

Doberman Secrets Revealed

**Love, Life and Laughter.
With a Doberman**

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Foreword

Whoever coined the phrase ‘man’s best friend’ must have had the Doberman in mind. Because, you will not find a better companion in any other breed.

It’s long list of qualities (and trust us, if trained right, these will surface) seems a little too perfect. But only a Doberman can lay claim to every one of them. A Doberman is a sensitive dog, keenly alert to your feelings and wishes. He is fiercely loyal, protective to a very high degree and will love you back tenfold.

Observe him when someone you like visits you. Again, observe him when someone you don’t particularly care for, visits you. He will be watching the visitor hawk-eyed. And also looking into your face, to see your reaction. How does my master feel? Is he upset? Is he happy? He can actually get into your mind. In fact, the only thing he can’t do is speak. Otherwise he is as human as you and I.

It is, not for nothing that he is called “the dog with the human mind”. The amazing thing is, a Doberman and his owner can communicate beautifully with each other.

Extremely, agile a Doberman will do more tasks than other dogs. A very intelligent dog, he is easily trained. They learn through watching. They learn through trial and error, and often seem to reason things out.

Once he is in your home, he will become a part of the household. He will effortlessly merge into your family. As each day passes, the bond will get stronger. The wonderful thing about this unique relationship is that there is no downside to it. He will demand your attention and a proper place in your life. You can’t treat him like an ordinary dog: to be patted once in a way and then forgotten.

A Doberman is an affectionate animal. But this affection isn’t given to all. It is reserved for you. He won’t leave you for a stranger who offers to pat him. He’d rather sit cozily on your shoe. He will not lick, either. A single kiss, a touch of the tongue, a touch of his nose to your ear, that is his way of greeting you. Yet with dark eyes, his short tail, and elegant gait, he can tell you how much you mean to him.

He is great with children too. He can take care of his very young master, help him, understand that his master needs to show him off to his friends and bring him safely back home.

In the ultimate analysis, he makes for a great friend who will be with you. No matter what. How many humans can truthfully say the same, about themselves?

Chapter 1.

Buying A Doberman

All the Protection, Only a Doberman

Before buying a purebred, you must ask yourself a few questions. Dogs are not a low-involvement product. Nor are they a buy-use-and-throw-into-the-attic-product. They need your love, care and attention. For a lifetime.

To start with, answer the following questions honestly. Do you really want a dog? Do you have children? How old is the youngest? Young Dobermans (up to about two years old) jump with great vigor and things can go flying, including people. Do you want a dog to pet and cuddle or do you want a protector? How big is your residence and yard? Are there arguments or fights in your home? Dobermans are extremely sensitive to stress and can end up sick, with digestive upsets and nervous behavior, if the people in their home are having family problems.

Are you willing to invest a lot of time in your dog? Can you exercise it everyday? Are you aware of the expenses? Do you already have a dog? Because if you do, you should think before you buy another. Certain breeds do not mix with other breeds. Getting the puppy or dog is not the big expense. There are other expenses. Inoculations every few weeks while the puppy is young; training classes (any where from \$30 to over \$100); annual wellness checks and inoculations; feeding (the bigger the dog the bigger the food bill); medical emergencies (easily, hundreds of dollars if not more).

Are there any allergies or medical conditions in your family that could lead to your getting rid of the dog? No breed is truly hypoallergenic. People with serious problems may not be able to tolerate any breed. If you suspect any health concerns, consult a doctor before considering a pet. Are you starting a family? What will happen to the dog? What will happen when the dog ages? Are you willing to cope with increasing health issues? Can you control a big, powerful dog?

Your answers could help you get the dog that is suited to your lifestyle and family.

A great dog. A greater friend.

If you have thought about your answers and decided on a big protector, consider a Doberman.

There's an old German saying. "If you can touch my Doberman, you can have him." A Doberman was bred to be the perfect protection dog. The old myth that they turn on their owner is because of the temperament of the dog. Train it badly and they can turn around and bite you. People blame the breed, but it's improper training, which makes the dog this way.

In the past ten to fifteen years, attempts have been made to correct this breed's aggressive tendencies. Training and early socialization are a must with this breed. Even though the Doberman was originally bred as a guardian and personal protector, he has an excellent nose for tracking and has been used for capturing felons.

Doberman Secrets Revealed

For many years the Doberman has been chosen to become an outstanding member of Search and Rescue Teams. A few owners have been surprised by the pointing and retrieving instincts of the Dobe and have made excellent hunting companions out of their pets. They can also be found herding sheep and bringing the cows in at milking time.

The Doberman's loyalty, devotion, confidence and high degree of trainability made the Doberman the dog of choice by the USMC during WWII. In contrast, this same breed has been and is still being used as a guide dog as well as an outstanding therapy dog.

The Doberman is a very intelligent dog. In fact, he is known for his intelligence and his great reasoning ability. These qualities combined with the Dobe's power, zest for life, and his simple yet complex nature and temperament require extra time for early socialization, obedience training, and ample exercise. If you cannot spend a lot of time with your Dobe, then he is not for you.

Ask any Doberman owner and they will tell you a Doberman has tremendous character. Those dark, mischievous eyes, taking in every little thing about you, the environment. A very fine tuned nose; alert for any movement (a squirrel, a lizard, a butterfly) that will provide a chase.

One distinct trait is the instinct to protect. Early socialization will not undermine this trait. As a prospective Doberman owner, beware of breeders who advise you to forego early socialization, puppy kindergarten, and obedience training.

You cannot confine him to a kennel or expect him to stay in the backyard without constant attention. He should be treated like a member of the family. If not, he will show evidences of shyness, fear, and nervousness.

Vital Statistics: The Breed Standard

The Doberman is elegant, muscular and very powerful. He has a square and compact body. He is built for great endurance and speed.

He has a well-proportioned chest, a short back and a lean, muscular neck. His hard, shorthaired, close-fitting coat is black, or black & tan, although blue-gray, red, and fawn also are common. Some are born all white (albino). The hair is short, thick, hard and tight to its body and cropped (cut at the age of about 12 weeks).

The pup's ears have to be taped for a couple of months to make them stand up. If left natural, they develop ears somewhat like a hound. The tail is usually docked at the age of 3 days. If the tail is not docked, he grows a tail somewhat like a hound. The legs are perfectly straight.

Height

Dogs 26-28 inches (66-71cm.), bitches 24-26 inches (61-66cm.). The height is measured vertically from the ground to the highest point of the withers, equaling the length measured horizontally from the forechest to the rear projection of the upper thigh. The length of head, neck and legs are in proportion to the length and depth of body. Weight: 66-88 pounds (30-40kg). The Doberman's lifespan is about 13 yrs.

Temperament

A Dobe is an energetic dog with all the wonderful qualities you expect in a protector. He is watchful, determined, alert, fearless, loyal and obedient.

Head

The head looks like a blunt wedge in both frontal and profile views. When seen from the front, the head widens gradually toward the base of the ears in a practically unbroken line. Eyes are lively, almond shaped, moderately deep set, with an energetic expression. The iris, of uniform color, ranges from medium to darkest brown in black dogs. The ears are normally cropped and carried erect. The upper attachment of the ear, when held erect, is on a level with the top of the skull.

Teeth

The teeth are strongly developed and white. The lower incisors are upright and touch the inside of upper incisors. They close in a scissors bite. The ears are usually true scissors bite. 42 correctly placed teeth, 22 in the lower, 20 in the upper jaw. Teeth should not be overshot more than 3/16 of an inch. Or undershot more than 1/8 of an inch. There should not be more than three missing teeth.

Neck, Topline , Body

Neck proudly carried, well muscled and dry. Well arched, with nape of neck widening gradually toward body. Length of neck proportioned to body and head. Withers pronounced and forming the highest point of the body. Back short, firm, of sufficient width, and muscular at the loins, extending in a straight line from withers to the slightly rounded croup.

Chest broad with forechest well defined. Ribs well sprung from the spine, but flattened in lower end to permit elbow clearance. Brisket reaching deep to the elbow. Belly well tucked up, extending in a curved line from the brisket. Loins wide and muscled. Hips broad and in proportion to body, breadth of hips being approximately equal to breadth of body at rib cage and shoulders. Tail docked at approximately second joint, appears to be a continuation of the spine, and is carried only slightly above the horizontal when the dog is alert.

Forequarters

Shoulder Blade sloping forward and downward at a 45-degree angle to the ground meets the upper arm at an angle of 90 degrees. Length of shoulder blade and upper arm are equal. Height from elbow to withers approximately equals height from ground to elbow.

Legs seen from front and side, perfectly straight and parallel to each other from elbow to pastern; muscled and sinewy, with heavy bone. In normal pose and when gaiting, the elbows lie close to the brisket. Pasterns firm and almost perpendicular to the ground. Dewclaws may be removed. Feet well arched, compact, and catlike, turning

Hindquarters

The angulation of the hindquarters balances that of the forequarters. Hip Bone falls away from spinal column at an angle of about 30 degrees, producing a slightly rounded, well filled-out croup. Upper Shanks at right angles to the hipbones are long, wide, and well muscled on both sides of thigh, with clearly defined stifles. Upper and lower shanks are of equal length.

While the dog is at rest, hock to heel is perpendicular to the ground. Viewed from the rear, the legs are straight, parallel to each other, and wide enough apart to fit in with a properly built body. Dewclaws, if any, are generally removed. Cat feet as on front legs, turning neither in nor out.

Coat

Smooth-haired, short, hard, thick and close lying. Invisible gray undercoat on neck permissible.

Gait

Free, balanced and vigorous, with good reach in the forequarters and good driving power in the hindquarters. When trotting, there is strong rear-action. The gait must be elastic, elegant, and cover a lot of ground. He will do okay in an apartment if sufficiently exercised, but does best with at least an average-sized yard. Dobs are very sensitive to cold weather and are not an outside dog. That is why police in areas where it gets cold are not able to use them.

Free, balanced and vigorous, with good reach in the forequarters and good driving power in the hindquarters. When trotting, there is strong rear-action drive. Each rear leg moves in line with the foreleg on the same side. Rear and front legs are thrown neither in nor out. Back remains strong and firm.

Some terms you should know

Dam: The biological mother of a dog.

Docked: Docking refers to the surgical shortening of the tail.

Ear carriage: This is the visual effects of ear placement, where it sets on the skull as well as how the dog uses the ear when alert.

Feathering: The long fringe of hair many breeds have on their ears, legs, tail or body.

Flank: The hollowed out looking area between the last rib and the hipbone.

Flat foot: See it from the side. The foot appears flat with no arch to the toe.

Gait: How the dog moves at various rates of speed. A judge watching the gait will be looking for patterns in the footsteps and leg movements during each speed observed.

Gestation: The period of pregnancy. In dogs, the average gestational period is sixty-three days.

Harlequin: A patch of color on a white background. Usually black or gray as seen in Great Danes.

Hindquarters: The entire rear area of the dog including the pelvis, thighs, hocks, pasterns and back feet.

Hip Dysplasia: A disease that causes malformation in the canine hip joint that can lead to pain and lameness. Seen most often in larger breeds such as the German Shepherd, it is thought to be a result of heredity. There is also some evidence that suggests nutrition may aggravate the situation. Dogs with hip dysplasia should not be bred.

Hock : The collection of bones in the rear leg that form the joint between the second thigh and the metatarsus. Inbreeding- this involves the breeding of dogs that are closely related. Mother to son, father to daughter, grandfather to granddaughter.

Malocclusion: A malformation in the way the teeth come together.

Monorchid: A dog that has one testicle retained and one dropped into in its proper position.

Muzzle: The area of the head in front of the eyes. This will include the nose, nasal bones, jaws and foreface.

Parrot mouth: A greatly overshot bite.

Pedigree: A written record of the dog's parents, grandparents and so forth for a minimum of three generations.

Professional handler: A person who shows dogs for a fee.

Sire: The biological father of a given dog.

Withers: The area that is the highest point over the shoulders.

Ask us

What are the major organizations that recognize the Dobe?

CKC	=	Continental Kennel Club
FCI	=	Fédération Cynologique Internationale
AKC	=	American Kennel Club
UKC	=	United Kennel Club
KCGB	=	Kennel Club of Great Britain
CKC	=	Canadian Kennel Club
ANKC	=	Australian National Kennel Club
NKC	=	National Kennel Club
NZKC	=	New Zealand Kennel Club
CCR	=	Canadian Canine Registry

Do the ears need to be cropped?

This is a surgical procedure that is best done by only the most experienced veterinarians. For this reason, many breeders do not place puppies until after this operation has been done. Mistakes can be made that adversely affect the appearance of the dog. Following surgery on the ears, taping and propping to achieve proper healing and ear carriage is essential.

Does a Dobe turn on its owner?

No properly bred, raised, socialized, and trained dog would do that. The critical thing is to train him well. Dobermans are loving, loyal, family oriented dogs that will never think of doing such a thing. The only reason a Doberman would turn on anyone is due to abusive treatment. This is not something that is unique to a Doberman. For that matter, any animal will defend themselves when threatened.

Is a Doberman the right companion for me?

Definitely, if you are willing to commit yourself to him. A Dobe makes a very devoted and loyal companion. You need to put time and effort into the training and socialization of a Dobe.

Is a Dobe good with kids?

Yes. If you are a good, firm and loving owner, a Doberman will make a wonderful pal and protector for children, an obedient companion and loyal friend, and a loving member of the household.

Are Dobermans nervous?

No, a Doberman is not nervous. They are full of energy. If a Doberman owner tends to be nervous, stressed, and unsure of how to properly handle/train a Doberman, the Dobe will often display his owner's nervousness and confusion.

Are Dobermans shy?

No, a properly bred Doberman is not shy. Early socialization and training will help develop the correct temperament of a Dobe. However, if you are having trouble with your Doberman, please contact a qualified Doberman trainer.

Chapter 2

The first paw-marks

Louis Dobermann (1823 - 1894) lived in Apolda, a small village in the state of Thuringen in Southern Germany. Dobermann was employed as a tax collector, a “dog catcher”, a night watchman, and as a supervisor for local slaughterhouses. As a night watchman, Herr Dobermann found his need for a suitable dog to accompany him on his rounds. Besides, a protection dog would be desirable while working as a tax collector carrying large amounts of money.

Old records tell of a “dog market” that had been held in Thuringen since 1863. Its purpose was to improve the strains and to educate owners as to the advantages of pure breed dogs. The dogs were divided into various classes (perhaps one of the first dogs shows), and we are told, “all of the twelve guard-dogs were rubbish except a Pinscher.”

Herr Dobermann also had a great interest in breeding dogs and was certainly exposed to a great variety of dogs. Thanks to his various occupations. That enabled him, along with his two friends, Herr Rebel and Herr Stegmann, to produce develop his large ‘pinscher’ or terrier.

Some of the breeds used to shape the Dobe include the pinscher (a smaller black and tan dog very similar in appearance to the modern Doberman and the Manchester Terrier), Rottweilers, and Thuringian Shepherds. Other breeds that contributed their genes are black Greyhound for elegance and sleekness, Great Dane, Weimaraner and German Shorthaired Pointer These dogs quickly became renowned as fearless protection dogs. They could also be used as gun dogs, for eradicating vermin, and for herding sheep. They were said to be very intelligent.

The resulting dog possessed an uncanny intelligence, bravery loyalty, stamina, and protectiveness in a medium-to-large working dog with an easy-care, short, dense coat. It was with great pride that this breed became known as “Dobermann’s Pinscher.”

Today’s Doberman Pinscher has lost the second ‘n’ from its name and has mellowed in fierceness to become a family member capable of displaying great gentleness and devotion to children and other animals in the home.

