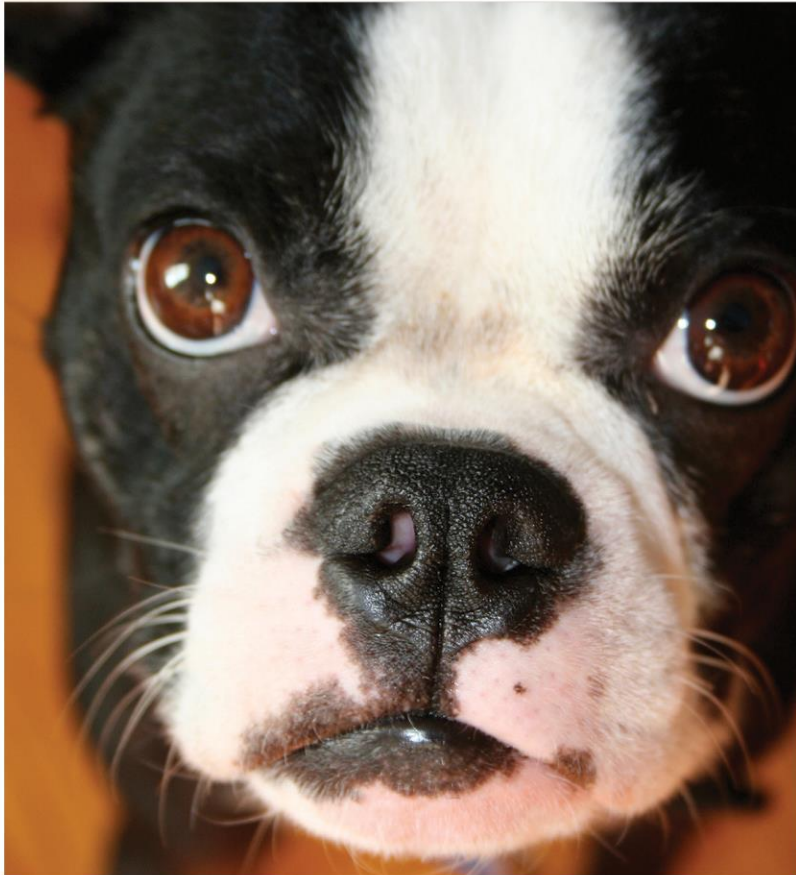


# Your Boston Terrier

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



## PET MEDICAL CENTER

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Your Boston Terrier

## Boston 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 Boston Bulls and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

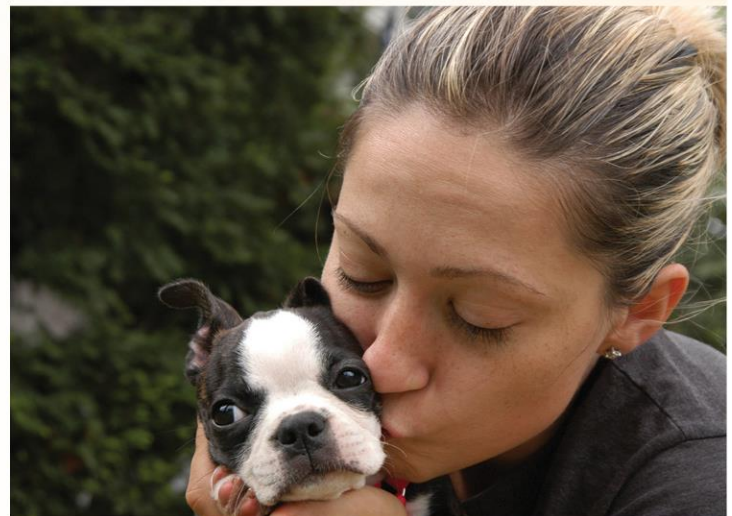
- Intelligent, friendly, and easily won over
- Loves to play games, especially fetch
- Good with kids and other pets
- Quiet—not much of a barker
- Small, but sturdy
- Protective of family: a good watch dog

