7 PREVENTATIVE CARE TIPS FOR A HAPPY, HEALTHY DOG

Having a dog means epic adventures and heaps of cuddles. It also means keeping them safe and healthy – from their first clumsy puppy steps to just chilling on the stoep as a veteran. Here are our seven tips to ensure your furry friend keeps on wagging a shiny tail.

1. Be pro-active rather than reactive

Take preventative care by giving them plenty of exercise, quality food and all their check-ups. Create an environment that is mentally and physically safe for them. Know and prepare for the unique health challenges of your dog's breed.



2. Start your puppy's vaccinations at 6 weeks

The crucial DHPP vaccine is given in three shots 2 to 4 weeks apart until your puppy is 16 weeks. It is a combined vaccine that protects against distemper virus, canine adenovirus, canine parvovirus and canine parainfluenza virus. Next up is the rabies vaccine that needs to be updated once a year. Ask your vet for specific advice on vaccinations for your area and your dog's breed.

3.Spot health issues early

Look for changes in your dog's behaviour, appearance, and mood. Is your dog scratching furiously, with inflamed skin and hair loss? If you can find flea dirt and eggs on its skin, you've got an infestation. If not, it could be an allergy instead.

A restless dog biting at specific areas on its body might have ticks. You can find out by patting around your dog's head, neck, ears or paws.

Is your poor baby bloated, vomiting and having diarrhoea? This is likely a digestion issue. Ask your vet about skin lumps and loss of appetite because this can point to something more serious.



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4. Know how to treat infestations

As you can see from our previous tip, fleas and ticks are a common health issue for our dogs. Luckily there are plenty of treatment options: shampoos, powders, flea collars and oral medications. However, be mindful of the chemicals in some of these products and get your vet's advice on the best treatment for your dog.

5. Commit to a grooming routine

Regularly brushing and bathing your pooch is a great start. Trimming is also a key component – contact a grooming specialist or learn how to do this yourself. Got a long-haired beauty? Avoid matting by trimming the hair around their eyes, mouth and bum. Does your dog prefer the couch to the great outdoors? Be sure to trim those nails.

Remember that your dog's teeth need attention too. Brush it a couple of times a week with dog-safe toothpaste (that means absolutely no fluoride). Switch to crunchy, calcium-rich food and have a vet check their canines at least once a year.

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6. Feed them the right things in the right amounts

Just like you, dogs need a well-balanced diet and plenty of clean water to stay healthy. Quality pet foods, like JOCK dog food, provide the essential proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals they require. Your dog's life stage can also inform their diet: fatty acid DHA supports brain development in puppies and high antioxidant foods boosts the memory of older dogs.

Puppies eat three or four times a day, gradually moving to one or two meals when they become adult. Your dog's portion size will depend on its breed, its age and how active it is. A suggestion is to feed them 2-3% of their body weight daily.

7. Keep them stimulated and moving

Regular activity maintains your dogs' healthy weight, protects their hearts and keep them from boredom-induced destructive behaviour. This is especially important for breeds with high energy levels. You can play games with your dogs to stimulate them mentally, lower their stress and bolster their overall happiness.