

Your Rottweiler

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Rottweilers:

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

- Well suited as a companion, family dog, or working dog
- Confident, steady, and fearless
- Even temper and gentle disposition
- Large, strong, and athletic, with lots of stamina in cooler climates
- Protective of owners; excellent guard dog
- Intelligent and easy to train

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

- Must be properly socialized as a puppy to avoid aggression as an adult
- Needs regular exercise and diet regulation to avoid weight gain
- Easily bored or distracted if not given something to do
- Can be strong-willed
- Sensitive, matures slowly
- Territorial with larger dogs, especially of the same sex

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! Rottweilers are proud workers and noble companions. She is happiest when she has a job to do and gets ample exercise.

It is believed that the Rottweiler was developed by Romans in Germany around 74 AD. Rotties were used to drive cattle by day and to guard the herd by night. They were bred to be large and strong and to help control and navigate large bulls. When herding cattle was made illegal, Rotties became nearly extinct! They became popular again later when used as draught dogs by butchers. In the early 1900s, a breed club



PET MEDICAL CENTER

501 E. FM 2410 • Harker Heights, Texas 76548
(254) 690-6769
www.pet-medcenter.com

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General Health Information for your Rottweiler

Dental Disease

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

Rottweilers 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 Rottweilers. 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 Rottie'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 Rott 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

was formed to preserve the breed. With proper socialization, Rottweilers make strong and loyal companions. The Rottweiler is a generally healthy breed with an average lifespan of 12 years.

Your Rottweiler'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 Rottie. By knowing about health concerns specific to Rottweilers, 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 Rottweilers 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 Rottweilers. 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 Rottie 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.

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 Rottweilers

Bloat

Gastric dilatation volvulus, also known as GDV or bloat, usually occurs in dogs with deep, narrow chests. This means your Rott is more at risk than other breeds. When a dog bloats, the stomach twists on itself and fills with gas. The twisting cuts off the blood supply to the stomach and sometimes to the spleen. Left untreated, the disease is quickly fatal, sometimes in as little as half an hour. Your dog may retch or heave (but little or nothing comes up), act restless, have an enlarged abdomen, or lie in a prayer position (front feet down, rear end up). Preventive surgery in which the stomach is tacked down or sutured in place so that it is unlikely to twist is an option. If you see symptoms, take your pet to an emergency hospital immediately!

Bone and Joint Problems

A number of different musculoskeletal problems have been reported in Rottweilers. 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.

- Many older dogs have arthritis, and bigger dogs tend to have more pain and disability than smaller ones. Rotties are particularly prone to developing arthritis, but various treatments are available. The earlier we begin treatment, the better the results. Good nutrition and proper exercise are also very important to help reduce bone and joint problems as your pet gets older. Don't let your pet become overweight, and save him a huge strain on his joints.
- The cranial cruciate ligament is one of four tough bands of tissue that hold each knee together. A torn cranial cruciate ligament is a common injury in active dogs, including your Rott. Usually, surgical correction can stabilize the knee and help prevent crippling arthritis. Physical therapy and multimodal pain management are necessary for the best outcomes. Keeping him at the right weight, feeding a high-quality diet, and avoiding too much twisting of the knees (like when playing Frisbee) are key in avoiding these painful injuries.
- When Rott puppies are allowed to grow too quickly, the cartilage in their joints may not attach to the bones properly. This problem is known as osteochondritis dissecans, or OCD. If this occurs, surgery may be required to fix the problem. Our recommended growth rate for Rottweiler puppies is no more than four pounds per week. To maintain this rate, don't overfeed him and don't supplement with additional calcium. Feed a large-breed

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Lymphoma

Lymphoma or lymphosarcoma is a type of cancer that afflicts Rottweilers more than other breeds. This disease makes the body form abnormal lymphocytes, which are a type of white blood cell. Because white blood cells can be found throughout the body, this cancer can show up almost anywhere. Lymphoma is a very treatable form of cancer with an excellent success rate in dogs receiving chemotherapy. Luckily, lymphoma is one of the few types of cancer that can often be found with a blood test, so we may recommend a complete blood count twice yearly. Watch for swollen glands (ask us, we'll show you where to look), weight loss, or labored breathing at home and be sure to call us if you notice any unusual symptoms.

Cataracts



Cataracts are a common cause of blindness in older Rotts. 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.

Eyelid Abnormality

Entropion is a condition in which the eyelid rolls inward, causing the eyelashes to rub against the cornea (the surface of the eyeball). This is an extremely irritating and painful condition that can ultimately lead to blindness. Entropion can occur in any dog breed, however, your Rott is especially at risk for this heritable disorder. Surgical correction is usually successful if performed early.

Hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's)

Addison's Disease is an endocrine system disorder that occurs when the adrenal glands fail to produce enough hormones to keep the body functioning normally. Left untreated, hypoadrenocorticism can be fatal. Symptoms often mimic many other diseases, but we can run a specialized blood test to check for this specific condition. Though this disease can occur in any type of dog, Rotties are more at risk. We'll be watching for clinical signs at every exam and will periodically check his electrolyte levels to screen for this problem.