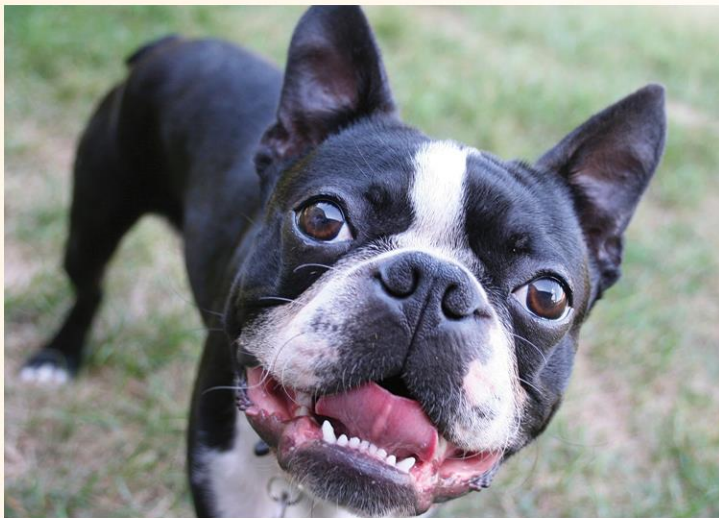
However, no dog is perfect! You may have also noticed these characteristics:

- Can be rambunctious and rowdy, especially as a puppy
- Can be gassy and may drool a lot
- Makes a lot of snorting, snuffling, and wheezing noises; may snore
- Can be possessive of toys and food; tends to show dominance
- Exhibits signs of separation anxiety if left alone too much
- Can be difficult to housetrain

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! She is a gentle, enthusiastic, and clownish family companion that is willing to be friends with anyone. She can adapt to most living situations provided she is given adequate exercise and early socialization.

The Boston Terrier originated in Massachusetts as a companion dog in 1870 from crosses between the white English Terrier and the English Bulldog. They were the first American breed recognized by the American Kennel Club. Also called the “American Gentleman”, Bostons are recognized by their short coats of black, brindle, or seal with





## General Health Information for your Boston Terrier

### *Dental Disease*

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

Boston 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 Boston 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 Boston Bull'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 Boston 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

white markings, their short tails, and erect ears. Boston Terriers are social butterflies; they love people, activity, and attention. The Boston Terrier can be stubborn at times, but is generally well-mannered and eager to please. The Boston is active and charming and wants nothing more than to be your best friend. The Boston Terrier is a generally healthy breed with an average lifespan of 13-14 years.

## Your Boston 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 Boston. By knowing about health concerns specific to Boston 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 Boston 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 Boston 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 Boston Bull 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.



Your Basset Hound

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with his eyes. A damaged cornea is painful and should be



Your Boston Terrier

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may develop at an earlier age than those of normal weight, causing undue pain and suffering.

### *Spinal Deformities*

Boston Terriers are more likely than other canines to be born with spinal deformities, a condition called hemivertebrae, which may lead to spinal cord damage, instability, or disability. We'll take X-rays when your pet is young to ensure that we identify problems early as symptoms can worsen with age, weight, and sometimes activity. During his life, if he develops back problems, we'll rule out any other causes, such as a slipped spinal disc or arthritis. If a deformity is diagnosed, we'll prescribe medication, acupuncture, or rehabilitation as needed.

### *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 Bostons 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 Boston, 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.

### *Hair Loss*

Both male and female Bostons are prone to genetically patterned baldness. As with balding men, the hair gradually falls out and does not grow back. This hair loss does not cause itchiness, though the skin can sometimes become dry. Affected areas usually include the throat, chest, belly, and the insides of the legs. We'll conduct tests to rule out treatable problems that present hair loss as a symptom, such as hypothyroidism, but if it is true pattern baldness, supplements or hormones may help although there is no cure.

### *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 Boston Bull 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.

### *Respiratory Distress Syndrome*

Respiratory distress syndrome, also known as brachycephalic syndrome, affects dogs with a short nose, like your Boston Terrier. Short-nosed dogs have the same amount of tissue in their noses and throats as longer-nosed dogs, but with less area to contain it. As a consequence, the soft palate at the back of the roof of the mouth is too long and may hang down into the airway. These dogs' nostrils are often too small, and sometimes the trachea, or windpipe, is narrow and undersized as well. All of these differences can lead to a narrow and obstructed airway such that many of these dogs can barely breathe! Watch for exercise intolerance, loud breathing, coughing, bluish gums, or fainting. With his short nose, your pet is also more likely to develop other problems, such as flatulence from excessive air intake, pneumonia from aspirating food, and heat stroke. In severe cases, surgical correction may be recommended to alleviate airway obstruction.

