease in dogs, but any dog with these symptoms should be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

### *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 Miniature Schnauzers 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.

### *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 Mini Schnauzers 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.

### *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, Miniature Schnauzers 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. The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the specific eye disorders your pet may encounter.

## **Taking Care of Your Miniature Schnauzer 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 Mini Schnauzers. 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 Mini Schnauzer 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 professional grooming will also help maintain her wiry double coat.
- ✓ Miniature Schnauzers 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 well suited to apartment life as long as she is given daily walks and frequent play sessions.

- ✓ 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 Miniature Schnauzer 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
- ✓ Increased hunger and thirst, weight loss
- ✓ Slow or stunted growth; sometimes seizures after eating
- ✓ Drinks and urinates more, eats more; potbelly, poor haircoat
- ✓ On-going vomiting, weight loss, and/or diarrhea

### 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
- ✓ Gums that are a color other than bright pink
- ✓ Coughing, exercise intolerance, rapid breathing at rest
- ✓ 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 Miniature Schnauzer'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 Mini Schnauzer 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 Miniature Schnauzer Healthy	Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Schnauzer-Specific Problems We're Looking For
		○	6–9 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination  Eye disease screen Heart health check  Internal organ health evaluation Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Dental alignment, heart murmur, hernia Cataracts Portosystemic shunt (PSS) and Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) Megacosophagus von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
		○	10–13 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check  Internal organ health evaluation Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth and ears at home	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts Portosystemic shunt (PSS) and Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) Megacosophagus von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
		○	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check  Internal organ health evaluation Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss obedience and grooming	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts Portosystemic shunt (PSS) and Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) Megacosophagus von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
		○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check  Internal organ health evaluation Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Discuss microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts Portosystemic shunt (PSS) and Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) Megacosophagus and Kidney disease/Renal failure von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
		○	6 months to 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check  Internal organ health evaluation Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts Portosystemic shunt (PSS) and Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) Kidney disease/Renal failure 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 Miniature Schnauzer Healthy	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Schnauzer-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	○	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 Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation  Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss behavior and nutrition Schedule spay/neuter after 1 year	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Glaucoma, and Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) Portosystemic shunt (PSS), Mitral valve disease, and Sick sinus syndrome Allergies Kidney disease/Renal failure, Urolithiasis, Pancreatitis, and Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis (HGE) Diabetes and Cushing's disease Epilepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD) and Immune-mediated hemolytic anemia and immune-mediated thrombocytopenia (IMHA/ITP)
	○	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 Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation  Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Glaucoma, and Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) Portosystemic shunt (PSS), Mitral valve disease, and Sick sinus syndrome Allergies Urolithiasis, Pancreatitis, and Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis (HGE) Diabetes and Cushing's disease Epilepsy Immune-mediated hemolytic anemia and immune-mediated thrombocytopenia (IMHA/ITP)
	○	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 Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation  Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Glaucoma, and Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) Portosystemic shunt (PSS), Mitral valve disease, and Sick sinus syndrome Allergies Urolithiasis, Pancreatitis, and Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis (HGE) Diabetes and Cushing's disease Epilepsy Immune-mediated hemolytic anemia and immune-mediated thrombocytopenia (IMHA/ITP)

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.