Otto Goeller, who became very interested in the breed and used the kennel name of Thuringen, is credited with further refining and stabilizing the breed. In 1889, Herr Goeller established the first “Dobermann Pinscher Club”

The Doberman is one of the few breeds that has been named after a person. There is also record of an heirloom photograph of Herr Dobermann, given for a prize at one of the dog shows, which indicates that he was acknowledged as a respected breeder and his dogs were held in high regard.

Herr Goeller, along with a fellow townsman Herr Gorswin who bred Dobermanns bearing the kennel name of Groenland, produced several of the most important Dobermanns in the breed’s history. These dogs can be found in the ancestry of the modern Doberman.

In the US, the National Kennel Club is the American Kennel Club. THE national Breed Club is the Doberman Pinscher Club of America.

In the Dobe world, there is also a legend. His name is Borong the Warlock. It is not unusual for someone to call a Dobe club Breed Referral number and say, “I have this Warlock male. He is a fawn and one hundred and ten pounds. I want to breed him to a bitch that is strong and exceptional, preferably a Warlock bitch.”

Or for another caller to state, “My bitch is a Warlock but she is getting old, I would like to get another Warlock bitch.” Members of many Dobe clubs report that they get calls very similar to the ones just described.

Interesting stories about the Doberman: The Warlock

Some Dobermans are called warlocks. Now, a warlock is a sorcerer, wizard or a demon. The Doberman who began the legend was born in Florida in the middle 1950's. His breeders were Theodosia and Henry Frampton. They named this pup Borong, the Warlock. The name did not describe Borong because he was a rather quiet-mannered dog, well trained and never aggressive toward anyone nor other dogs.

He was not the best in his litter. The pup endeared himself to Henry Frampton. Many thought that it was the pup that chose Henry rather than the other way around. When the pup grew up, Henry began to show Borong and he began winning. This was the beginning of what would go on for years.

Over the years, Warlock has been associated with oversized Dobs. Dobe fanciers in Texas thought this was just a local phenomenon, but there have been reports that there are such dogs in many other states. There will be breeders telling people their puppies are warlocks , so the name will live on.

Chapter 3

Choose your Dobe

So, you've set out to buy yourself a Dobe. Before buying, consider the other dogs in your house. You should not mix certain breeds. Also is there a bully roaming in your block? Then maybe, a different sex is better.

You should look for a dog that is healthy, attractive, mentally sound, and has the best possible chance of providing years of companionship whether it be a dog for a pet show (conformation), to compete in dog performance events such as obedience, agility, fly ball, tracking, Schutzhund, or to perform Search and Rescue operations or therapy work. In fact, for just about anything.

Before you buy, it's best to talk to breeders. Talk to breeders who are open and honest about health and temperament testing. Realize that all dogs do have problems: you want to deal with breeders who admit their problems, will discuss them and will be able to tell you how they are attempting to solve them.

All ethical and responsible breeders test their dogs for health, temperament, title their dogs, and aim to produce only the highest quality Dobermans that will better the gene pool. Responsible breeders are choosy about which dogs they breed: they study pedigrees for quality in conformation, health, longevity, temperament and working ability. They try to find the absolute best match for their female. They travel to great lengths to find the best male.

Puppy mills

Be wary of pet stores. They buy their puppies from puppy mills (where dogs are kept locked in cages breeding constantly with no concern for their health or welfare – all that matters is that they are producing puppies for money.

These dogs are killed if they can no longer produce puppies.). Responsible, ethical breeders do not sell their puppies to pet stores. People who truly care about animals do not purchase puppies at pet stores. Responsible breeders are concerned about where their puppies live for the rest of their lives.

A pet store sells to whoever has the money with no concern as to where that puppy lives or what kind of life it will have.

The puppies at pet stores are often in ill health and have had little socialization since they are taken from their mothers at an early age. Many of these puppies die on the journey to the pet stores crammed in cages with other sickly puppies in the backs of poorly ventilated, large trucks establishments known as “commercial” breeders. They won't call themselves that, but they produce many hundreds of puppies a year with little thought or regard to health, longevity, temperament and conformation. This type of establishment may sound ideal because they are likely to have a puppy available with little or no waiting at any time.

These establishments often have glitzy brochures, splashy ads in magazines and may appear very classy, which is easy to do when they are selling hundreds of puppies for profit annually. Warning signs that may indicate a commercial kennel are slogans such as “World Wide Shipping” and “All major credit cards accepted!” These are usually very clear signs that the breeder cares little about where the puppy ends up and who buys it.

Such breeders also praise the male simply because they need the female for breeding purposes.

How old should your pup be?

Responsible breeders keep puppies until they are at least 8 weeks old. Some states actually have laws against selling puppies prior to 8 weeks of age. Important socialization is being learned and taught during that time. The puppies’ eyes and ears open at about three weeks and they begin to test solids foods after that.

A five or six week old puppy is barely weaned. The extra couple weeks with the dam and littermates can make a big difference overall. Also, puppies should have *at least* one set of shots before going to homes. The vaccine schedule for puppies is usually 6, 9 and 12 weeks with the first rabies booster being at 16 weeks

Puppies that are taken too early from their littermates and mother often have trouble and issues later.

Ask what health testing was done on the sire and dam of the litter. Yearly shots & a vet’s “okay” are not an equivalent or substitute for health testing. Responsible Doberman breeders today, in general, are testing for hip and elbow dysplasia, von Willebrand’s disease (vWD), thyroid disease, genetic eye disease, normal cardiac function, liver functions also dog’s hips and elbows X rays to OFA.(Orthopaedic Foundation for animals).

Besides, the breeder will be ready, willing, and able to show proof of all such tests and the results. You should not have to pay for this. Responsible breeders will not be offended that you ask. They will be glad you are doing your research.

In addition, responsible breeders will keep you advised throughout the lifetime of your puppy about the ongoing health of the parents and of the siblings. They are also likely to seek out information about your puppy to help them make future breeding decisions. Beware of breeders who tell you that their Dobermans are guaranteed free of cardio (dilated cardiomyopathy) and/or CVI (Cervical Vertebral Instability). There is no genetic test. If you go to a rescue, look at an adult dog. Just because a dog is fully-grown does not mean they are past training. Adult dogs have better bladder control and more attention span than a young puppy. And puppies are only little for a short time

Examine the puppies. Look at them as a group. If there are four puppies and three of them are running away or staying at arm’s length or woofing suspiciously at you, do not consider them. Nor should you go for the fourth. Chances are that shyness or distrustfulness is in his genes. Don’t be fooled by the breeder when he says that the pup hasn’t been socialized yet. This is laziness.

The pups should show no signs of lameness, discharge from eyes, ears, nose, etc. They should have clean, shiny coats and be alert. Their stool should be firm. A good breeder or rescue group will have no issue if you wish to have your vet examine the animal before bringing it home. Many will insist you do.

If you are going to a breeder, find out what tests were run on the parents to help ensure the healthiest dogs were bred. If there were no tests done at all, leave immediately. If there were no shots given to puppies, leave immediately.

Also a good breeder will give you some form of health guarantee. Many will even have a lifetime guarantee as long as you are taking proper care of the animal. Are the dogs from lines that fit the breed standard correctly – ideally the dogs should have proven themselves in both the show ring as well as in some form of performance sport like Obedience or Agility.

The Environment

Now, look at the condition of the facility. Is it full of feces and looks unclean? Does it have a really offensive odor or smell too heavily of cleaners as if something was being hidden? Is there sign of pest infestation? What is the attitude of the people to the animals? What is the attitude of the animals?: Is the person trying to place the pup or dog trying to push the animal on you? Is the person telling you both the pros and cons of the breed – or cross?

I cringe when I hear statements like “This is the BEST dog for anyone If they seem too anxious to make that sale or adoption, I would consider strongly going elsewhere .Has there been any temperament testing to the puppies or dogs? If you are a quiet, laid back person, it could be tough to be matched with an outgoing, dominant puppy. If you were looking for a dog to compete with in sports, that quiet, shy dog would probably not work out well. A good breeder or rescue will screen the puppies

A well-bred, sound, healthy puppy from a reputable breeder is worth the wait. Don't get caught up in a mind-set that you must have a puppy immediately. Take your time to do your research and don't be surprised that you will likely have to wait for a quality puppy. The time and money you invest in the puppy up front is very likely to save you time and money later.

Ask for references. Ask for the names and numbers of at least 5 of the breeder's puppy owners and follow up with them. Also, it would be wise to ask for a reference from the breeder's vet.

Ask the veterinarian about the standard of care the breeder provides for the dogs from a veterinary standpoint. It wouldn't hurt to ask a few other breeders local to the one you are considering if they would recommend them.

Responsible, ethical breeders participate in breed clubs, help with rescue, breed education, take part in medical research, attend seminars and learn more about Dobermans any way they possibly can. They are constantly giving back to the breed something other than a litter of puppies.

Will the breeder be able to at any point and time in the lives of the puppies, be able to take back those puppies? A responsible, ethical breeder (including the owner of the stud) will at any time take back dogs they bred for whatever reasons. They will ensure that none of the puppies they produced ever end up in a homeless situation, that they never burden an animal shelter, pound or rescue organization.

Registration

There are two main documents to certify your puppy. One is the registration. This is usually done by one of the clubs. It certifies that your puppy comes from a purebred sire or dam. The second is the pedigree. This shows lineage up to 3 or 4 generations.

Ask us

Who is a Hobby Horse Breeder?

This breeder is primarily interested in bettering his breed. He is always actively involved in showing in conformation, and often participates in obedience, and/or agility. He is also actively involved in dog clubs.

Who is a commercial breeder?

This breeder houses many males and females of several breeds. The bitches are usually bred every time they are in season, until they can produce no more. The animals are all in kennels. Breeding is for volume and dollars. The puppies are usually sold to brokers at 5 to 6 weeks old.

Who is a Backyard Breeder?

This kind of breeder usually breeds because the kids in the family want one more dog. Or it is an opportunity to make a few dollars. The Sire is chosen very easily. Usually it is someone who owns a male. They do not understand the genetic health issues or the need to health test the sire and dam before breeding. No consideration is given to the quality of the breeding partners, because they simply don't know what constitutes a good Doberman.

What's wrong with a white Doberman?

Watch out for the letter 'z' in the registration papers. This means that there is a white Doberman or albino in the family. The dog has blue eyes and is cream colored with light tan markings. Such a dog suffers from photo phobia (photosensitive). This means he cannot tolerate light. Their temperaments range from being very shy to biting out of fear. Avoid buying such a dog.

Should I buy a male or a female?

Both have their plusses and minuses. Males tend to be slobbers though lovable. They are more outgoing, more vigorously affectionate. Males tend to be more stable and reliable in mood, less prone to emotional swings. Males sometimes test their owners and engage in dominance struggles, especially during the hormonal adolescent months, which can last a long time — from about six months old all the way up to two or three years old in larger breeds.

Females are more affectionate, tend to learn faster and are subtler than males. They are less dominant, more clever and manipulative. They are prone to mood swings.

Check if there is an aggressive dog in your neighborhood. You should buy a different sex.

What are the tests conducted by a good breeder?

A good breeder will make sure to breed only those dogs that have a clear health history, having passed all health and genetic testing specific to the breed. Most important of these tests are

- *VWD by DNA for Von Willibrands Disease
- Thyroid panel
- OFA Certification for hips
- An exam ruling out probable Dilated Cardiomyopathy at the time of breeding. The dog's temperament must also be closely examined and any dog showing temper or an intolerant attitude must be immediately eliminated from the breeding program.

Should I buy a puppy or an adult?

When you acquire a puppy, you're buying potential. So "typical breed characteristics" are very important. But when you acquire an adult, you're acquiring what he already is. You can buy an adult provided he has been trained properly and shows no negative characteristics.

Can dogs sense fear?

Yes. They read a person's reaction to them. In fact, much of the time spent in training dogs is actually dedicated to instructing the owners. They need to have the body language and voice that display an owner's confidence and dominance. If dogs are approached in a timid manner, by humans or other animals, they see this as a signal to take over.

Stressed out owners pass on their depression to their Dobs. If there are problems at home, such as a divorce or a lost loved one or financial stress, the dog begins to act poorly since the humans they are living with are miserable .you can fool the world but not your pet . So, in addition to fear, I believe that dogs sense a whole gamut of emotions.

A human who is fearful of dogs will get in trouble because a dog may actually perceive him as an enemy and try to run him off. Try to stay calm, possibly pat the dog and walk off.

My dog throws up when we go anywhere in the car. Why does she do that and how can we stop it?

Dogs commonly get motion sickness while riding in cars. More often than not, excitement causes it. Taking your dog for frequent short car trips tends to get him over the excitement of being in a car and will put him in a calmer frame of mind. Instead of just trips to the vet, the groomer or the kennel, take your pet out to pick up a gallon of milk, the newspaper or on whatever errands you may be running.

Try some natural remedies such as peppermint tea or bach flower remedy. Peppermint tea is available in capsules and the bach flower remedy is given with a dropper. Both are given orally every two hours to combat excitement and subsequent nausea, and both are available in health food stores. It also may be helpful to encourage your pet to lie down on the floor of the vehicle or to keep them in a well-ventilated travel crate if they are small enough.

It is best to keep your pet on an empty stomach while traveling, so withhold food about six hours prior to your trip. Water, however, should always be available before and during your trip. On long trips it's a good idea to pack a water bottle and bowl. You can feed your pet once you get to your destination.

What causes bumps and how can you get rid of them?

A person would have to have a little more information about your Doberman and possibly even see him before they could advise you. I would advise you to take your Doberman to your vet. Sometimes young Dobermans get an infection .It is normally treated with an antibiotic for 3-4 weeks. He could also have an allergy or any number of problems. Please see your veterinarian about these bumps.

My 16-month red female Doberman recently started what appears to be trying to bite her tail or lack thereof. I'm not sure if it's biting her tail or if she is trying to scratch herself.

She could have a sore. Sometimes at this time of year flies sit on the tail and the edges of the ears and bite away. Check with your vet. .

We have a 3-month-old male Pug (about 6-7lbs) .We will be getting a female Doberman puppy. The female Doberman is 8 weeks old, and I was wondering if you think that we might have a problem with the dogs getting along since one of the dogs is of much greater size than the other.

No but train both well. Supervise them so that the puppy understands that she cannot bounce off the Pug nor can she be too rough with it. They learn fast.

When a Dobe is attacked, will it fight back?

It depends on how the Dobe sees the person. If the owner does not train him well or if the owner continually beats his dog, the dog will eventually defend himself and fight back. As with people, dogs have different tolerance levels. Some dogs may take abuse forever. Others may fight back after the first blow.

Are Dobermans good with other cats and dogs?

A young Doberman brought into the house is likely to adapt to whatever animals you have. But other animals brought into a house with an existing Doberman could be a problem. This again depends on the temperament of the individual dog. Males generally, are not good with other male dogs, no matter what the breed.

Is a Doberman so protective that will not think twice about scaring trespassers off?

A Doberman is bred to be a watchdog and most Dobermans will have the natural instinct to bark at strangers and protect their property. There are some poorly bred Dobs that may have lost this instinct. It is best to talk to breeders about their dogs and even visit a breeder's house to see how the dogs act. A Doberman should allow you to enter the house at the owner's request, but should alert the owner of your arrival and protect her if needed.

How do I know if a Doberman is the breed for me?