### *Heart Disease*

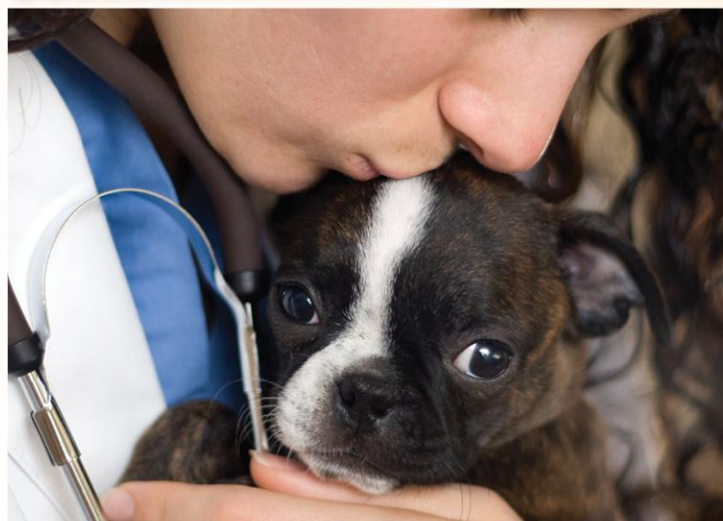
Heart failure is a leading cause of death among Boston Terriers in their golden years. Most heart disease in dogs is caused by the weakening or slow deformity of heart valves such that they no longer close tightly; blood then leaks back around these weakened valves, straining the heart. Pets with heart 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.

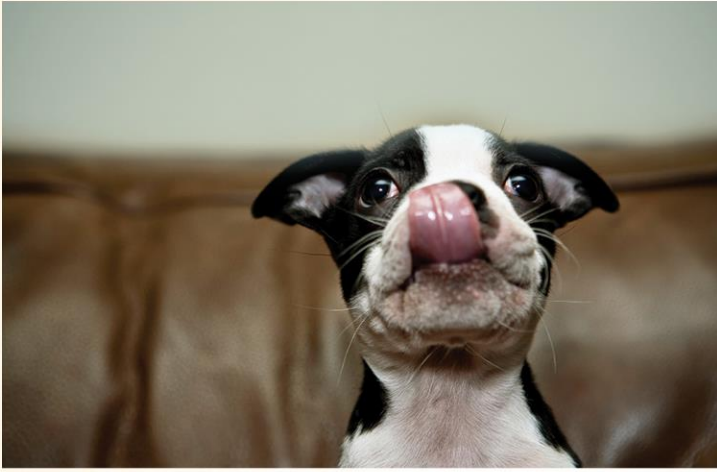
### *Cancer*

Cancer is a leading cause of death in older dogs. Your Boston Bull 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 lifetime health care chart included in this guide will list the specific cancers that we will be monitoring for.

### *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 Boston 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





### *Routine Care, Diet, and Exercise*

Build her routine care into your schedule to help your Boston Bull 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. Her facial and tail-base folds should be kept clean and dry to prevent infections.
- ✓ Boston Terriers 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.
- ✓ She is a sensitive dog and doesn't do well with harsh training methods or punishment; always end training on a positive note.
- ✓ She can be sensitive to temperature extremes; avoid prolonged weather exposure and be very alert to the signs of heat stress.
- ✓ Keep your dog's diet consistent and don't give her people food.
- ✓ Feed a high-quality diet appropriate for her age.
- ✓ Exercise your dog regularly, but don't overdo it at first.

### *What to Watch For*

Any abnormal symptom could be a sign of serious disease or it could just be a minor or temporary problem. The important thing is to be able to tell when to seek veterinary help and how urgently. Many diseases cause dogs to have a characteristic combination of symptoms, which together can be a clear signal that your Boston 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
- ✓ Drinks and urinates more, eats more; potbelly, poor haircoat
- ✓ 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

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.

### *Reproductive Difficulties*

Breeds with a large head and small pelvis are more prone to difficulties during the birthing process. The female's pelvis may be too small to pass the puppies' heads and a C-section is often required for her health and that of her puppies. If you are interested in breeding your Boston Bull, speak with us first. We can help you make an informed decision based on the body conformations of both sire and dam.

### *Deafness*

Heritable deafness has been noted in some Boston Bull 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 Boston 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 Bostons. 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.

- ✓ Cloudiness, redness, itching, or any other abnormality involving the eyes
- ✓ Loud breathing, tires easily at exercise
- ✓ Coughing, especially at night or upon rising after sleeping; 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 **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 Boston Bulldog's medical care. With less than a few drops of blood, we'll have a lifetime of information to assist us in providing the very best care of your friend's unique and individual needs throughout her life!

