

Your Doberman Pinscher

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



PET MEDICAL CENTER

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Doberman Pinschers: 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 Dobies and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Energetic and playful
- An affectionate companion and family dog
- Obedient and devoted
- Easily motivated and trainable
- Protective; an excellent guard dog
- Large, strong, and athletic

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

- Can be aggressive, fearful, or snappy if not socialized properly
- Requires vigorous, frequent exercise and space to run
- Prone to boredom and separation anxiety, with associated chewing and howling behaviors
- Can be rambunctious and rowdy, especially as a puppy
- Overprotective of family and territory if not socialized properly
- Sensitive, matures slowly

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's full of personality, and you love her for it! The Doberman is well known as a brave guardian and noble companion.

The Dobie is a relatively new breed compared to the ancestry of other canines. In the late 1800s, a German tax collector by the name of Louis Dobermann began to selectively breed a line of dogs to provide owner protection. As the story goes, Mr. Dobermann used his Dobies to protect him while traveling through bandit-filled territories. To this day, Dobies make excellent guard dogs and rarely need additional training in this area. While not usually outwardly aggressive, they do



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require proper socialization and training during puppyhood to teach them appropriate interaction behaviors. With encouragement, they make a wonderful addition to the family. Dobermans are intelligent, almost stealth-like, and have great stamina. Give her a job and lots of exercise and you'll have a great friend for life! The Doberman Pinscher is a generally healthy breed with an average lifespan of 13 years.

Your Doberman Pinscher'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 Doberman. By knowing about health concerns specific to Doberman Pinschers, 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 Doberman Pinschers 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 Doberman Pinschers. 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 Dobie looking and feeling her best. You will know what to watch for, and we will all feel better knowing that we're taking the best possible care of your pal.

General Health Information for your Doberman Pinscher

Dental Disease

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

Doberman Pinschers 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 Doberman Pinschers. 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 Dobie'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 Doberman 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



anemic, weak, and lethargic. His gums will look whitish or



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.

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, Doberman Pinschers 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.

Kidney Disease

Glomerulonephropathy is an inherited disease that slowly damages your Doberman Pinscher'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.

Bone and Joint Problems

A number of different musculoskeletal problems have been reported in Doberman Pinschers. 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.

- Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) is a common condition in Dobermans. The disease is caused when the jelly-like cushion between one or more vertebrae slips or ruptures, causing the disc to press on the spinal cord. If your dog is suddenly unable or unwilling to jump or go up stairs, is reluctant to move around, has a hunched back, cries out, or refuses to eat or go potty, he is likely in severe pain. He may even experience sudden paralysis—he may drag his back feet or be unable to get up or use his back legs. If you see these symptoms, don't wait! Call us or an emergency clinic immediately! In many cases involving paralysis, we'll recommend surgical removal of the ruptured discs (within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms for the best results). For less severe cases, rest and medication may resolve the problem. And as with so many other diseases, weight control helps reduce the risk of IVDD. You should also provide ramps or steps for your pet from puppyhood on to prevent your dog from stressing his back by jumping on and off of the furniture.
- Growing Dobermans can suffer from a painful inflammation of the long bones in the legs called eosinophilic panosteitis, or pano or eo-pan for short. It usually starts around six to ten months of age and shifts from leg to leg. We'll look for this condition upon examination; if your pal exhibits pain when the area is squeezed or palpated, we'll take X-rays to diagnose the problem. Panosteitis usually causes no permanent damage,

but requires pain medication. If your dog has this condition and develops an abnormal gait to compensate for the sore leg(s), rehabilitation exercises may be required.

- Many older dogs have arthritis, and bigger dogs tend to have more pain and disability than smaller ones. Dobermans 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.

Thyroid Problems

Dobermans are prone to a common condition called hypothyroidism in which the body doesn't make enough thyroid hormone. Signs can include dry skin and coat, hair loss, susceptibility to other skin diseases, weight gain, fearfulness, aggression, and other behavioral changes. We'll conduct a blood test annually to screen for this disease. Treatment is usually as simple as replacement hormones given in the form of a pill.

Cancer

Cancer is a leading cause of death in older dogs. Your Dobie 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! The healthcare chart included in this care guide lists the cancers your pet may encounter. We'll perform periodic diagnostic tests and look for lumps and bumps when we examine your pet.

Multiple Skin Problems

Your Dobie is susceptible to various kinds of skin infections and diseases. One type, *Malassezia* dermatitis, is caused by a kind of yeast. When this yeast infects the ears, it causes itching, redness, and an accumulation of brown, waxy discharge. On the skin, this yeast leads to greasy, hairless areas, especially on the neck and throat, with a characteristic odor. Another common skin disease called seborrhea can cause dry, flaky skin or greasy, oily skin. Skin diseases make your pet itchy and uncomfortable. Bathing with special shampoos and rinses may be helpful, and we'll treat any underlying problems such as allergies as well. The earlier you call to have your pet's skin problems checked, the less likely you will end up with an itchy, bald, smelly dog.