The Doberman is a highly active dog that will need a lot of exercise and training time in order to be a good pet. Dobermans are very intelligent and need training to use it wisely. You should start classes for socialization and training as early as 12 weeks. A Doberman sticks to its owner and will be with you at all times, even in the bathroom. It is important that you want a dog that is this much a part of your life. A Doberman should be raised as part of the family and not tied to a tree out back or left in the yard all day. Dobermans have short coats and do not do well in cold climates for long periods of time.

I live in an apartment. Can I still have a Doberman?

Yes, you can. Just ensure the dog gets the exercise he will need to be healthy and happy.

Chapter 4

An addition to the family

So you finally decided on that adorable pup and now he is home. Looking after a puppy is no different from looking after a newborn baby. The first thing to check is his health. Your puppy's state of health will affect his ability to be successfully house trained.

Let a vet see your puppy within 48 hours of arriving at your home. If your puppy does not receive a clean bill of health, it is important that any physical conditions that can impede successful house training be properly treated. A fecal check will determine whether worms or internal parasites are present.

Your pup will need a warm, safe, dry, comfortable place to live, including an extra large dog crate/kennel for training, housebreaking and when left alone. Blankets/comforters or other soft suitable material for the puppy/dog to rest on is necessary to prevent sores/pressure sores/elbow and joint swellings.

Right from the beginning, teach your puppy to allow all parts of his body to be examined and handled. Particularly, teeth, mouth, feet and testicles by both you and strangers. Otherwise, they will not allow these examinations to be performed if not trained to do so as a pup.

Before you take the next step, it's important to know a few facts about your puppy.

Know your baby

A newborn Doberman puppy weighs, on average, between 10ozs and 20ozs. They, like other canids, are born with their eyes shut and their ears tightly creased and closed. They nurse constantly, usually every 1 to 2 hours, taking in small amounts, which help to sustain their metabolism and their growth.

They grow rapidly, gaining steadily throughout the puppy stage, which is considered the first 12 months of their life. The Doberman is born with a tail and dewclaws on the inside of each front leg. Occasionally they also appear on the inside of the hind legs.

3 to 5 days later, the tails are docked and the dewclaws removed by a veterinarian. The tail is docked at about the about the second or third joint. The skin is cut first. Next, the bony vertebra of the tail is cut and the skin is stitched to close the wound. It's the same with the dewclaws. They are snipped off and the small little wound closed with a stitch or tail. The dewclaws can be glued with surgical glue used by the veterinarian.

The puppy is usually introduced to solid food at around age four weeks. At this time they have their small milk teeth and are able to stand, lap and chew soft food. At about 6 weeks, they are eating fully on their own and can be fully weaned away from their mother. At six weeks, most puppies weight around 8 to 12 pounds, and start to really grow taller and heavier.

6-7 weeks.

At about 6 to 7 weeks the first vaccinations are given. These usually include DHPP, which are all the major infectious diseases that affect puppies and also Parvo which is a deadly disease affecting young puppies .

The 7-week-old puppy is eating on his own about four meals, now. And he continues to grow and develop. Between 7 and 10 weeks , the ears are cropped. This is an operation done by the veterinarian that removes a large portion of the outside of the ear. He removes the outside part of the ear, and does this in a slightly curving line from the base of the ear, near the head and up to the tip of the ear. The ears are sutured and either taped over the head and covered with gauze, or are taped and glued to a wedge of foam, or a styrofoam cup, or some other manner to keep the ears upright to allow for healing of the edges.

The ears heal and after about 10 days, the sutures are removed and the ear can then be rolled and taped to train the ear to stand erect, rather than flopping down at the side of the head. It is important to tape the ears properly and for the length of time that it takes to make sure they will continue to stand properly.

Teething

At about 12 weeks of age, the Doberman starts the teething phase of its life. This continues for the next 3 months as the baby teeth fall out and permanent ones come in. Often you will find teeth on the floor. Your puppy will just swallow them. Don't be alarmed, as this is normal. During this time the puppy can have swollen, bleeding gums and want to chew everything it can.

At six months, the Doberman puppy has all his permanent teeth, or nearly so. The ears should be standing, or taped if the crop is very long. And this is also the time that the puppy should be either neutered, if a male or spayed if a female. This operation can be done sooner at the advice of your Veterinarian. There is no need to keep intact Dobermans, or any dog, unless you are a reputable breeder of the highest caliber.

The vaccinations are complete by this age, and the puppy is old enough to start Obedience Classes or training. Training will ensure that he will be a good member of society and an asset to its owner and family. A six-month-old puppy is about half to 3/4 the height that it will eventually be. A six month old looks very much like an adult, but slightly smaller.

The wonder years

This time period is one of continued growth and maturing for the puppy. The females are usually close to being done growing height wise. They will continue to fill out and mature over the next year. The males will continue and mature over the next year and may even put on a slight amount of height, until they reach their adult maximum.

Remember the ideal height for males is 27 1/2 at the wither and 25 1/2 at the wither for females. The wither is the highest point of the Doberman's back, just behind the neck and before the back. The measurement is taken from the wither to the ground.

The weight for both males and females will increase over the next year; vary slightly for the females and more for the males. At 12 months, a Doberman is considered an adult, as most upward growth is finished. The filling out and maturing will continue for more than a year. A male is not considered at his prime until about age 3 + years and a female at about age 2 to 3 years.

The Doberman's lifespan is about 9.6 years. The adult phase of their life is from one year old until the dog reaches about 7. During this mature phase the Doberman is at its peak. These are the years are when your dog is most active, and is doing most of the family activities, show events such as Obedience and Agility and just enjoying life with his people. The training and Obedience is done and life is good. Puppyhood is over and you can trust your Doberman.

At seven years old, the Doberman is considered a senior or a Veteran, according to the Show language. They are beginning or already have slowed down. They may show signs of some arthritis or muscular aches and pains. For many, the spirit is willing, but the body is not able. They may need a different diet, and the medical needs will probably change. Heart problems and cancer are major concerns.

Good Food, Healthy Dog

Give your puppy a consistent diet of a high-quality premium brand dry puppy food. In general, you should offer your puppy three meals daily from eight to 16 weeks of age; then twice daily from 16 weeks to one year of age.

By 5 to 6 months, the puppy will more than likely be eating twice a day, with maybe a snack of a couple biscuits in-between the two meals. You will need to observe the puppy's weight and body condition. The puppy should be neither too thin nor too fat. You should be able to "feel his ribs when you push in on the sides."

At one year, you may continue to feed twice daily or decrease to once daily, unless your veterinarian advises otherwise. This is the time to provide real bones (cooked), rawhides, pig ears and other safe things for the puppy to chew on.

Also, large stuffy toys that they can bite down on and help some of those teeth come through are helpful. Puppies at this age chew and swallow anything and everything that they can fit into their mouth. Nylon bones, safe bones, big rawhides are safe as long as they are large and the puppy cannot swallow them.

Let the puppy eat all it wants in 10 to 15 minutes, then pick up the food. It's best not to allow your puppy easy and constant access to food. This could lead to obesity and an increase in the frequency and severity of bone and joint problems in the larger breeds. Your veterinarian and breeder can advise you when to change to an adult diet, based on your breed of dog and other factors.

Avoid feeding your puppy table scraps or changing brands unnecessarily. If you need to change your puppy's food for any reason, do it gradually over a period of 4-to-7 days, preferably by overlapping both the old and the new puppy food together, until the old food is phased out completely. Canned dog food can loosen his stool, making housebreaking more difficult.

Many Doberman breeders recommend a lower protein puppy food (less than 28%) for the first months of puppyhood. They also suggest discontinuing feeding puppy food at an early age, around 4 months.

This practice is thought to help reduce the incidence of Panosteitis (wandering lameness) and reduce the rapid growth produced by a higher ratio of protein found in most commercial puppy foods. Many also recommend raising the food dish off the floor to lessen neck strain while feeding.

Your Doberman needs a high quality dog food to remain healthy and happy. The amount of food each dog needs varies with the dog, his activity level, and the food. You should start off feeding the quantity recommended on the package of the food you feed, and adjust up or down depending on the way your dog gains or loses weight.

Remember, to keep your dog fit and lean. Make sure your dog does not become obese. How many meals you give your Doberman each day is largely a matter of your preference. Many people believe that it is healthier for him to eat two small meals each day rather than one large meal.

This is because they believe that "Bloat", a life-threatening condition where the dog's stomach twists trapping food & gas and obstructing the blood flow in the abdomen, is more likely if the stomach contains a large amount of food, but there is no proof of this.

Premium or Super Premium food is excellent quality dog food for the Doberman. Dogs are carnivores and require high quality meal in their diet. Premium foods that contain large amounts of good meats are necessary for good health. These types of foods are usually not found on the grocery store shelf. Water is essential at all times. Most people feed their dogs once or twice a day, depending on their schedules. Feeding routines are flexible.

Tips

- * A Doberman puppy or adult requires nutritionally balanced meals.
- * Get the breeder's and vet's advice before you feed your growing puppy a large growth range of dry dog food.
- * The average feed intake per day is 390 - 480 grams at a cost from \$2-00 - \$3-00 per day. The other options are a natural diet of raw beef and fiber and added additions to balance the diet, dog sausage or tinned food but this would usually work out at a higher daily cost than dry dog food feeding. If you choose food like dog sausages, you must add the supplements needed for your growing puppy.

House Breaking

You need to supervise very closely. It only takes a few seconds for your puppy to soil your house, so watch for signs that your puppy may need to eliminate, such as sniffing the floor, slowing down, circling or twirling in place, running out of sight suddenly.

These are signals that he is about to urinate or defecate. Watch every movement of his. When he begins to exhibit any of the previous behavior, rush him to the place you want him to defecate and urinate and praise him. Only the best dogs know to go in the yard or on the paper. Sooner or later you will notice that he is repeating some type of behavior before eliminating, and you can start reinforcing that behavior by taking him to his poop place.

Often the dog will develop his own signal, which need not necessarily be the one you'd like but it is a signal that he is learning, like dropping a shoe on your foot, which does get your attention.

You need to praise or reward when he urinates or defecates where you want, because at that age puppies urinate and defecate a lot. He will have to go out frequently, and the best thing is to take him out so frequently that he does not have a chance to be uncomfortable and have to signal you.

Puppies need to urinate shortly after they eat, drink water, play, chew, or sleep. For most puppies over 10 weeks of age, that means somewhere between 5 and 10 times a day. Adolescent dogs (from 6 to 11 months old) will need 4 to 6 walks a day. Adult dogs need 3 to 4 walks a day, and elderly dogs need at least 3 to 4 walks daily (incontinent dogs will need more).

First of all, establish a regular feeding schedule so his digestive cycle is predictable. Pick up his water bowl at night. Crate training or area confinement is recommended for puppies and most adolescent dogs when left unsupervised alone in the house. If done properly, crate training is an efficient and humane way to prevent house training accidents as well to keep your puppy safe when you cannot watch him.

The crate should not be used for excessive periods of time and should not be used as a punishment. Brief “time outs” in the crate, though, are fine.

Keep a diary of your puppy’s urinating and defecating times for several days or more. Determine the minimum interval between elimination. Subtract 15-30 minutes from this period of time and that will be your puppy’s temporary “Safety Zone.”

This is the duration of time he can generally be trusted to control himself after he is taken for a walk or has “gone” on his newspapers. Make sure however, that he is still closely supervised any time he is not confined to his crate or confinement area.

Crate Training

Here he will always have access to newspapers or a litter box.

Let most of the area here be taken up by the paper or box. Except for a small blanket or bed, food and water bowls, and a toy. Leave no other open space. Most puppies don’t want to soil their bed so they will usually go on the paper or in the box, especially when you give them no other choice. That’s why the pen should be small: to help build the correct habit from day one. Whenever your puppy goes on the paper or box, praise him.

After a few days expand the size of the pen so he has more room to play. If he makes a mistake by going on the new open floor inside the pen rather than on her papers or in her box, reduce the pen again so he must go in the right place.

Whenever he is outside of the pen (remember, this should only be while you’re playing with him) occasionally lead him back onto the papers or into the litterbox with a treat. This helps him remember where his box is. If at any time he actually runs in and uses the box, praise him and give him a big treat

If you have confined your puppy overnight to a crate, take him outside first thing in the morning. Stay outdoors with him until he eliminates. This could take from a few minutes to as much as several hours.

Follow a routine:

*Establish a regular in-and-out schedule. Take him out about every two hours plus whenever he wakes from a nap, after he eats or when he suddenly walks in small quick circles or sniffs the floor.

*Choose a bathroom spot in your yard. Take him directly to that spot, on leash. Stand still. He can circle around you but the leash prevents him from running off to play. Don’t speak other than to occasionally encourage him to “Hurry up” or “Go potty.”

*If he gets bored and sits down take a few steps to get him moving and then stand still again. If he really doesn't have to go bring him back inside, put him in his crate and close the door. After a couple of minutes, take him back outside. He will learn that he must go to the bathroom, even a token drop, before he is allowed to run and play.

*When he does go, praise him. "Good boy!" You might even give him a treat. Then romp and play with him for a while. As soon as your puppy eliminates outdoors, offer lavish praise and a treat. If you take your puppy back inside the house before he's fully eliminated, he will surely have a house soiling accident indoors. If you absolutely have to return home before your puppy finishes his job, crate him, then try taking him outside again every 15-30 minutes until he "goes".

Shut all the doors

Many puppies and dogs prefer certain areas or surfaces to eliminate on, such as rugs. Keep your puppy away from risky areas or surfaces whenever possible. If your puppy suddenly runs out of sight, it may be to look for a secret spot to eliminate, so close doors to rooms where he may sneak a quick pee or poop.

Neutralize urine odors with an enzyme-based deodorizer. Should your puppy have a few house-soiling accidents despite your best efforts to prevent them, neutralize any soiled areas (carpet or floor surface) with an pet odor neutralizer. Avoid using ammonia-based cleaners to clean up after your puppy's urine, as ammonia breaks down to urea, which is a component of urine.

Say no to water after 9pm

It is best to take away your puppy's water bowl after 9 pm, unless he seems very thirsty or weather conditions are exceedingly hot. A couple of ice cubes are OK.

Remember will make housetraining tough for you. Never ever discipline (verbally or otherwise) your puppy or dog after he has soiled your house.

Submissive and excitement urination are completely involuntary, so never discipline your puppy for this. Eye contact, verbal scolding, hovering over, reaching out to pet your puppy's head, animated movements, talking in an exciting or loud voice, as well as strangers/ visitors approaching your puppy, may all potentially trigger your puppy to piddle. Disciplining your puppy for involuntary piddling must be avoided or the problem will simply get worse.

Your vet and you

As we said earlier, bringing a new puppy home is similar to bringing home a new human baby. You will need to visit your veterinarian during the first year frequently. If you don't already have a regular veterinarian, establish a relationship with one before you bring puppy home. Ask for referrals from the breeder or from your dog-owning friends. When choosing a veterinarian, there are several things to consider.

How comfortable are you with the veterinarian? You must be able to ask questions and feel that they are taken seriously and will be answered thoughtfully. Your veterinarian should be knowledgeable in all areas of dog health as well as basic dog behavior and training. He should be able to provide referrals to local trainers and kennels as needed.

Your first visit with your new puppy is an important one. Most veterinarians will schedule a long appointment in order to discuss their preventive healthcare plan with you. Breeders usually give initial vaccines at five to six weeks of age. Vaccinations are repeated at eight, 12 and 16 weeks to protect against distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza and parvovirus. A rabies vaccine is also given at 16 weeks. Other vaccines may be given against bordatella, leptospirosis, Lyme disease and coronavirus .