For more information about genetic testing, visit <http://www.k9genetics.com>

Your Boston 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 Boston Terrier Healthy	Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to 17 in People Years			Boston Terrier-Specific Problems We're Looking For
	(✓)	Age	Services We'll Provide	
	<input type="radio"/>	6–8 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss socialization and at-home puppy care	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Dental alignment, heart murmur, hernia Cataracts and Corneal ulcers Brachycephalic syndrome Mitral valvular disease Hemivertebrae Deafness
	<input type="radio"/>	10–13 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Parasite detection/prevention Vaccinations Discuss caring for your dog's teeth and ears at home	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Corneal ulcers Brachycephalic syndrome Mitral valvular disease Demodicosis Hemivertebrae Deafness
	<input type="radio"/>	14–16 weeks	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Parasite prevention Vaccinations Schedule spay/neuter surgery Discuss obedience and grooming	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Corneal ulcers Brachycephalic syndrome Mitral valvular disease Demodicosis Hemivertebrae and Legg-Calve-Pethes Deafness
	<input type="radio"/>	4–6 months	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Pre-surgical diagnostics Spay/neuter surgery Discuss microchipping	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Corneal ulcers Brachycephalic syndrome Mitral valvular disease Demodicosis Hemivertebrae and Legg-Calve-Pethes Deafness
<input type="radio"/>	6 months through 1 year	Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Oral health assessment Heart health check Skin and coat exam Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations	Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Corneal ulcers Brachycephalic syndrome Mitral valvular disease Demodicosis and Pattern alopecia Hemivertebrae, Legg-Calve-Pethes, Patellar luxation, and Hip dysplasia Deafness  All major diseases important in the breed with diagnostic plan	

## Adult to Golden Years Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Boston Terrier Healthy		Age	Services We'll Provide	Boston Terrier-Specific Problems We're Looking For
<i>Adult: 18 to 39 Years</i>	○	years through 9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head-to-tail physical examination</li> <li>Eye disease screen</li> <li>Oral health assessment</li> <li>Heart health check</li> <li>Skin and coat exam</li> <li>Endocrine screening</li> <li>Bone and joint exam</li> <li>Neurological assessment</li> <li>Parasite prevention</li> <li>Vaccinations</li> <li>Discuss behavior and nutrition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus</li> <li>Cataracts, Corneal ulcers, Glaucoma, and Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS)</li> <li>Brachycephalic syndrome</li> <li>Mitral valvular disease</li> <li>Demodicosis, Pattern alopecia, and Allergies</li> <li>Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's)</li> <li>Patellar luxation and Hip dysplasia</li> <li>Epilepsy</li> </ul>
<i>Senior: 40 to 59 in People Years</i>	○	9 years through 12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head-to-tail physical examination</li> <li>Eye disease screen</li> <li>Oral health assessment</li> <li>Heart health check</li> <li>Skin and coat exam</li> <li>Endocrine screening</li> <li>Bone and joint exam</li> <li>Neurological assessment</li> <li>Cancer screen</li> <li>Parasite prevention</li> <li>Vaccinations</li> <li>Discuss mental and physical well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus</li> <li>Cataracts, Corneal ulcers, Glaucoma, and Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS)</li> <li>Brachycephalic syndrome</li> <li>Mitral valvular disease</li> <li>Demodicosis, Pattern alopecia, and Allergies</li> <li>Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's)</li> <li>Patellar luxation and Hip dysplasia</li> <li>Epilepsy</li> <li>Mast cell tumors and Melanoma</li> </ul>
<i>Golden Years: 60+ in People Years</i>	○	13 years and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head-to-tail physical examination</li> <li>Eye disease screen</li> <li>Oral health assessment</li> <li>Heart health check</li> <li>Skin and coat exam</li> <li>Endocrine screening</li> <li>Bone and joint exam</li> <li>Neurological assessment</li> <li>Cancer screen</li> <li>Parasite prevention</li> <li>Vaccinations</li> <li>Discuss mental and physical well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus</li> <li>Cataracts, Corneal ulcers, Glaucoma, and Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS)</li> <li>Brachycephalic syndrome</li> <li>Mitral valvular disease</li> <li>Demodicosis, Pattern alopecia, and Allergies</li> <li>Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's)</li> <li>Patellar luxation and Hip dysplasia</li> <li>Epilepsy</li> <li>Mast cell tumors and Melanoma</li> </ul>

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.