

Your Pomeranian

Caring for Your Faithful Companion



Pomeranians: What a Unique Breed!

Your dog is special! She's your best friend and companion and a source of unconditional love. Chances are that you chose her because you like Pomeranians, and you expected her to have certain traits that would fit your lifestyle:

- Friendly, extroverted personality
- Intelligent and easy to train
- Alert, curious, and busy
- Small, but sturdy
- Excellent companion

No dog is perfect, though, and you may have noticed these characteristics, too:

- Long coat needs to be brushed regularly
- Has a tendency to bark quite a bit if the behavior is rewarded
- Gets too hot to be a lapdog
- Needs frequent attention from her people
- Prone to separation anxiety and territoriality when not socialized properly

Is it all worth it? Of course! She's got her own personality, and you love her for it.



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Your Pomeranian's Health

We know that because you care so much about your dog, you want to take good care of him. That's why we'll tell you about the health concerns we'll be discussing with you over the life of your Pom.

Many diseases and health conditions are genetic, meaning they're related to your pet's breed. That doesn't mean your dog will have these problems; it just means that he's more at risk than other dogs. We'll describe the most common issues for Pomeranians to give you an idea of what may come up. Of course we can't cover every possibility here, so always check with us if you notice any unusual signs or symptoms.

This guide, along with the health evaluation schedule it contains, helps us and you plan for your pet's health-care needs. At the end of this booklet, we've included a description of what you can do at home to keep your Pom Pom looking and feeling his best. You'll know what to watch for, and we'll all feel better knowing that we're taking the best possible care of your pal.

Cataracts

Cataracts are a common cause of blindness in Pomeranians, and they may appear as early as age four. We'll watch for the lenses of her eyes to become more opaque—meaning they look cloudy instead of clear—when we examine her. Many dogs adjust well to losing their vision and get along just fine. Surgery to remove cataracts and restore sight is an option.

Dental Disease

Dental disease is the most common chronic problem in pets, affecting 80% of all dogs by age two. And unfortunately, your Pomeranian is more likely to have problems with his teeth than other breeds. 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 his teeth and be in danger of damaging his kidneys, liver, heart, and joints. In fact, the disease may shorten your pet's life 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.

Fluid Build-up in the Skull

Water on the brain, or hydrocephalus, occurs when fluid builds up inside the skull and puts pressure on the brain tissue. This condition is most common in breeds with dome-shaped heads, like your Pom Pom. It is often present when the skull bones don't fuse properly. Signs include seizures, difficulty training the puppy, dulled mental function, circling, and a spastic gait. We'll do testing if symptoms develop. Sometimes surgery can alleviate the problem.

Heart Disease

Pomeranians are prone to develop several types of heart disease, including valve deterioration (mitral valve disease), a birth defect (patent ductus arteriosus), and a malfunction of the part of the heart that signals it to beat (sick sinus syndrome). Physical signs include coughing, reduced tolerance of exercise, weight loss, shortness of breath, or weakness in the hind limbs. We listen for a heart murmur and perform diagnostic tests to look for these problems. If your pet develops heart disease, we'll recommend surgery, rest, or medication depending on the type of disease and its severity. Proper dental care and weight control also go a long way in preventing heart disease.

Infections

Pom Poms are susceptible to bacterial and viral infections—the same ones that all dogs can get—such as parvovirus, rabies, and distemper. Many of these infections are preventable through vaccination, which we'll administer to your dog based on the diseases we see in our area, her age, and other factors.

Knee Problems

Sometimes a Pomeranian's kneecap will 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. This can happen with his elbows, too, which leads to lameness in the front legs. If the problem is mild and involves only one leg, your Pom may not require much treatment beyond arthritis medication. When symptoms are severe, surgery is needed to realign the kneecap or elbow to keep it from popping out of place. Rehabilitation and special exercises can be very helpful.