Administering these vaccines depends upon the area in which you live and the puppy's potential risk of exposure. Occasionally, a fifth parvovirus vaccine is given at 18 to 24 weeks of age, especially for Rottweilers and Doberman Pinschers, which are particularly susceptible to this disease. After the initial series of vaccines, your dog will receive annual boosters to continue his protection against these potentially deadly diseases.

During this first series of visits, your veterinarian will also discuss other important health concerns with you. One of these is the presence and prevention of parasites. Most common are worms that can infest the intestinal tract. Your veterinarian will ask you to bring in for analysis during your visits to check for the presence of these parasites.

Don't try to treat parasites without veterinary advice and supervision. Different types of worms require different types of treatments. Heartworm, another internal parasite, is currently present in most parts of the country, and the best treatment is prevention.

During the first six months, no heartworm test is required to start your puppy on any heartworm medication; however, it is usually necessary thereafter. Because heartworm is spread by mosquito bites, no dog can remain completely unexposed to this deadly disease.

Prevention is very simple with a once-a-month pill that provides virtually 100-per-cent protection. Your veterinarian will tell you during which months you must give the preventive for your region.

Another major concern is external. Fleas and ticks. These not only cause significant irritation to your puppy but may also have the potential to spread disease. Your veterinarian will discuss the seasons in which these parasites are major problems, as well as an appropriate means of control for your specific area.

These parasites are easily controllable when the correct products are used on an appropriate schedule of prevention. It is much more difficult to deal with an established infestation than to prevent one from occurring in the first place.

Coat

You should not have a problem with his coat. A quick brush with a woolen sock works to get a great shine and put all those little hairs in just the proper place. To get a fast shine and great smell on your Dobe, mix a little Listerine and water in a spray bottle and apply a small mist to your Dobe, then wipe down with a soft towel. Always wipe/brush, in the direction of the growth of the coat. Bathing should be kept to a minimum, using a very mild shampoo and rinsing thoroughly.

Some Dobermans have poor coats. Fawns and Blues are susceptible to a condition called Color Dilution Alopecia, or CDA. If your dog suffers from a thinning coat, have a thyroid check done. Very often a thinning coat is a sign of hypothyroidism. If it is not the thyroid, a richer diet could help.

Eye

Mucus build-up in the eye is common in Dobs and should be wiped out daily. The color of the discharge should be gray. Yellow or green discharge could mean an infection and your Dobe should see a vet.

Teeth

Brush his teeth daily. Periodically scale his teeth with a professional scaler to remove the build up of plaque and tartar. Place the flat, sharp side of the instrument against the tooth and scrape downward on the tooth. Make sure to start up under the gum and then scrape down. Most veterinarians are more than glad to show you exactly how to do this.

Make an appointment with your vet to have your Doberman's teeth cleaned. Most veterinarians will anesthetize your dog to perform this procedure, so this is definitely the most risky option.

Nails

Handle nail care by grinding. With grinding you won't run the risk of cutting into the quick. Grinding should be started as early as possible and may need to be done weekly or bi-weekly when the nails are under control.

If you turn the dog's foot over and look underneath the toenail you will "see" where the quick comes to the end of the nail (there is a little "v") and beyond that is the part that you want to grind down/off. Knowing where the quick stops and the nail begin will eliminate "quicking" the dog.

If grooming nails of your Dobe becomes a traumatic event, seek help from a Dobe breeder/handler. Done properly, your Dobe will stand/sit/lie down to have their nails done.

Toys

The Doberman is likely to destroy most toys suitable for other breeds. Dobs also love tennis balls but these should only be provided with supervision. There are known cases of Dobermans choking on tennis balls. Beware of products stating they can be "ingested" safely. This does not mean they can be digested successfully.

Ear Cropping

Ear cropping should only be done by those that are very experienced in this procedure.

If you plan on showing your Dobe, make sure that you find out about a show crop. See the descriptions below:

Length of Ears

Military/Pet Crop:

This ear is shorter in length and has a wider base (bell). It does not take very long to stand.

Medium Crop:

A longer ear with a little less bell.

Show Crop:

This crop is longer and a little narrower than the other two crops.

Ear Taping

Caring for the ears should only be done under the guidance of an experienced Doberman vet/breeder/handler. It requires time and commitment on the part of the owner. The general view is that the ears should be taped for a week, then untaped long enough to allow the ears to breathe and dry out, then taped back up again.

The longer the ears are left untaped, the longer it will take for them to stand on their own. By the time the pup's permanent teeth come in (around 6 months), or before, they should be able to stand upright with no artificial support.

Important things to remember when taping the ear: Check for odors (should not have a foul smell). Don't allow the ear become wet. If this should happen, rewrap with dry tape. Do not take the ears down and let the ears "hang" for any length of time. When the ear(s) fall — put them right back up in the roll.

Ask us

How good are commercial foods?

Commercial foods are good and bad. Some commercially prepared dog foods are not acceptable foodstuffs for dogs. Sometimes, pet foods are made from waste and byproducts from the human food industry. That is because, there is no body guiding the pet food industry.

Naturally, some of the food often contains contaminants having little or no nutritional value and may be harmful to your dog. But there some very good commercial foods on the market that are nutritionally complete for your dog. Most of them contain the ingredients listed on the packages.

What are the basic constituents of a balanced diet?

A combination of meats and cereal grains is very important in maintaining a balanced diet for your pet. Your dog should get the daily requirements of protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins, minerals, and water from his diet to develop properly. You may need to make some dietary changes depending on your dog's age, growth, and activity level. Talk to your vet. If your dog becomes pregnant or sick, the nutritional needs will change.

What are dry foods?

Kibble is just little biscuits. They may appear more expensive than moist foods. They are more concentrated, so you don't have to feed your dog so much. Read the instructions to check the exact amount to feed. You don't have to keep dried food in the fridge, and you can leave it in your dog's bowl all day, so that he can eat whenever he likes. Dry food also can help to keep your dog's teeth clean. Make sure that it is a 'complete' dried food and not mixed up with other foods.

What is BARF?

Many people advocate BARF. Raw Food is also called BARF. : Biologically Appropriate Raw Foods or Bones and Raw Foods diets. There are several people who are feeding a raw diet exclusively and are having great success with it. BARF. They claim it detoxifies your dog.

What you need most is a supply of raw meaty bones (RMB) for chewing but more importantly for eating. These form the basis of the diet. Most people feed chicken or turkey wings, necks, backs or carcasses. These pieces consist of bone, cartilage, fat and a little bit of flesh. The optimal RMB is 50% meat to 50% bone. Other meaty bone sources should be evaluated for the required balance of these components according to the needs of the dog being fed.

Which is better: white meat or red meat?

White meats seem to be healthier for dogs than red meats. This may be because they are higher in essential fatty acids unlike red meats, which are higher in saturated fats and associated with degenerative conditions such as arthritis. But try and incorporate variety, (beef, lamb, pork, ostrich) several times a week.

What kind of feeding dish should I use?

Use hard plastic, stainless steel or earthenware dishes. These are available in many shapes and sizes. Choose one that is large enough to hold each meal, but is stable. It should not tip over or spill as your dog eats. It is very important to keep your dog's feeding and watering dishes clean on a daily basis. Once the dog has finished his meal, throw away any uneaten food and clean the dishes. They should be washed using hot water and soap, and then rinsed and dried.

Is a Dobe an outside dog or an inside one?

A Dobe is not a dog that does well outside. They are a people dog and do well in the same environment that you prefer. They take after its owner. If you feel hot, so will your Dobe. If you are too cold, or don't like standing in the sun, you can bet your Dobe is uncomfortable too.

Do I need a lot of space for it?

A fenced yard is a big plus (some breeders require it) but a Doberman can do well in a small yard or even in an apartment as long as the owner realizes that the Doberman loves exercise and must be willing to provide daily walks and or runs.

Is a Dobe safe with kids?

Interaction with children when the Doberman is a puppy often enables the dog to develop a strong loving bond with the child and family. Rescued and older dogs also adapt well to children. However, do not leave dogs and small children unsupervised.

Do Dobses shed a lot?

Doberman Pinschers shed quite a bit. Their short coarse hairs come off on your hands when you pet them, and stick to your carpeting, upholstery, and clothing.

Do puppies need to be handled with care?

Yes. During the first few months, you should treat them like China. Try not to lose with your puppy. Even if he does something wrong. Treat it as a teaching moment and say "No" in a calm voice. You should carry your puppy downstairs; help it out of cars and other places until 4-5 months old to prevent joint and growth plate injuries. Don't force him to exercise. If he is tired, let him rest. Tired muscles become weak and injuries are more likely to occur at that time.

Can I take him to the pool?

Swimming is fine except that tiredness and water intake need to be monitored to prevent cramps and accidental drowning.

Where can I take my puppy to exercise?

Ensure that he doesn't play on slippery surfaces or with adult dogs as these can cause muscle, joint and growth plate injuries. Do not allow him to jump up for a treat, a toy or jump off or over objects that are more than 1ft. high until beyond 1 year and then only on good footing and with common sense. You can let the puppy to run and play on safe footing as much as he wants of his own free will. Let him be in a safely enclosed area when playing off a leash.

How do you carry a puppy?

Never pick the puppy up under the shoulders like a child. Always support his rear. If you have young children make sure they pick the puppy up as they might drop and injure him. However, do not carry the puppy all the time as they need the walking exercise and if carried a lot it increases the jumping up on people.

Are Dobes a pure breed?

Yes.

Are Dobes emotionally very needy?

Yes. They need to be with you all the time. If you are happy, so are they. So try not to make the environment very stressful. They can get sick.

Why are people terrified of Dobes?

Perhaps they've run into one, which was badly trained. Do not worry. A Dobe brought up the right way is a very obedient dog.

How can I make sure my Dobe's coat shines?

Use a rubber brush or a woolen sock. It gives a great shine.

What are the accepted colors for a Dobe?

The four colors are: Black and rust. Blue and rust. Fawn and rust. Red and rust.

Should I crate train my Doberman?

The crate was designed with the Doberman in mind. It is practically his home in a home. If introduced properly and in a positive manner, it becomes a safe haven and a secure place. Whenever things get too hectic and he needs a break he can go to his crate. When he has to travel, you can pack his home and take it. This goes a long way in settling him. He is protected from himself when there is no one to supervise him.

It is very unfair to leave a young, unsupervised Doberman alone in the house and expect him to be good. When he is safely in his crate and you come home you know that you can enjoy your dog and he can enjoy you without the trauma of a big, unexpected mess. Last, but certainly not least, if your dog is ever ill and is required to stay in a crate, either at home or at the vet, it will help his recovery if he is comfortable resting in his crate.

What do they eat and about how much?

Because of their high energy level they should be fed a high quality food containing a good balance of protein and fat and with essential fatty acids. Most normally active Dobermans will require a higher level of fat and protein than many other breeds throughout their lives. Adults will eat from 2-5 cups of food a day depending on the individual dogs metabolism and how much activity they are getting. Good quality, balanced food will also help to keep the coat healthy and reduce shedding.

Where should they live?

A Doberman that gets a lot of exercise and interaction with family makes an excellent housedog but he must have a secure area to run and play in or he should be taken on very regular romps to let off some steam. A Doberman that has been cooped up and not allowed to play rambunctiously may be too active to enjoy in the house. Because of their curious nature and high activity level it is best if young dogs sleep in a confined, secure place such as a crate. This assures that the dog does not “accidentally” get into trouble during the night when he wakes up and is unsupervised. Older, mature dogs that have proven themselves trustworthy housedogs can be allowed to sleep loose.

Dobermans cannot be outside dogs and they cannot be ignored. An ignored Doberman will become bored very easily. The high intellect and curious nature of the breed will result in some very undesirable behaviors. Barking, digging and general destruction both indoors and outdoors can result.

What are the grooming needs of a Doberman and how often should they be done?

Maintaining your Doberman is minimal compared to many other breeds but there are still some areas that require attention. Good dental health is also a must. Teach the dog early to enjoy having his teeth brushed with a toothbrush and toothpaste designed for dogs. Also, encourage him to chew on toys that are designed to clean teeth and stimulate gums.

Toenails should be kept short. It is best to do them once a week. Long nails can be hazardous. Also, if they are too long the dog will be walking on the nails, as opposed to walking on pads of the feet as they are supposed to, resulting in sore, splayed feet.

How can you take care of a Dobe's coat?

Baths with a good quality shampoo that is mild on the skin, as well as regular, consistent grooming with a rubber-grooming glove are good. This will keep the skin stimulated and the hair healthy plus it will remove the dead hairs before they fall off on the furniture. A good way to cleanse him without a frequent bath is to make a mixture of 1/3 Listerine Mouthwash, 1/3 glycerine and 1/3 water and put it in a spray bottle. Spray the dog daily and wipe down with a soft cloth. This will keep the dandruff and shedding to a minimum and give your dog a sleek, shiny coat year round.

How much exercise do they need?

Your dog, like most canines, will be most secure and content with a regular daily routine. A Doberman's daily routine definitely must include some form of exercise preferably morning and evening. The ideal would be time to run and play in a secure fenced area; at least a half hour in the morning and in the evening. Or a brisk morning and evening walk or jog is essential. If you live in the city, you will have to get more creative with providing him high energy, a daily opportunity to blow off steam and to stay in condition, maybe a treadmill type dog jogger, or a local basketball court where a ball or Frisbee can be safely chased.

What toys and supplies do I need to buy?

Most Dobermans like toys that they can fetch. Teach your dog early on to chew on proper toys that will result in good dental health. Hard nylon chew toys or sterilized bones are good for helping reduce the tartar on their teeth. He may not like them so encourage him. Some dog treats such as rawhide bones and rope toys should be given to the dog only when supervised. These types of toys can be dangerous if the dog eats them rather than just chewing them and most Dobermans are inclined to do this. Some dogs enjoy their treats and simply enjoy chewing them; others simply destroy them and swallow large pieces.

Is the Miniature Pinscher related to the Doberman Pinscher?

Originally, Miniature Pinschers may have been used in the creation of the Doberman Pinscher. Though there is not much evidence. Probably, the two breeds are related through their common ancestor, the German Pinscher. Miniature Pinschers do not resemble in Doberman Pinschers in temperament. They are not miniature Dobermans. They look like a Doberman in coloring.

What kind of dog is the Miniature Pinscher ?

This dog has been grouped with the Toy Group by the American Kennel Club. It is referred to as, "The King of Toys". It is an assertive, outgoing, active and independent breed.

The right Miniature Pinschers measure only 10" to 12.5" at the shoulder but are a bundle of energy. Loving, affectionate and playful, the Miniature Pinscher makes its own rules, but will bend to yours if treated with affection and care.

Miniature Pinschers can be good with children if the children are good with dogs. While they look like toys, they are not toys. Children should always be supervised with dogs, and most especially with small dogs.

Is crate training really important?

Yes. But that does not mean you can leave him in a crate all day long. He needs to get out in the evening for a few hours and put back in the crate for the night. Otherwise, he can become neurotic, destructive, unhappy and noisy. If you work all day, find someone who can take your dog out for a long walk in the afternoon. If this is not possible, only use the crate at night. You must invest time and energy for just a few short weeks in housetraining. The effort you put in now will last for the rest of your pet's life.

Here's how you train the little fellow. Buy a crate and for the first 3 to 4 weeks keep your puppy in it when you are not with him. Make sure the crate is not too big. It should be large enough for the puppy's bed, but no larger. Dogs do not want to soil their bed and the use of a crate teaches them to control their urge to eliminate. You must supervise at all times. As soon as you see him pacing, sniffing around, and turning in circles, immediately take him outside.

Be patient and do not rush him. He may have to go several times. Give him about 10 minutes before taking him back inside. Do not play with him while you are on this mission. Let him know this is business.