Parvo

Parvo is an infection caused by a virus that can lead to deadly illness, especially in younger puppies. Vomiting, bloody diarrhea, fever, and severe dehydration are some of the symptoms of parvo. Older dogs don't usually become as ill as puppies, but may still develop bloody diarrhea and fever. Affected dogs can shed the virus in their stool for weeks even after recovering from the illness. Several breeds, including your Rottweiler, do not develop as strong an immunity as other breeds against parvovirus from vaccinations; instead vaccines tend to have a weaker and more latent response in Rotts. Your friend should get an extra vaccine booster for parvovirus about a month after the completion of his regular puppy vaccine series, and his parvovirus vaccine should also be boosted yearly.

Heart Disease

Subaortic stenosis, or SAS, is a heart defect in which a narrowing develops below the aortic valve. This defect causes the heart to become overworked as it tries to pump blood through the narrowed opening. This condition causes an irregular heart rhythm and can lead to sudden death. A characteristic heart murmur can sometimes be heard with a stethoscope. If your Rottweiler has a murmur, we may recommend further testing, including an echocardiogram to rule out other likely causes and to help guide treatment for his condition. Medications can sometimes help, but many puppies with SAS die suddenly before adulthood.

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 Rottweilers. We'll conduct diagnostic testing for blood clotting time or a specific DNA blood test for Von Willebrand's disease and other similar disorders to check for this problem before we perform surgery.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Inflammatory bowel disease, or IBD, is an immune system disorder common in Rotts in which the intestinal lining becomes overrun with immune system cells called lymphocytes and plasmacytes. The stomach and/or intestinal lining becomes thickened affecting his ability to absorb nutrients properly. Chronic vomiting or diarrhea is common, or symptoms may flare up suddenly and then improve again for a time. Stress, diet change, or intestinal parasites can make IBD worse. If your friend has diarrhea or digestive upsets that are not explained by more common reasons, diagnostic tests, which may include intestinal biopsy, will be needed. Lifelong medications and special diets are usually required to keep IBD under control.

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 Rotts 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.

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 Rott, 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.

Kidney Disease

Glomerulonephropathy is an inherited disease that slowly

damages your Rottweiler'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.

Taking Care of Your Rottweiler 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 Rotts. 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 Rottie 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.
- Rottweilers generally have good teeth, and you can keep them perfect by brushing them at least twice 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 be sensitive to warm temperatures; avoid any prolonged exposure and be very alert to the signs of heat stress.
- She should be leash walked and a sturdy fence is a must due to her large size.
- 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 Rottweiler 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
- Lumps or bumps – regardless of size
- Swollen lymph nodes or glands, unexplained weight loss

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
- Dry heaving or a large, tight, painful abdomen
- General reluctance to run or play
- Leg stiffness; reluctance to rise, sit, use stairs, or jump; "bunny hopping"
- General listlessness, droopy facial expression, vomiting, diarrhea
- Vomiting and bloody, watery diarrhea
- Coughing, fainting episodes, tiring easily

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 **K9Genetics™ Disease Screen** to screen for more than 150 genetic mutations that cause disease.

Each **K9Genetics™ Disease 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 Rottweiler'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://www.k9genetics.com>

Your Rott 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:

Pet Medical Center
254-690-6769

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Puppy to Adolescent Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Rottweiler Healthy <i>Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in</i>		Age	Services We'll Provide	Rottweiler-Specific Problems We're Looking For
			8-9 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
○	10-13 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Blood disorder evaluation Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth and ears at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Entropion Subaortic stenosis Demodicosis Kidney disease von Willebrand's disease (vWD) 	
○	14-16 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Schedule spay/neuter surgery Discuss obedience and grooming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Entropion Subaortic stenosis Demodicosis Kidney disease von Willebrand's disease (vWD) 	
○	4-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Spay/neuter surgery Discuss bloat, stomach tack, microchipping, and extra Parvo vaccine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Entropion Subaortic stenosis Demodicosis Kidney disease Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) and Hip dysplasia von Willebrand's disease (vWD) 	
○	6 months to 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Entropion Subaortic stenosis Demodicosis and Allergies Kidney disease and Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD), Hip dysplasia, and Elbow dysplasia 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 Rottweiler Healthy					Rottweiler-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide		
	<input type="radio"/>	2 years through 5 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss behavior and nutrition		Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts Allergies Kidney disease and Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) Addison's disease Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Cranial cruciate tear Wobbler disease von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
	<input type="radio"/>	6 years through 7 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being		Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts Allergies Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) Addison's disease Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, Cranial cruciate tear, and Arthritis Wobbler disease Osteosarcoma and Lymphoma
<input type="radio"/>	8 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being		Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts Allergies Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) Addison's disease Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, Cranial cruciate tear, and Arthritis Wobbler disease Osteosarcoma and Lymphoma	

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.