- 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 Doberman, 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.
- Pemphigus foliaceus is a superficial skin disease that is more common in Doberman Pinschers. It often starts around four years of age and causes crusts and hair loss, usually on top of the nose and inside the ear flaps. Some dogs get it on their footpads and toenails as well. Bacteria easily invade the damaged areas, so secondary skin infections are common. Skin crusts typically wax and wane; there is no

cure, but there are a variety of effective treatments. Sunlight makes it worse, so applying zinc-free sunscreen to sensitive parts before heading outdoors can help.

- Most dogs lick their legs or body from time to time for routine grooming or to care for minor wounds or skin lesions, but some Dobies may obsessively lick the same area of the body over and over. This recurring licking can cause a deep skin callous called a lick granuloma to develop at the affected area. These sores usually occur on the legs or feet, but may also be on the flank. As soon as you notice a granuloma starting, bring your pet in for treatment. A lick granuloma can be extremely difficult to cure once the repetitive behavior is established, so early diagnosis and treatment are essential.

Taking Care of Your Doberman Pinscher 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 Dobermans. 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 Dobie 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.
- ✓ Doberman Pinschers 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 is a sensitive dog and doesn’t do well with harsh training methods or punishment; always end training on a positive note.
- ✓ Can be sensitive to cold, so a warm winter wardrobe is necessary.
- ✓ 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 Doberman Pinscher 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
- ✓ Stiffness or reluctance to rise/sit/use stairs
- ✓ Dull coat, hair loss; sluggish, weight gain

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
- ✓ Fainting, collapse; breathing issues, coughing
- ✓ Dry heaving or a large, tight, painful abdomen
- ✓ Gums that are a color other than bright pink
- ✓ Depression, poor appetite, yellowing of the eyes

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 Doberman Pinscher'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 Doberman 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 Doberman Pinscher Healthy <i>Puppy to Adolescent: Infant to Adolescent</i>		Age	Services We'll Provide	Doberman-Specific Problems We're Looking For
			8-9 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Blood disorder assessment 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 Skin and coat exam Blood disorder assessment 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 Retinal dysplasia Demodicosis von Willebrand's disease (vWD) 	
○	14-16 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Blood disorder assessment Parasite prevention Vaccinations Schedule spay/neuter surgery Discuss obedience and grooming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Retinal dysplasia Demodicosis von Willebrand's disease (vWD) 	
○	4-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Blood disorder assessment Pre-surgical diagnostics Spay/neuter surgery Discuss bloat, stomach tack, sulfonamide sensitivity, and microchipping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts and Retinal dysplasia Demodicosis von Willebrand's disease (vWD) 	
○	6 months through 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head-to-tail physical examination Eye disease screen Skin and coat exam Internal organ health evaluation Bone and joint exam Blood disorder assessment Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss lifetime genetic considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, and Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) Demodicosis Kidney disease Panosteitis von Willebrand's disease (vWD) <p>All major disease important in the breed with diagnostic plan</p>	

Adult to Golden Years Health Care Recommendations

How We'll Keep Your Doberman Pinscher Healthy		Age	Services We'll Provide	Doberman-Specific Problems We're Looking For
Adult: 18 to 39 in People Years	○	7 years through 9 years	<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 Endocrine screening Neurological assessment Blood disorder assessment Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss behavior and nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, and Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) Demodicosis, Pemphigus Foliaceus, and Lick granuloma Kidney disease Hypothyroid, Chronic hepatitis, and Copper hepatopathy Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) and Wobbler syndrome von Willebrand's disease (vWD) and Immune-mediated hemolytic anemia and immune-mediated thrombocytopenia (IMHA/ITP)
			<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 Endocrine screening Neurological assessment Cancer screen Blood disorder assessment Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, and Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) Demodicosis, Pemphigus Foliaceus, and Lick granuloma Kidney disease Hypothyroid, Chronic hepatitis, Copper hepatopathy, and Diabetes Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) and Wobbler syndrome Prostate cancer, Osteosarcoma, and Melanoma von Willebrand's disease (vWD) and Immune-mediated hemolytic anemia and immune-mediated thrombocytopenia (IMHA/ITP)
Golden Years: 60+ in People Years	○	10 years and older	<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 Endocrine screening Bone and joint exam Neurological assessment Cancer screen Blood disorder assessment Parasite prevention Vaccinations Discuss mental and physical well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breed-specific physical abnormalities plus Cataracts, Retinal dysplasia, and Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) Dilated Cardiomyopathy Demodicosis, Pemphigus Foliaceus, and Lick granuloma Kidney disease Hypothyroid, Chronic hepatitis, Copper hepatopathy, and Diabetes Arthritis Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD) and Wobbler syndrome Prostate cancer, Osteosarcoma, and Melanoma von Willebrand's disease (vWD) and 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.