Be consistent and establish a schedule. Pay attention to your puppy's behavior so you can develop a schedule that works for you and the pup.

How do you train him to pee on a newspaper?

Place layered newspaper in the corner away from the feeding and water dishes. After meals take the puppy to the newspaper. Each time the puppy pees change the top layer of newspaper and leave the bottom layer. Puppies like to go where they smell urine and feces and will start to prefer the newspaper to any other spot.

Chapter 5

Follow The Leader

My dog is not listening to me, these days. What should I do? He is rude and barks incessantly. Roxy hates people coming over. I want my dog to be my friend. I don't want to control him.

These are common complaints from owners. The truth is, dogs belong in a group. Unlike cats which are solitary animals. Dogs love to be social. Their world is very black and white. Either you are the leader or the follower. If the ground rules about who the leader are not established or fixed in his head, he will disobey you.

Should you train on your own?

Well, the correct thing to say would be: don't. If you are not 100% sure about how to train your dog in this way, you should not attempt it alone. Take your Doberman to a local training class. They will be able to assess your dog's temperament and ability. They will also be able to find out what you want from your dog. For example, do you want a full working dog or just a family guard? These are two totally different propositions. They will give you the right advice.

Training your Dobe is definitely no joke. So it's best if you meet an expert on this and have a proper consultation, face to face. The consequences are too serious and in extreme cases of bad training, the dog may have to be put down.

For example, when teaching a dog to sit, lots of people start by saying "sit down". This is actually two commands. Naturally, dogs often get confused and don't know whether to sit or to lie down. A dog can also become confused about who is a threat and who is not. Apart from these issues, your progress will need to be monitored every step of the way.

Catch 'em young

It is important to start training your new puppy as soon as you bring it home. As we said, if you are confident, you can train yourself. Otherwise, a professional can be hired. Local dog training classes are often available. Ask your veterinarian to recommend a trainer or look in your local newspaper for a trainer in your area.

There are two types of training: behavioral, and obedience.

Behavioral Training

This corrects bad habits that your puppy or dog may have developed. Jumping, car chasing, begging, climbing on furniture, and chewing are just a few. It is very important to be consistent during the training process. For example, do not let your puppy on the couch unless you are planning to always let him. This will confuse him, causing problems.

Obedience Training

This consists of several commands you want executed. Like 'sit', 'stay' or 'come'. These training sessions should be frequent but short to prevent your dog from becoming bored: ten to fifteen minute sessions, two or three times a day will be sufficient. It is best to train your dog right before meals so it associates his meal with a reward for the training.

Before giving a word command to your dog, speak its name to get its attention; then speak a one-word command such as "stay," "sit," "come" or "heel." Do not get impatient. You will probably have to repeat the command many times. Never use negative reinforcement.

Never call your dog to come to you for punishment: this will teach your dog not to come on command. Be sure to keep any frustration out of the tone of your voice. If you feel yourself becoming frustrated, take a break. Your dog can sense this and will start to associate training with your unhappiness.

Some of the specific commands are "sit," "stay," "come," "down" and "heel." When speaking the commands, say them loudly and clearly, repeating them often. The dog may have to hear the commands over and over, but will soon begin to associate the word with its meaning.

Always remember to praise your dog when it responds correctly. This will encourage your dog to perform correctly the next time. You may either use food or a verbal praise as the reward or both.

Sit

This is one of the first commands. When teaching your dog to sit, hold your hand high over its head with a reward in it. Your dog will look up at the reward. Use your other hand, to gently push the dog's behind into a sitting position and say in a clear, firm tone, "Sit" while still holding the reward in the air above the dog's head.

When your dog sits, reward him. Give him the treat and verbally praise him. Do not allow your dog to jump up and grab the reward out of your hand. Say firmly, "No." You may have to repeat this over and over. Eventually your dog will associate sitting with the reward and will sit without your assistance.

Remember the training sessions should be short but frequent. Repeat this method throughout the day. If you get frustrated, stop and try again later.

Stay , Come

It is usually best to teach your dog to sit before you teach it to stay. That is because your dog will have an easier time staying if he is in a sitting position. After your dog has the sitting command down and has been correctly sitting for a couple of days without assistance, it is time to teach your dog to stay and come. Tell your dog to sit.

Have two rewards in your hand. After your dog sits, give him one reward. Hold your empty hand up like a stop sign in front of your dog's face and back up slowly saying "Stay" clearly, firmly, and frequently. Be sure to stay facing your dog and remain looking at him. Walk down a short distance and say with some enthusiasm, "Come." When your dog comes to you, reward him again. If your dog gets up and runs to you without the "Come" command, say "No" and start all over again.

Remember to verbally praise him as well as provide a treat when he gets a new command right. Start off only backing up a short distance from your dog. As he begins to understand what you want of him, you may back farther away and eventually you may be able to walk out of sight and have your dog still stay until he hears the "Come" command.

Remember to be consistent and stop if you become frustrated. Your dog can sense frustration and it will confuse him. He wants to please you. If he senses frustration, he may learn to not like the training sessions.

Lie

After successfully teaching your dog to sit, stay, and come without assistance, it's time to teach it to lie down on command. Tell your dog to sit. Show him the reward you have in your hand. Hold the reward up and then bring it down in front of the dog to the floor and say "Down" in a firm clear voice.

Only give the reward if he lies down to reach it. Do not give it to him if he stands up to reach his reward. Again repeat this throughout the day as much as possible, keeping sessions short but frequent.

Note: Each training session should include any new commands you are trying as well as old commands the dog has already learned. So the dog does not forget them. Always be consistent. Important: If you become frustrated, stop and try again later.

Growling

Does your dog growl at you? Do your neighbors complain about your dog growling at them? Has your dog ever snapped at or bitten someone in front of you? What did you do? Thousands and thousands of dogs are put to sleep or given away because these problems are not handled correctly and the situation gets out of hand. This is very unfortunate because in most cases, the problem could have been avoided if the owner just understood their dog.

Growling could be due to alpha-aggression or because the dog has a psychological or emotional problem. If you think your dog has psychological or emotional problems, consult an animal behaviorist.

Make it clear to your dog that he is not the leader. Dogs have a natural instinct to have a leader, and a natural instinct to challenge the position of the leader. When your dog growls at you, he is saying he is the leader or challenging the position of the leader.

You must never tolerate growling because this will usually lead to biting. Not always, but it can. So you need to correct it as soon as possible. Let him know it is not acceptable to ever growl at you or your children. Make it clear that your children are the offspring of his Alpha leader (you) and that they are to be treated as Alpha “pups.” Do not confuse this kind of growling with puppy play growling. Only growling that is geared towards aggression growling. Puppies need to be able to be puppies.

When a dog growls or snaps, he needs to be properly corrected. Not correcting a dog at the time of the incident is like telling the dog his behavior is acceptable.

Dogs are not human. They do not think like humans, nor should they be treated like humans. The first thing one needs to understand is that a dog responds to the tone of your voice, not just your words. Try this test with your dog; in a friendly, cheerful tone, say to your dog. “You bad boy, I am going to sell you today. You are a bad dog, bad dog.” How did your dog respond?

Now say in a mad, harsh voice “you are a good boy.” How did your dog respond? Or consider this: An owner sees his dog snap at someone. The owner says to the victim, “I don’t know why he did that.” He takes his dog by the collar and leads him away saying to the dog, “What has gotten into you?” in a questioning voice. This reaction does not clearly tell the dog that his action was not correct. Chances are, this dog will snap again. It needs to be made clear to the dog that you did not approve.

Some dogs are more voice sensitive than others. With some, a harsh “NO!” is all it takes. With others, sterner steps need to be taken. They need a smack on the rear and a harsh tone. You should know your dog’s limits and correct him accordingly. Make sure your dog clearly understands that you will not put up with his bad behavior. Let him know you greatly disapprove and will not tolerate it.

Try having the person your dog growls at the most, be the only one to feed him. You want to make him sit to reinforce your position as the leader. He is learning that he depends on you and he must obey in order to eat. And if he growls after you set down the food, tell him no and take the food away. Tell him to sit again. This is how you will reinforce the “no growling rule.”

Whining and Howling

If your puppy is howling, whining or barking, it is for a reason. If the problem is not resolved immediately, whining can become an ingrained habit that is intensely irritating and annoying. Many dogs use whining, howling, and barking as a means of blackmail in order to control their owners.

What you should do

If he is confined to a crate or small room or pen, always give your puppy the benefit of the doubt. When he begins whining, immediately take her to him to the toilet area.

Teach your puppy to accept isolation and privacy. Get him used to being left by himself, even if you are home. This will prevent separation anxiety and all the problems that accompany it.

Make sure your puppy is comfortable. Is your puppy hungry, thirsty, too hot, too cold, uncomfortable, sick, or has lost his toy under the furniture?

Once your puppy's physical needs are met and you have taken the time to accustom him to isolation, teach him that whining is unacceptable.

What you should not do

Do not ever give in and reward your puppy for whining.

Do not hesitate to appropriately reprimand unnecessary whining.

Do not let your dog feel abandoned

Separation Anxiety

Before we discuss separation anxiety, make sure your puppy is really suffering from it. It may not be separation anxiety after all. Perhaps your dog is trying to have some fun with you if there is nothing else to do. He may be relieved to be able to get angry, howl and jump because he can't do those when you're home.

Some dogs with separation anxiety are stressed, nervous and insecure when they are left alone. They express this nervous energy in typical dog fashion: chewing, digging, barking and house soiling.

To prevent separation anxiety, dogs need to feel happy, secure, and comfortable when you're away. It's important to give them things to do while you're gone. Provide them with lots of toys, or a digging pit in the yard. Often another companion pet can help make thing fun and keep boredom at bay.

You can also prevent separation anxiety by setting aside scheduled time periods to give your dog-undivided attention, play and exercise. A happy, well-exercised dog will usually sleep contentedly during the day while you are gone. Be sure that one of the scheduled play sessions occurs before you must leave for the day. Give your dog a chance to settle down before you leave and don't make a big deal of your departure. Just leave without any emotion or commotion

Chewing

If you are a first-time owner, welcome to a fun world. Chewing, ripping, shredding, tearing up and generally destroying stuff is as normal for dogs as tail wagging. You should, as a matter of fact, expect chewing. .

Dogs do not chew and destroy your house and belongings because they are angry, jealous or spiteful. They do it because they are dogs. Since it is a dog's natural tendency, you can only curb it. Not worry about why he has it, in the first place.

Give him his own toys and teach him to use them. Otherwise, he will destructively chew anything available, such as your furniture, carpet, clothing or shoes. They may be lonely, bored, frustrated or anxious, but they are not malicious, vindictive or petty.

Active dogs can become restless when left alone for long periods. If you always come home at a certain time and you are late, your dog may become anxious. Your dog does not punish you for being late by destructive chewing. The dogs' chewing is a form of stress buster. If you come home and find that your dog has destroyed something, do not punish the dog.

Passive Training to Prevent Chewing Problems

Until your dog can be trusted not to destroy your home and yard, do not give him freedom. Give him a pleasant area or room of his own. Let him enjoy himself and relax when you are not home or are unable to supervise him. Literally flood his room with a wide variety of toys.

Since he will have no other choice of things to chew, he will learn to chew and play with his own toys. But remember to get toys that are enticing. Soak rawhide and long, marrowbones in different flavored soups. Let them dry and give a different flavor to the dog each time you leave him alone. Sterilized marrowbones and Kong toys can be stuffed with liver treats or cheese.

The dog will be entertained for hours trying to extricate the treats from the toy. Bury these toys in the dog's digging pit.

Active Training to Prevent Destructive Chewing

When you are home, take time to teach your dog to play with her toys and to seek them out whenever he feels like chewing. Always praise your dog lavishly every time you see him playing with or chewing on one of his toys. Teach your dog to find his toys. Scatter several toys in different rooms throughout the house. Lead him from room to room encouraging him to pick up a toy when he sees one. When he does so, reward with affection, play and even a food treat, then continue the game.

Anticipate Chewing

Usually, most destructive chewing occurs just before the owner returns home. The dog is anxiously anticipating the owner's return and this energy is released by chewing. You can prevent your dog from chewing whatever is handy and instead chew his own toys. Whenever you return home, insist that your dog greet you with a toy in her mouth.

At first you will have to help him by telling him to find his toy. Wait until he has a toy firmly in his mouth and only then give your usual home coming greeting. Within a few days, your dog will realize that you never say hello unless he has a toy in his mouth.

In the next few days, before your dog starts anticipating your return, he will automatically begin looking for a toy with which to gain your greeting and approval when you do return. If a toy is already in his mouth, he will be likely to chew on it, rather than on the furniture, to release tension.

Chewing Deterrents

You can deter him from chewing. You can sternly scold him with a verbal warning. Send him to one of his own toys and praise him for chewing it. This will teach your dog not to chew forbidden items when you are present.

However, it probably may not discourage the dog from getting curious about these items when you are not there. The only way to prevent your dog from chewing these things is to make them inherently unattractive.

There are many products in pet stores that are designed to apply to furniture that are safe but repulsive to dogs. Why chew on something that is boring, distasteful or unpleasant when there are plenty of fun, exciting and tasty things to chew on?

Common Sense and Chewing

Of course, if you don't want your dog to chew up your favorite tie or shoes, keep them out of reach. Put your shoes in the closet and shut the door. Place the trash outside. Keep doors closed; keep valuables out of reach. Praise and reward your dog profusely for chewing her own toys.

Inhibit Biting

You must teach your dog to inhibit his bite before he is 4 months old. Especially a protector dog like a Dobe. Normally, he would learn this from their mother, his littermates and other members of the pack. But, because we take them away from this environment before this learning is completed, we must take over the training.

Socialization Prevents Biting

The importance of socialization cannot be overemphasized. By allowing your puppy to socialize with other puppies and socialized dogs, they can pick up where they left off. Puppies need to roll, tumble and play with each other. When they play, they bite each other everywhere and anywhere. This is where they learn to inhibit their biting. This is where they learn to control themselves. If they are too rough or rambunctious, they will find out.

After all, the other dogs and puppies react and interact with them. This is something that happens naturally. It can only be learned from trial and error. There is nothing you can say or do to educate them in this realm

The other major advantage of socialization is that it will help your dog to grow up not being fearful of other dogs. They will then vent their energy in an acceptable manner. Puppies that have other puppies to play with do not need to treat you like littermates. So the amount of play biting on you and your family should dramatically decrease. Puppies that do not play with other puppies are generally much more hyperactive and destructive in the home as well.

Lack of socialization often results in fearful or aggressive behavior. The two major reactions a dog has to something it is afraid of are to avoid it or to act aggressive in an attempt to make it go away. This is the most common cause of children being bitten. Dogs that are not socialized with children often end up biting them.

The optimum time to socialize is before the dog reaches 4 months. With large breed dogs, 4 months may be too late, simply because at this age the puppy may already be too large for most mothers of young children to feel comfortable around.

For most owners, the larger the dog is, the more difficult it is to control, especially around children. If there is anything you do not want your dog to be afraid of or aggressive towards, you must begin to socialize your puppy with them before it is 4 months old.

Helpful Hints

1. Reprimand alone will never stop biting.
2. Respect is important. If not, the biting will get worse. If you act like a littermate, the dog will treat you as one.
3. Get the dog's trust. Otherwise, the dog may eventually bite out of fear or lack of confidence.
4. Be consistent. If you let the dog bite some of the time, then biting will never be completely eliminated.
5. Make sure the dog understands one important point. That it is the biting that you don't like, not the dog itself. Make up afterwards, but on your terms..

