

Your Bichon Frise

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



PET MEDICAL CENTER

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Your Bichon Frise

Bichon Frises:

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

- Quirky, entertaining personality
- Alert, curious, and busy
- An excellent family dog that loves human companionship
- Always on the go, with a keen eye for adventure
- Lively, with a friendly personality
- Good with kids and other pets

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

- Difficult to housebreak
- Can be snappy when nervous
- Needs frequent attention from her family
- Exhibits signs of separation anxiety if left alone too much
- Coat requires regular brushing and grooming
- May have a tendency to bark excessively

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! The Bichon is an affectionate dog that is easy to live with and loves to perform tricks.

The Bichon Frise was transported from the Mediterranean by Spanish sailors during the 13th century. They were originally bred for human companionship and became favorite companions of French and Italian nobility. The Bichon excelled as trick-performing circus dogs. The Bichon is a small healthy dog with an average lifespan of 14-16 years. Some genetic conditions have been seen in the Bichon, like liver shunts and cataracts. Early detection is the key to a long and happy life, so be sure to schedule routine checkups.



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General Health Information for your Bichon Frise

Dental Disease

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

Bichon Frises 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 Bichon Frises. 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 Bichon'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 Bichon 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

Your Bichon Frise'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 Bichon. By knowing about health concerns specific to Bichon Frises, 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 Bichon Frises 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 Bichon Frises. 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 Bichon 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.

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 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 Bichon Frises

Heart Disease

Bichons 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.

- Bichons are susceptible to a condition called Patent Ductus Arteriosus, in which a small vessel that carries blood between two parts of the heart does not close shortly after birth as it should. This results in too much blood being carried to the lungs, fluid build-up, and strain on the heart. Outward signs may be mild or you may see coughing, fatigue during exercise, weight loss, shortness of breath, or weakness in the hind limbs. We listen for a specific type of heart murmur to diagnose this problem during his examinations. If your pal has this condition, we may recommend surgery to close the problematic vessel.
- Heart failure is a leading cause of death among Bichon Frises in their golden years. Most heart disease in dogs is caused by weakening of a valve. A heart valve slowly becomes deformed so that it no longer closes tightly. Blood then leaks back around this valve and strains 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 his life for many years. Veterinary dental care and fatty acid supplementation can help prevent heart disease and weight control can help diminish symptoms.
- Some breeds like your Bichon can be born with a variety of heart defects. Most of these affect the structure of the heart's dividing wall or the vessels. They can also cause problems with the electrical signals that control the heartbeat or with heart valve function. Because of the significant risk of heart disease, we'll pay special attention

to his heart during each examination. Special testing will be recommended if we hear a heart murmur or you notice any unusual symptoms such as tiring easily, coughing, a swollen belly, or fainting.

Liver Problems

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

Eye Problems

Not many things have as dramatic an impact on your dog's quality of life as the proper functioning of his eyes. Unfortunately, American Water Spaniels 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.

- Cataracts are a common cause of blindness in older Bichons. 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.
- Glaucoma, an eye condition that affects Bichon Frises 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 his 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!
- 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 Bichon is especially at risk for this heritable disorder. Surgical correction is usually successful if performed early.
- 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 Bichon 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.

Hemolytic Anemia and Thrombocytopenia

Bichons are particularly prone to some relatively rare diseases of the blood. They 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 the 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 Bichon Frises. 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.

Bladder or Kidney Stones

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

Allergies

In humans, an allergy to pollen, mold, or dust makes people sneeze and their eyes itch. In dogs, rather than sneeze, allergies make their skin itchy. We call this skin allergy "atopy", and Bichons often have it. Commonly, the feet, belly, folds of the skin, and ears are most 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. The good news is that there are many treatment options available for this condition.

Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a fairly common disease in dogs. Any breed can be affected, but Bichons have an above average incidence. Dogs with diabetes are unable to regulate the metabolism of sugars and require daily insulin injections. It is a serious condition and one that is important to diagnose and treat as early as possible. Symptoms include increased eating, drinking, and urination, along with weight loss. If he shows signs, we will conduct lab tests to determine if he has this condition and discuss treatment options with you. Treatment requires a serious commitment of time and resources. Well regulated diabetic dogs today have the same life expectancy as other canines.

Bleeding Tumor

Hemangiosarcoma is a type of bleeding tumor that affects Bichon Frises at greater than average incidence. These tumors commonly form in the spleen, but can form in other organs as well. Unbeknownst to a pet owner, the tumor breaks open and internal bleeding occurs. Some tumors can be volleyball-sized or larger before signs of sickness show. We often find clues that one of these tumors is present during senior wellness testing, so have his blood tested and an ultrasound performed at least yearly.