Jumping

Another annoying habit is jumping .It can also be dangerous. It's not just the owners of biting dogs who are sued. The owners of jumping dogs are too. Young children and elderly people can easily be toppled over and seriously injured by exuberant, friendly dogs. Start early to teach your puppy not to jump up. Even little dogs can cause problems and injury to themselves and others when they leap and jump around.

In a very gentle manner, place puppy's feet back on the floor and reward him there. Do this repeatedly. Be consistent. Get down to his level to give affection and attention. Never pet, talk, cuddle or reward him for jumping.

Clicker Training

A clicker is a cricket-like box with a metal tongue that makes a click-click sound when you press it. You can train your dog with this device. Click it and deliver some desirable treat, many times in a row. Simply click the clicker, pause a moment, and give the dog the treat. After you've done this a few times, you may see the animal visibly startle, look towards the treat, or look to you.

This indicates that he's starting to form the association. This is called, "creating a conditioned reinforcer". The click sound becomes a signal for an upcoming reinforcement.

Sometimes, you may wonder about your dog's behavior. Are you training him well? Or is there something lacking? Here are a few hints on how to recognize the signs of an alpha dog.

- *He resists obeying commands that he knows well.
- * He won't move out of your way when required.
- * He nudges your hand, takes you're arm in his mouth or insists on being petted or played
- *He defends his food bowl, toys or other objects from you.
- *He growls or bares his teeth at you under any circumstances.
- *He won't let anyone (you, the vet, the groomer) give him medication or handle him.
- *He gets up on furniture without permission and won't get down.
- *He snaps at you.

How to tackle this issue

Consult an animal behavior specialist if you recognize the signs of dominance aggression in your dog. No physical punishment should be used. Getting physical with a dominant dog may cause the dog to intensify his aggression, posing the risk of injury to you.

Take precautions to ensure the safety of your family and others who may encounter your dog. Avoiding situations that elicit the aggressive behavior. Every time your dog acts aggressively, back off and use “happy talk” to relieve the tenseness of the situation.

Supervise, confine and/or restrict your dog’s activities as necessary, especially when children or other pets are present. When you’re indoors with your dog, use baby gates and crate your dog. You can also use a cage-type muzzle, or a gentle leash, but only when you can closely supervise your dog.

Your dog off the leash

This question is a bit like asking, when will you let your kids take independent decisions. Frankly, this depends on the individual. Obviously, the right answer would be: When the individual is responsible and trustworthy enough for you to have the confidence that he can take good decisions.

Is your dog socialized enough that he will not fear being aggressive towards other people and dogs? Can you trust your dog not to jump on people (especially children), chase joggers, fight with other dogs, pick up garbage, invade picnic lunches and so forth? Unsociable and skittish dogs will often bolt if something frightens them.

Most importantly, can you control your dog off the leash? Will your dog reliably come when called and stop when told to stay? These commands are essential for your dog’s safety. Some dogs when let off leash will simply run away. Other dogs will chase a tennis ball or a cat right into the street.

If you feel you can risk the safety of the public, the safety of your dog and the security of your finances (paying your own or someone else’s medical or veterinary bill, facing a lawsuit, etc) then do so.

If you are unwilling to take the risk, only let your dog off-leash in areas where the above-mentioned risks do not exist. A fenced-in dog park is ideal. Tennis courts are usually completely enclosed. Your dog may not come when called but at least you can just go and get him or her when it’s time to leave. If your own yard is not large enough, find a friend or neighbor with a yard where their dog and yours can get together to run and play.

Use a long leash on outings to give your dog some freedom but still allow you to maintain control.

Classical conditioning

The Russian physiologist Pavlov studied how animals learn about the environment. His theory was that if a dog had to wait for the claws of a bear to sink into his flesh before running from the danger, he could never survive. The fact is clear - the warning or signal must come before the correction. An obvious answer but you'll be surprised to know that most owners haven't figured this out.

Experiment

Let's get an assistant to ring the bell. Your dog will fling himself toward the door, barking and fussing. By the time, you can get to the door; the dog has been displaying the behavior for about 10 seconds. Now we know what the dog is likely to do in this situation.

The next time, you throw a pillow before you say, "No". Fido rushes the door. It takes you ten seconds to get there and throw the pillow at the dog. You might as well skip the word, no; it hasn't given you any advantage over just throwing the pillow.

Now we try the theoretically correct, natural approach to the problem. This time, as the doorbell rings, he again starts to rush the door. At the first instant of rushing toward the door, you say the word, "No" to identify which behavior causes the pillow to fly. We then throw the pillow at the dog. You will see the advantages of this method on the next repetition.

Now, something unusual happens. When the bell sounds, and you say "No", the dog checks for a second. Instead of worrying about the door, he is suddenly concerned about that blasted pillow. The use of a warning signal before the actual correction has disrupted the behavior effectively. Over two of three additional trials, the behavior of rushing the door will disappear. Now, you can reward him for his passive behavior.

The Alpha Position

In simple words, training is only about the Alpha position. Once you establish a few basic rules, you will have a lovely, obedient dog for a companion.

Always walk through the door first. If your dog always goes ahead of you, you need to get your leash and pull him back.

Do not let your dog sleep in the same bed as you. If you just can't be without your dog in the bed, make sure he sleeps at the foot of the bed. A doggie bed on the floor beside you is your best bet for maintaining the Alpha position.

The art of socialization. Take him everywhere. Let him be exposed to as many people and places as possible.

Do not let your dog ride in your lap in the car. Make him sit in his own seat or on the floor.

Do not baby your dog too much. He needs to learn to be a dog. Do not overprotect him. Let him explore, learn to be independent. You do not want to raise a flighty, paranoid dog. When he is afraid of something that he should not be afraid of, do not pick him up and ooh and ah over him. Simply tell him it is okay, and show him the object or person. If you feed his imaginary fears, he will become a snappy and untrustworthy dog. He may develop fear aggression.

One instance is when he sits in your lap and growls at people or other animals. Do not tell him it's okay. If you do that, you are really telling him this is the type of behavior you expect of him, and he will continue to do it because there is a reward attached to it. Tell him no and put him down off your lap. This should not be interpreted, as cute by the owners. When a child reaches to pet the dog or hug you, he could bite them if allowed to get away with this antisocial behavior.

Note: This is a very common happening. Many times, children get reprimanded when they get bitten. In reality, it is the owner who is responsible. You will often hear parents saying, "You shouldn't have gone near that dog. You know it's very protective."

Spend time with your dog. Play with him. Train him, and love him. Just as a child looks to his parents for guidance and boundaries, so does your dog. Sometimes we have to be cruel to be kind but eventually, you and your dog will be happier if you maintain the Alpha role.

Ask us

Does a dog really understand our commands?

More than your dog understanding, it's you who will need to understand your dog. Training requires a fair amount of getting into the dog's psyche. They do not think the way humans do. When you are unhappy with your dog, it assumes that whatever it is doing at the exact moment you show disapproval - is the thing that is upsetting you. For example:

If your puppy relieves himself on your floor and you show your disapproval five minutes after he has committed the act, the puppy will not understand that it was the act of relieving himself on your floor that you disapprove of. The dog will eliminate, see the mess and get worried; you are now going to be unhappy. This is the reason so many dogs will relieve themselves in inappropriate places and look really guilty about it, yet they continue to do it.

How do I train him in this case?

Some owners think their dog is being sneaky when really it does not fully understand what it is doing wrong. It knows the mess upsets you but does not understand that it should stop making the mess. A firm, "No", is all that is needed. Immediately take your dog outside to the appropriate place. Wait for your dog to go again and when and if he does, praise him. Important: Always praise your dog after he eliminates in the appropriate place.

How do you train him with a leash?

Train him early. Use a body harness and train your puppy to accept it the same way you teach puppy to accept a collar. Check here if your pup is frightened of the collar/harness or leash. Reward to keep your puppy at your side.

Keep the leash loose at all times. If you see your puppy starting to forge ahead, abruptly reverse directions so that puppy finds himself suddenly behind or beside you. Don't wait until the puppy is clear at the other end of the leash, pulling ahead before you take action. The leash should always remain loose except when you're reversing direction. Do not drag your puppy back to your side. Do not give him the opportunity to pull.

Since your pup is unable to walk the streets yet, begin teaching him to walk around your house and yard. He should be taught not to pull before hitting the streets.

Why does my Dobe whine?

Make sure it's not a physical problem. Confirm that he does not want to pee. If it isn't either of the two, he may be asking for attention or just trying to bully you into playing with him. Or he may be bored. When he starts whining, take him to his area. Give him toys and other playthings. Soon he will learn to be by himself. This training will also lessen separation anxiety.

How do you train a Dobe to climb a staircase?

Begin by building his confidence. Start off at the bottom of a flight of steps. A wide, shallow stairway is best. This will probably be least frightening for your dog. Go up one step; encourage and entice your dog up with your voice, a food treat or a toy. Reward well. Then go back down that same step. Repeat only one step over and over until your dog goes up and down with ease and courage. Wait a while, and then try two steps. When he feels like going up and down two steps, then try three steps and so on. Never force your dog to go up or down as this will only frighten him and slow the process

How do you put a collar around his neck?

Just put the collar on the dog and let him jump, squirm, roll and paw at it if he wishes. Ignore him. Don't encourage the behavior by laughing or trying to soothe him. Do not reprimand him either. He will get used to it. Once the dog accepts it, he won't even know it's there.

Are Doberman puppies supposed to bite you a lot?

No. It all depends on his training. The right kind of training is very important. It is best to correct his behavior when he is a puppy. Be firm and say "No." Reward him that instant.

Continue with the training until he gets it right.

When do Dobermans grow out of their chewing phase?

Chewing comes naturally to dogs. You should expect this behavior. First of all, keep stuff out of reach. Next, give him firm commands. Reward him for not chewing. You can also use deterrents.

I have a Doberman. Whenever I want her to sit, she always lies down. Does she want her belly stroked?

If you want to change her behavior, do so immediately. Do not stroke her belly. Tell her to sit. Train her to understand that command. She will not understand you if you are not clear.

What is Schutzhund ?

This was developed around the turn of the century as a means of testing and preserving the character and the utility of working dogs. The program was first started for the German Shepherd. Other working breeds joined in. Dobermans, Boxers, Giant Schnauzers, Belgian Sheepdogs and Rottweilers. It was used then and in many cases is still used today as criteria to gauge the suitability of a dog for breeding. For most people, it's an excellent way to work with your dog in tracking, obedience and protection and be able to go to trials also.

How can I get my Doberman to stop barking at my 4-year old grandson?

First, you have to make sure he does not have a physical problem. Next, start by training him. Give a simple command, "No". When he obeys, reward him. Repeat this every time he barks. It's important to reward him.

I have a lot of nieces, nephews who see me infrequently. How do I prevent my Dobe from trying to protect me?

Start the socializing process. It will help him understand that all unfamiliar faces are not threats.

Does a Dobe make for a loyal friend?

Yes. If you train him well, he can be a great companion, loyal and trustworthy.

My dog not only licks himself but also anything on the floor. What can I do?

All dogs lick a little. This is considered normal. If it is excessive, there is definitely something wrong. If you are giving your dog a good quality dog food and he has normal stool production, then there is no vitamin or nutrient deficiency at play. Other medical reasons could include viral infections, liver disease, anal gland infections, skin disorders, or other painful conditions. A visit to your veterinarian will help determine if your dog is suffering from any of these conditions.

In most situations, it could be an obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) like those seen in humans. This is a compulsion to perform an act repeatedly due to anxiety, fear or paranoia. Doberman Pinschers are prone to sucking on their skin and causing lick granulomas (thick open sores). So just check with your vet.

Can an older Doberman be trained?

Definitely. The rules are the same.

Why does my dog bark so much?

Dogs that bark are conveying a message: let me out/in, or get out. Dogs who are rewarded for barking will continue to bark. They got what they wanted so there's no reason why they shouldn't continue with the barking. Their boredom and loneliness was still alleviated, at least for a moment.

If your dog barks when confined or left alone, there are two approaches to take: try and make the lifestyle more suitable for the dog, and stop rewarding misbehavior.

How can you make out whether they are happy or angry when they bark?

First find out if he has a medical problem. If he doesn't, one reason could be alpha aggression. This should be taken care of by training. If your dog is barking a lot because he is very playful, consult a trainer. Excitement and play barking are very, very difficult to control or eradicate. The dog often doesn't even know he is vocalizing, which makes it very hard to get his attention long enough to train him to stop.

The solution to this kind of barking can be very complicated, and often requires the use of a dog trainer. Some of the methods used to retrain a dog who barks when happy involve making the dog unhappy, and when that becomes too difficult or perhaps even inhumane, the option of debarking becomes one to consider.

Chapter 6

Protect him so he can protect you

A healthy Dobe, a happy Dobe

Not much is known about the Doberman ancestral roots. However, we do know that he originated in Apolda in Thuringen, Germany sometime around 1890. The animal was first recognized as a distinct breed in 1900.

A very intelligent dog, it can be easily trained. The Doberman has been used a lot as a guard dog and a dog of war. His ability to track a scent has made him a favorite among many police departments and even for the sport of hunting.

The accepted colors as defined by The American Kennel Club are black, red, blue and fawn colors with sharply defined rust colored markings above each eye, on the muzzle, throat, chest, all legs and feet as well as the underside of the tail. No other colors are accepted, nor are any white markings exceeding one-half square inch on the chest. In fact, white is not allowed on any other part of the body.

The gait should be free, powerful and energetic. The Doberman's temperament is alert, obedient, fearless and watchful. All in all, the breed is an excellent, for a family or work environment. But as with other breeds, you have to take care of him to keep him healthy.

Hereditary problems

Every type of purebred dog has some sort of health problem to which it is particularly susceptible. The Doberman, like most breeds, is prone to a few hereditary diseases. As a Doberman owner; you should be familiar with the major and minor problems affecting this wonderful breed. If you recognize any signs or symptoms, consult your veterinarian. Some of the hereditary diseases are: vWD (von Willebrand's Disease), cardiomyopathy, hip dysplasia, Wobbler's syndrome, albinism, hypothyroidism and PRA (progressive retinal atrophy).

von Willebrand's Disease

One of the most common hereditary problems in Doberman Pinschers is von Willebrand's Disease. This really isn't a disease but a condition that affects the platelets in the blood.

Platelets allow blood to clot after surgery or some type of trauma. Unlike hemophilia, the numbers of platelets aren't lowered with von Willebrand's disease but the protein that acts as an adhesive changes. This protein is called vWF and if it is lowered, the platelets can't stick together to stop bleeding. Von Willebrand's Disease is, therefore a disorder in which the blood does not coagulate. It is characterized by hematomas, intermittent lameness (from bleeding into joints) and nosebleeds. vWD is usually only a problem during surgery, but in severe

cases, the dog can start to hemorrhage spontaneously.

A genetic blood test can diagnose vWD. Dogs do not develop this disease; they inherit it and can be tested as puppies. In most cases, the dog will live a normal life. However, any kind of trauma can be life threatening to a dog, since it can lead to excessive blood loss.

Von Willebrand's Disease is of three types and they usually are affected by Type I. This particular type is considered the mildest of the various types. Clinical trials conducted on 15,000 Dobermans showed seventy percent of them were carriers of the disease. Of these 15,000 Dobermans, the majority of them didn't show clinical signs. Another study estimated 68%-73% of Dobermans had the disease.

As such, von Willebrand's Disease can cause problems in Dobermans that have undergone any type of surgery including tail docks, ear trims and spays and neuters. It also increases the mortality rate for the breed from Parvovirus.

Dilated Cardiomyopathy

This is a disease of the heart muscle itself. In a canine, the cause of the disease is generally unknown, but is highly breed specific and is common to the Doberman. It is most likely genetic, although this has yet to be proved and the mode of inheritance has not been documented.

Dilated Cardiomyopathy has been thoroughly studied in the Doberman. In this breed, it appears that the disease is first seen around 2 to 5 years of age. Only an echocardiogram can identify the illness at this early stage. As the illness progresses, the affected heart muscle grows weaker and weaker, while the left ventricle compensates by enlarging.

The signs of the disease itself often appear suddenly. It is as if the affected animal has become ill only during the last few days; in reality the dog would have already progressed through the early stages and is now in severe heart failure.

Heart failure can be controlled by medication (diuretics, ACE inhibitors, digoxin). If the disease is very severe, however, an affected dog may not survive the initial treatment. Even if the illness is initially controlled, long-term prognosis is poor and most Dobermans with this condition will die within one to six months.

Hip dysplasia

This is inherited. It may vary from slightly poor conformation to gross malformation of the hip joint allowing complete luxation of the femoral head. The hip joints need to be replaced and this requires expensive surgery. Both parents' hips should be OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) certified excellent, good or fair. Fortunately, Hip Dysplasia in Dobermans has been on the decline in recent years, thanks to the diligent efforts of reputable breeders.

Hypothyroidism

Again, this could be probably inherited and means that the thyroid gland is not producing enough hormones to adequately maintain the dog's metabolism. Weight gain, poor coat and irritability are common symptoms of the disease.

Liver and Pancreas

Chronic Active Hepatitis, Doberman Hepatitis, Copper Toxicosis. This is a common genetic disease in Dobermans. Mild intermittent clinical signs generally progress to show severe signs of liver disease. These may be weight loss, loss of appetite, vomiting, build up of abdominal fluid, bleeding tendencies, and brain damage. Middle-aged females are most at risk. Copper concentration in the liver is increased in some, but not all, indicating the disease is different from the copper toxicosis described in other breeds.

Besides, Dobermans do not respond to the treatment like other breeds do to medical means of ridding the liver of copper. In fact, there is no specific treatment for Dobermans although several different methods have been used with variable success. Accurate diagnosis is essential. Blood chemistry panels are used to screen for liver disease and should be a part of regular annual examinations in Dobermans.

Many liver diseases affect blood chemistry values. However the final diagnosis can only be by liver biopsy at this time.

If discovered in the early stages, the use of one or more protocols can, in some cases, extend the quality of life for a significant period of time. This condition has long been considered to be autoimmune in origin, but now there is preliminary evidence that high blood pressure in the liver blood vessels may be a primary factor.

There is much that is unknown here and therefore controversial about this common Doberman condition, and the ideal treatment will depend on finding the cause.

Diabetes Mellitus

Excessive sugar accumulation in the blood and urine causes this disease. This is due to a lack of ability to use insulin produced by the pancreas. The onset is usually less than 3 years of age.

Muscular Diseases

This muscular disease, the Dancing Doberman Disease, must be considered hereditary simply because no other mammal, let alone a canine, has ever been reported with the disease. Here again, we do not know how it is inherited. It has been reported in dogs as early as 6 months and as late as 7 years of age.

The disorder begins with flexing of one rear limb, progressing to alternate flexing of both rear limbs in sort of a dance like motion that progresses over several years. It is probably more prevalent than recognized because it is easily confused with other diseases like hip dysplasia or Wobbler's disease. No apparent pain is associated with the condition.

Folliculitis / Hypothyroid

Many Dobermans have sensitive skin. They can actually experience hair loss as an allergic reaction to their own natural bacteria. Hair loss can be of different kinds. It can take place suddenly in fast-growing patches, or start very gradually with a moth-eaten look. An anti-bacterial shampoo such as ChlorhexiDerm is usually sufficient in mild cases. However, with severe cases, antibiotics along with the shampoo are used.

The condition could have other causes, and your veterinarian should do a skin scraping to rule out mange, but if the scrapings are negative and the vet doesn't know what is causing the problem, there is a good chance that it is folliculitis.

Many vets are not familiar with this problem and will diagnose it wrongly, or send you to a dermatologist. If your dog experiences any type of persistent coat problems, you should have a full-up thyroid test done. Your average thyroid test has two values, T3 (triiodothyronine) and T4 (thyroxine). Many dogs appear normal. Ask for a full panel showing T3, T4 and THS (thyroid stimulation hormone) for real accuracy. Many Dobermans have hypothyroidism, and intermittent coat problems are a symptom.

Symptoms usually appear between the ages of 2 and 6 years. Other symptoms are a dull, dry coat, mental dullness, lethargy, exercise intolerance and a tendency to gain weight without a corresponding increase in appetite or food intake.

These signs are often gradual and subtle. Hypothyroidism is easily treated with synthetic thyroid hormone, usually given orally twice a day. The most common drug given is Soloxine, and is relatively inexpensive. Treatment must continue for the remainder of the dog's life, but prognosis for recovery is excellent.

Cervical Vertebrae Instability, CVI or Wobblers Disease

CVI affects the neck. It is a deterioration of the neck, which causes gradual, or sudden paralysis and can produce sudden pain. The term CVI actually encompasses as many as two -dozen different conditions, and there are several surgical techniques that can sometimes correct the problem. Success depending upon several factors. CVI can be diagnosed by CT-myelography and is divided into two types: static and dynamic. The static form is a continual compression of the spinal cord; the dynamic form only compresses the spinal cord at certain positions, usually when the head is raised. Because Dobermans are prone to this disease, extra care

should be taken not to jerk or otherwise put an unnecessary strain on the dog's neck, to lessen the likelihood of occurrence. If your dog is uncontrollable on a leash, use a prong collar or head lead instead of constantly jerking the dog's neck with a choke collar.

Pancreatic Hypoplasia

Pancreatic Hypoplasia (Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency) usually occurs at or less than one year of age. Weight loss and chronic diarrhea are symptoms of this condition. These can be corrected with pancreatic enzyme supplementation (expensive). The mode of inheritance is considered autosomal recessive.

Portosystemic Shunt

Portosystemic Shunt (Extrahepatic) is a condition with symptoms similar to Doberman hepatitis. The mode of inheritance is unknown. These animals are born with extra blood vessels that allow blood to bypass the liver. Symptoms usually begin by one year of age or less, but its progress depends on the amount of blood circumvented around the liver.

Portosystemic Shunt (Intrahepatic)

Portosystemic Shunt (Intrahepatic) is a condition with signs similar to the extrahepatic form. The difference is that abnormal blood vessels within the liver cause symptoms. Again, the mode of inheritance is unknown. It occurs at about one year.

Eosinophilic Myositis

This is an inflammatory disease of the muscle in various parts of the body. They are generally firm to the touch and painful. Depending on where it is located, there may be lameness. It appears around one year.

Masticatory Myositis (Atrophic Myositis)

This usually occurs after one year of age. Symptoms include pain and visible swelling in the temporal (forehead) and masseter (jaw) muscles. The dog will be reluctant to open the mouth and eat. This along with decreased appetite and weight loss is a common symptom in this inflammatory muscle disorder.

In the case of Dobermans, the first sign may be the failure of an erect ear (or ears) to stand as a result of the inflammation in the temporal muscle. In chronic cases, the muscles of the head may atrophy (shrink) altering the entire appearance of the head.

The treatment usually consists of high doses of cortisone. Recovery is often rapid and complete only if the treatment is begun early. Once inflammation leads to fibrosis (scarring) in the muscle(s) therapy is ineffective.

Malignant Hyperthermia

This disease is characterized by a sudden, life-threatening increase in body temperature. Rapid heart rate, limb rigidity, respiratory and cardiac arrest can occur, apparently as a result of exposure to certain anesthetics. It could start at any age.

Albinism

White coated and white factored, these Dobermans should not be bred. In 1996, the AKC established a tracking system (the letter “Z” will be part of the registration number) allowing breeders to identify the normal colored Dobermans, which may carry the albinistic gene.

A list with all dogs tracing back to Shebah’s (the first Albino Doberman registered) parents is available from the DPCA. All breeders should require an AKC certified pedigree with colors to check that these signs are not present in the pedigree of the dog or bitch to be bred.

Albino Dobermans have become the subject of a hot debate between breeders, the Doberman Pinscher Club of America (DPCA) and fanciers of the color. The first recorded albino was born in November 1976 and named Padula’s Queen Shebah. She was the result of breeding two normally colored Dobermans, Rasputin VI and Dynamo Humm.

Neurological Diseases

Arachnoid cysts are formed by an accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid causing compression of the lower brain stem or spinal cord. They may be secondary to trauma, infection, inflammation, or hemorrhage. They may also be congenital and/or hereditary in which case symptoms occur at less than one year of age. How it is transmitted is unknown.

Symptoms occur because of compression on the spinal cord. Neck pain may accompany signs in the cervical (neck) area of the spinal cord, while pain is less likely if the thoracic (chest) spinal cord is involved. Diagnosis is confirmed by x-ray, myelography, and advanced imaging (CT or MRI). Surgical exploration is necessary to confirm the diagnosis and decompress the spinal cord.

Complete removal of the cyst is usually not possible, but partial excision may result in permanent clinical improvement.

Doberman Pinscher Lower Motor Neuron Disease

This has been reported in puppies showing weakness in the rear legs by eight weeks of age. Later, all 4 limbs are involved preventing the pups from walking. Ultimately they can only lie on their side and their front legs become rigidly extended.

Dysautonomia

This is a general term of dysfunction of a particular part (autonomic) of the nervous system. This relatively rare condition usually occurs by 2 or 3 years of age although animals between 6 weeks and 11 years of age are reported.

Signs occur acutely, usually over 2 or 3 days, and may include regurgitation and vomiting, diarrhea or constipation, difficulty urinating and incontinence from a distended urinary bladder, dry mucous membranes, prominent 3rd eyelids, difficulty swallowing and occasionally loss of anal tone resulting in fecal incontinence, and mild deficits of posture.

It is not established that the cause is hereditary. It could be environmental too. The mode of transmission is unknown. The treatment is usually supportive. The prognosis is poor.

Narcolepsy (Cataplexy)

A hereditary condition long recognized to be present in Dobermans. It has a recessive mode of transmission and is usually apparent before one year of age. Emotional stimulation or eating may cause the animal to suddenly fall asleep; muscle relaxation and weakness may occur resulting in collapse.

Frequency of attacks is greatly variable. Stanford University has isolated the genetic markers for this condition and a DNA is possible, but will not likely be available unless enough breeders are willing to take advantage of it.

Sensory Neuropathy

This occurs at less than 6 months of age and while known to be a recessive condition in some breeds, the mode of inheritance in Dobermans is undetermined. Brain degeneration decreases pain sensation allowing self-mutilation and trauma without apparent discomfort, particularly on the paws.

Ocular Diseases

Cataracts occur in many breeds and specific types vary by breed and onset. As a generality, any lens opacity (cloudiness) that obscures vision and may cause blindness is considered a cataract. The mode of inheritance in Dobermans is unknown.

Dermoid

A small patch of skin, generally on the cornea, often causing irritation, usually at less than one year of age. Mode of inheritance undetermined, but possibly autosomal recessive. Treatment is surgical removal with a usually favorable prognosis.

Enophthalmos

By one year, this becomes obvious by one year of age. The eyeball is recessed into the socket (sunken eyeball). Mode of inheritance is unknown.

Entropion

This is a turning in of the eyelids causing the eyelashes to rub on the eyeball creating discomfort, irritation, and possibly blindness over time. Surgical treatment is curative. While common in many breeds, it is reported in Dobermans and must be considered a genetic disease although the mode of inheritance is yet to be determined.

Eversion

This affects the Nictitating Membrane (a folding of the third eyelid) occurs at less than 3 years of age and the mode of inheritance, while autosomal recessive in some breeds, is unknown in Dobermans. The cartilage in the third eyelid is abnormal, causing it to roll from or toward the globe.

Treatment is surgical replacement of the cartilage and its gland, which supplies tears to keep the eye moist. Recurrence is the most common complication of any of several surgical techniques, however removal of the gland itself is discouraged because of resultant significant loss of tear production perhaps leading to chronic, “dry eye” accompanied by irritation, discomfort, and even blindness.

Persistent Hyperplastic Primary Vitreous (PHPV)

This is characterized by the presence of a membrane on the back surface of the lens. It is present at less than 3 months of age and the mode of inheritance in Dobermans is known to be autosomal dominant.

Persistent Pupillary Membranes (PPM)

These are obvious by 3 months of age and are of an unknown mode of inheritance. During fetal development, the anterior chamber of the eye is filled with blood vessels. At the end of gestation and immediately after, this tissue normally undergoes degeneration leaving persistent pupillary membranes. This tissue may attach to the inner cornea or the front part of the lens. Although focal (spot) cataracts are occasionally a result, most PPMs do not interfere with vision and are considered incidental findings in Dobermans. No treatment is indicated and the condition is not progressive.

Progressive Retinal Atrophy is a term that includes more specific disease processes (rod-cone dysplasia, rod dysplasia, progressive rod-cone degeneration) that affect many breeds. The genetic mode of inheritance is variable among those breeds. While many U.S. veterinarians and breeders have not considered Dobermans to be particularly at risk, there are anecdotal reports of higher incidence in foreign populations.

With more and more Dobes going out of the country and the increasing use of chilled-extended and frozen semen, there is a growing need to be vigilant. Fortunately, CERF testing is readily available so there is no reason for infiltration into unaffected lines. While DNA tests are available for some breeds, they are not yet developed for Dobermans.

Night blindness followed by loss of day vision is the most common symptom of this group of non-inflammatory conditions. While known to be an autosomal recessive condition in several breeds, the mode of inheritance is undetermined in Dobermans at this time.

Protrusion of the Third Eyelid(s) occurs at 3 months of age or less and the mechanism of inheritance is not known. The third eyelid extends over the globe of the eye with no obvious pathology. It may or may not interfere with vision.

Retinal Dysplasia (Folds). Abnormal folds in the retina are due to faulty development in this condition. The mode of inheritance is unknown in the Doberman, but is known to be an autosomal recessive in many breeds. It occurs at than one year of age.

Retinal Dysplasia (Geographic Detachment) is an autosomal recessive genetic disease of many breeds, including Dobermans, occurring by one year of age. Large areas of abnormal development of the retina may occur, along with detachment of the retina. In addition to the genetic form of this disease, other causes include trauma to the eyeball, severe contusion, inflammatory diseases, and sometimes-ocular surgery.

Rabies

Rabies. It is a word that sends shudders up all owners' spines. And naturally, too. It is a fatal disease. When the symptoms of this virus appear, it always results in death. Rabies, which attacks the central nervous system of warm-blooded animals, including humans and cats and dogs, is most often transmitted through a bite from an infected animal. It can also be passed from mammal to mammal when infected saliva enters the body through the eyes or an open wound.

The virus may incubate anywhere from weeks to months before becoming active. When it does become active, symptoms of the disease usually appear in 3 to 5 days. Symptoms include disorientation and staggering, caused by paralysis of the hind legs. Extreme behavioral changes can also be an indicator of rabies. An animal normally seen only at night, for example, may become active in the daytime, and vice versa.

Infected animals may also attack other animals or humans. The virus also can cause paralysis of the throat and jaw muscles, which results in foaming from the mouth. Other signs of rabies include loss of appetite, weakness, seizures and sudden death. The most common carriers are bats, raccoons, skunks and foxes. Unvaccinated animals, which are allowed to roam, unsupervised, are the group most likely to become infected, if they get into a fight with a rabid wild animal or stray dog or cat.