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, with Bichon Frises commonly afflicted. If your friend is prone to seizures, they 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 effectiveness. 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.

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 Bichon'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!

Hip Necrosis

Young Bichon Frises 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 a problem with blood supply to the hip, which causes the femoral head (the top of the thigh bone) to become brittle and easily fracture. Ouch! Usually occurring between six and nine months of age, it causes pain and lameness in one or both rear legs, and often requires surgery.

Knee Problems

Sometimes your Bichon's kneecap (patella) may slip out of place (called patellar luxation). You might notice that he runs along and suddenly picks up a back leg and skips or hops for a few strides. Then he kicks his leg out sideways to pop the kneecap back in place, and he's fine again. 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 popping out of place.

Spinal Cord Injuries

Bichon Frises are more likely than other breeds to have instability in the first two neck vertebrae (called the atlantal and the axial vertebrae). This can cause a sudden spinal-cord injury in the neck. If your dog is suddenly unable or unwilling to jump up or go up stairs, cries for no apparent reason, or tries to turn or lower his head when you pick him up, he is in pain. Call us immediately! We'll control the pain with medication, and sometimes surgery is recommended. As with so many other diseases, weight control helps to prevent it. With this breed, it's important to use ramps or steps from the time your dog is a puppy so that he doesn't spend a lifetime stressing his neck by jumping on and off of the furniture.

Taking Care of Your Bichon Frise 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 Bichons. 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 Bichon 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 a high maintenance double coat that doesn't shed much. She requires daily brushing and regular trimming to prevent mats.
- ✓ Bichon Frises 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 is well suited for apartment living; she will need a daily walk and regular inside play.
- ✓ 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 Bichon Frise 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

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
- ✓ Fatigue during exercise, coughing, or shortness of breath
- ✓ Slow or stunted growth; sometimes seizures after eating
- ✓ Gums that are a color other than bright pink
- ✓ Increased hunger and thirst, weight loss
- ✓ Pale gums, labored breathing, weakness, or sudden collapse
- ✓ Coughing, especially at night or upon rising after sleeping, rapid breathing at rest
- ✓ Any abnormal shaking, trembling, or excessive involuntary tremors
- ✓ General reluctance to run or play
- ✓ Tiring easily, coughing, a swollen belly or fainting/collapse
- ✓ Increasing hip pain at less than a year old
- ✓ Unwilling to jump, cries when moving head



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 Bichon 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

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 Bichon's medical care. With less than a few

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Puppy to Adolescent Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Bichon Frise Healthy

Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years

(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Bichon Frise-Specific Problems We're Looking For
○	6–9 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check 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 Entropion and Distichiasis Ventricular septal defect, Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), and Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Atlantoaxial instability von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
○	10–13 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check 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 Entropion and Distichiasis Ventricular septal defect, Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), and Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Atlantoaxial instability von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
○	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Schedule spay/neuter surgery Discuss obedience and grooming	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Entropion and Distichiasis Ventricular septal defect, Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), and Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Urolithiasis Diabetes Atlantoaxial instability von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
○	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Blood disorder evaluation Pre-surgical diagnostics Spay/neuter surgery Discuss microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Entropion and Distichiasis Ventricular septal defect, Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), and Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Urolithiasis Diabetes Atlantoaxial instability, Hip dysplasia, and Legg-Calve-Perthes disease von Willebrand's disease (vWD)
○	6 months through 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Entropion and Distichiasis Ventricular septal defect, Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), and Portosystemic shunt (PSS) Allergies Urolithiasis Diabetes Atlantoaxial instability, Hip dysplasia, Legg-Calve-Perthes disease, 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 Bichon Frise Healthy				
	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	Bichon Frise-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	○	2 years through 7 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss behavior and nutrition	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Distichiasis, Cataracts, and Glaucoma Mitral valve disease Allergies Urolithiasis Diabetes Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Patellar luxation Epilepsy von Willebrand's disease (vWD) and Immune-mediated hemolytic anemia and Immune-mediated thrombocytopenia (IMHA/ITP).
	○	8 years through 10 years	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Glaucoma Mitral valve disease Allergies Urolithiasis Diabetes Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Patellar luxation Epilepsy Hemangiosarcoma Immune-mediated hemolytic anemia and Immune-mediated thrombocytopenia (IMHA/ITP).
○	11 years and older	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Heart health check Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Blood disorder evaluation Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Glaucoma Mitral valve disease Allergies Urolithiasis Diabetes Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, and Patellar luxation Epilepsy Hemangiosarcoma 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.