The best form of protection is prevention. . Make sure that your pet's rabies vaccination status is up –to date. Depending on the type of vaccination used, your pet will require a booster every year or three years. In many areas of the country, it is mandatory for all domestic dogs and cats to be vaccinated after the age of 3 months.

Vaccinating your pet not only protects him from getting rabies but also protects him if he bites someone. Some local ordinances may require lengthy quarantines or euthanasia for rabies testing if your pet's vaccination record is not current. If you are not sure of the laws in your town, consult your local animal affairs agency.

Worms

Your dog looks like he's in great shape. So how could he possibly have worms? Just about all puppies are infected with intestinal parasites, passed on in the uterus or from their mother's milk. Adult dogs can get worms from eating feces or dirt that contain eggs. Roundworms are one of the most common intestinal parasites found in dogs and puppies in particular.

These long white worms that resemble spaghetti can grow to four inches and can cause mild vomiting and diarrhea. Severe infestations in young dogs may result in a potbelly, dull coat and weight loss. All puppies should be regularly wormed from two weeks of age-and all adult dogs wormed every year-to guard against roundworms. And, by the way, they can be passed on to humans.

Dog Breath

The best way to fight this is by daily brushing. Use toothpaste made especially for your pet's species; you should be able to find them in a pet supply store in such pet-friendly flavors as poultry and beef.

To get your pet used to daily brushing, start with just a little paste on your fingers or some soft gauze. Gently rub it along his outer teeth and gums for about 5 seconds. Over several days, gradually increase brushing time to 30 seconds.

When you think your animal companion is comfortable enough, switch to a soft toothbrush. There are some made specifically for dogs. You may opt for diluted salt water instead of canine toothpaste, but never use human toothpaste. It may contain detergents that can cause pets to get an upset stomach if swallowed.

Always exercise caution and common sense when attempting to brush your pet's teeth. Some animals will not permit it, so you may need to abandon the procedure if you are in danger of being bitten.

Tartar

If your pet has an excessive amount of tartar on the teeth, brushing will not help control the odor. In this case, the ASPCA recommends that you schedule a trip to the veterinarian for dentistry. Without proper early care, excessive tartar and gum disease may lead to problems chewing and eating and other medical consequences, such as the loss of a tooth.

Tartar can also be somewhat controlled with regular chewing, so be sure to provide your dog with hard rubber toys or synthetic bones. As he gnaws, he'll be cleaning his teeth and gums. Chewing raw carrot sticks or biscuits will do the trick, too.

Do not give your animal companion meat bones, which may splinter and become lodged in your pet's throat or intestines. If your pet's breath has an unusually sweet or fruity scent, inform your veterinarian. This could be an indicator of diabetes, particularly if your animal has been drinking and urinating more frequently than usual.

If your animal companion's breath smells a bit like urine, this may be a sign of kidney disease, A liver disorder could be the problem if the odor is unusually foul, and if your pet has been vomiting, lacks appetite, and his eyes or gums are tinged yellow. If your dog has any unusual smell, or if you are in doubt, consult your veterinarian.

Lick or Granulomas

Most owners confess to this problem and frequently questions are asked on this condition. This is a relatively common disease in dogs. It is characterized by chronic licking at an area of skin, usually on the lower part of an extremity, resulting in the development of an oval ulcer with loss of overlying hair. Male dogs may be more commonly affected.

You should spend more time with your dog, get him a new companion, and take him out to break the habit. Anti-anxiety medications may on occasion provide some benefit, particularly during periods of stress for the dog.

Incontinence

Your pet's bladder has a very important job. The kidneys eliminate toxins from the blood. These toxins are stored in this membranous sac as waste matter. As the bladder becomes full, urine is passed out of the body. Inflammation, infection and urinary disorders can impede a dog bladder from functioning correctly. The results can be painful and, in some cases, life-threatening.

Find out if your pet has been urinating more often than usual. A bacterial infection or cystitis could be causing inflammation of the bladder. Animals suffering from cystitis may pass only a only a little bloody urine or they may exhibit frequent urination, straining and constant licking under the tail.

If you suspect that your pet has cystitis, it's a good idea to get a urine sample for your veterinarian. Infections can be treated with antibiotics, but veterinary attention is crucial. Should the condition worsen, your pet's bladder could become blocked. . Incontinence in dogs can also be caused by displacement of the bladder; surgery may be required to move it to a more normal position.

Check for any signs of discomfort when your dog is urinating. Consult your vet. Otherwise, the bladder could ultimately get blocked. Soiling in inappropriate places or dribbling urine can mean that your dog or cat has lost bladder control. This may be the result of injury or infection, but it can also be a natural part of aging-and might occur when your elderly pet is excited, or simply when he gets up and down.

Incontinence is common in older females who have been spayed earlier in life. They start to dribble. The problem is caused by a lack of estrogen. A drug, most commonly known as PPA is most effective in treating incontinence, and is usually given once or twice a day. This is a very inexpensive problem to treat and highly controllable. You can help your incontinent

Food Allergies

Usually Dobermans are allergic to only one ingredient or to a small number of ingredients. Rarely do you find a dog allergic to the whole diet. So the solution lies in isolating the food that is causing the problem. This has traditionally been done by making a diet that is composed of foods that a dog has never eaten before.

Since food allergies are thought to occur only to foods that the dog has been sensitized to, there should not be an allergic reaction to a food that has not been eaten previously. An early diet to achieve this purpose was lamb and rice but now both of these ingredients are used in other dog foods and so this combination is less likely to be helpful.

More exotic protein sources like ostrich meat, alligator meat, duck, venison, rabbit, are usually used and potato, peas and rice (still) are sometimes used as the carbohydrate source. A homemade diet with these ingredients and no supplemental calcium or vitamins will be deficient as a long term diet but is usually all right for short term use in adult dogs or cats. A newer approach is to use a diet composed of artificially created very low molecular weight proteins. The reason for this is that proteins below a certain molecular weight are thought to be incapable of causing food allergies.

If clinical signs disappear while your dogs are on the diets, which may take 8 weeks or more, then you can safely assume that a food allergy is present (although with approaching winter, it will be hard to totally rule out inhalant allergies or atopy).

Food ingredients such as beef, chicken, milk, wheat, corn, are added back into the diet one at a time to see if clinical signs return. If and when they do, it is reasonable to assume that the ingredient being added at the time is the cause.

Future diets shouldn't include this ingredient. It is a really good idea to rule out food allergies when itching persists for a long time; so choosing to do a food trial to rule out food allergy is a good option.

Alopecia or Hair Loss

This is called Color Dilution Alopecia (CDA). The condition may affect any dilutely pigmented dog, regardless of coat color. This condition was known as Blue Balding Syndrome, Blue Doberman Syndrome, Color Mutant Alopecia or Congenital Alopecia. The name CDA came about because dilutes were at one time mutations from the deep pigment occurring in wild canines.

Dilutes are now a form of pigmentation in many breeds and have been so for hundreds of years. The term mutation is therefore not applicable to dilute individuals.

The condition is common in blue individuals of this breed, but it is not limited to either blue dogs or Dobermans. The term congenital means present at birth, but CDA affected dogs are born with normal hair coats.

The dilute (also known as Maltese) gene also appears in both mice and cats, and interestingly enough, is not associated with any abnormal coat conditions in those species.(1) CDA has been recognized in dilute individuals of many breeds of dogs including Chow Chows, Dachshunds, Doberman Pinschers, Great Danes, Irish Setters,

CDA is characterized by loss of hair from dilutely pigmented areas. Coats are normal at birth, and onset of hair loss usually begins between six months and three years of age. Hair loss usually begins along the dorsal midline (middle of the back) and often spares the head, tail and limbs.

The pattern seems to vary from breed to breed. It has been suggested that darker colored (steel blue) individuals are less likely to be affected. They may be less severely affected or may start to lose hair later in life than lighter colored dogs. This suggests that the severity of the disease may be related to the amount of dilution present. Deeply pigmented or white areas of coat are unaffected. In blue dogs with tan points (Yorkies and Dobermans) the tan areas retain a normal appearance

Diagnosis

First, other causes of hair loss must be ruled out. Diagnostic tests should include fungal cultures, skin scrapings to check for parasitic mites. CDA often closely resembles endocrine (hormone related) hair loss and the dog should be carefully examined for any other abnormalities, and tested for normal thyroid function.

The presence of dilute pigment and a characteristic course of disease also aid in making the diagnosis. Microscopic examination of hairs and/or skin biopsies can be used to confirm the diagnosis.

There is, however, no cure for CDA. You can only control the scaliness and any associated pruritus, (itching) with various shampoos or treatments.

Allergic bronchitis

Some Dobermans are allergic to grass. This is an unusual food allergy, because it doesn't have all that much protein in it, which is what causes allergic reactions. However, grass pollens are sometimes involved in inhalant allergies and since pollens stick to grass when gravity brings them to the ground, wet grass can sometimes be associated with itchiness of the feet or portions of the body it contacts.

Sometimes it is helpful to add something like green beans to the diet in order to discourage this behavior. It seems to meet the need for plant ingestion in some dogs. Other dogs like alfalfa sprouts and we even have one patient who craves lettuce. If there is some sort of deficiency that leads to this behavior it has never been conclusively identified.

Bacteria

Bacterial conditions in Dobes are extremely common. From yeast problems, to fading away syndrome, to fungal conditions, even to elimination problems. The cause is usually a bacterial imbalance in the body. Many things can trigger this imbalance.

Stress is a major factor. It could be because there's a new family member (animal or human) or moving to a new location. Dobes are very sensitive. They need to be loved a lot. They can even experience the same stress as you.

Weather changes are even a stressful time for dogs. Extremely hot weather as well as extremely cold weather can and will have a stressful impact on your dog's health at times. Some symptoms are diarrhea, bad breath, flatulence, and yeast infections like mange and ear infections.

Your Dobe may be eating a lot and actually losing weight. Besides, it would be getting thinner and thinner. Digestion requires a balance of good bacteria and pathogenic (bad) bacteria in the gut in order for the body to be able to absorb. The balance of good to bad bacteria is a approximately 80% to 85% good bacterium.

The remaining balance then would be from 15% to 20%, which is a bad bacterium that is essential for good digestion and the proper bacterial balance of the body. The use of antibiotics contributes to the bacterial imbalance of your dog's entire body, not just the gut.

Whenever an antibiotic is prescribed, it will indiscriminately destroy all the good bacteria right along with the pathogenic bacteria in the body, thus causing digestion problems and compromising the body's nutritional uptake.

Antibiotics suppress the immune system just when your dog needs a very strong immune system to help it combat whatever infection may be present. Antibiotics kill bacteria both good and bad and leave the body in a sterile environment, thus making the body vulnerable to more and more bacterial invasions. This is how a yeast infection begins. However, vets do prescribe them. Do check with your doctor.

Ask Us

How do you remove ticks?

It is probably best to use one of the tick removal devices that are available now. Several are made and they each have advantages and disadvantages. Talk to your vet. A good forceps also fine. Grasp the tick as close to the head as possible and pull with an even force. If part of the tick is left in the dog, don't worry. Just like a small splinter or anything else foreign in the body, the white blood cells will destroy the tick parts. If you give in to the temptation to remove ticks by hand without latex gloves or at least a tissue then be sure to wash your hands really well. There is no use in getting one of the tick-borne diseases yourself.

How do you control fleas?

Fleas lay eggs on the pet and they fall off. So it is obvious that they fall off where the pet goes. This means that you must treat your house if your pet comes inside. Many people resist doing this, explaining that they never see fleas in the house. The problem is, the flea egg does not move and it is very hard to see. The flea larva does not have legs so it has limited movement. The pupal stage of the flea does not move at all. Besides, you would not be aware of immature fleas until they grow into adults. It is possible to kill the pre-adult stages of the flea in the house. Outside, the flea eggs fall off in areas where the pet does things that dislodges them, like jumping around, sitting and scratching. If these areas are warm and moist throughout the day, the flea can reproduce there. It is not necessary to treat large expanses of lawn that dry out during the day. Stick to areas where the dog spends time and that stay moist and warm. Make sure you treat around the doors in and out of the house, where your dog is likely to be waiting around and where flea eggs are likely to drop off.

What is color dilution alopecia?

Alopecia means hairlessness. Dogs suffering from this condition have a poor, patchy haircoat progressing to widespread permanent hair loss. At the cellular level, there are abnormalities of the hair follicles and uneven clumping of pigment (melanin) granules in the hair shafts in affected areas.

Is it inherited?

The inheritance is unclear. The condition is thought to be due to the interaction of different factors at the gene position for color.

Are Dobes the most affected?

This condition is seen most commonly in Doberman pinschers with unusual coat colors (as many as 90% of blue Dobermans and 75% of fawns).

What does color dilution alopecia mean?

Dogs with this condition are born with a normal hair coat. Those with lighter blue or fawn hair coats usually start to show changes by 6 months while in dogs with darker steel blue coats, the changes may not be evident until 2 or 3 years of age. Your dog will experience hair loss and dry skin. Sometimes the earliest sign is a recurring bacterial infection (folliculitis), generally on the back, where you will see small bumps, which are infected hair follicles. This clears up temporarily with antibiotics, but the affected area is very slow to re grow hair, or remains hairless.

Hair loss is usually first apparent on the back and by 2 or 3 years has spread over all the light colored areas of the body. The exposed skin is often scaly and is susceptible to sunburn or extreme cold. Your dog's health is not otherwise affected by this condition.

How is color dilution alopecia diagnosed?

Your veterinarian may suspect this disorder if there are changes in his coat and is an unusual color for the breed. The diagnosis is confirmed through microscopic examination of plucked hairs or a skin biopsy. The latter is a simple procedure, done with local anesthetic, in which your veterinarian removes a small sample of your dog's skin for examination by a veterinary pathologist. The biopsy will show changes characteristic of this condition.

How is color dilution alopecia treated?

Your dog can lead a normal healthy life with periodic symptomatic treatment as needed. Moisturizing rinses for dry scaly skin or antibiotics for bacterial infections.

Since early hair loss occurs due to breakage, you may be able to slow the rate of loss by avoiding harsh shampoos and vigorous grooming.

Should dogs with this condition be bred?

Affected dogs, their parents and siblings should not be used for breeding. The condition can be entirely avoided by the use of non-color-diluted dogs in breeding programs.

Are Dobes dangerous?

Dobermans were bred to perform tasks that require more aggression than others. But breeds that are not bred for aggression, including golden retrievers, cocker spaniels, and Yorkshire terriers, have been involved in fatal attacks as well. The trick is to give them the right training and socialize them at a very early stage.

Do Dobes suffer from acne?

Usually this occurs in the 6-18 month stage with males being more susceptible than females. It is characterized by pustules and boils on the chin, muzzle and occasionally on the neck. It can be treated with antibiotics and by keeping the area clean and dry. The cause is a bacterial infection, usually self-limited, but it should be treated to prevent its spread or scarring or the encouraging of more serious skin infections.

What should I do about an allergy?

These are reactions to common environmental substances that are not normally toxic. Symptoms can range from hives to diarrhea to life threatening reactions. Antihistamines are the treatment of choice unless the allergy is to a food. Change the diet in such cases. A specific allergy may not be hereditary but the ability to form allergies is passed on genetically for no known reason and gets worse in each generation.

Dogs sometimes develop allergies to pollen, fleas or even foods that make them itchy. Fleas are a common cause of biting and scratching. For dogs that are sensitive to fleas, just one or two bites are enough to cause problems. Dogs predominantly get fleas over their rumps, on their tails, and on the backs of their legs.

You can find out what your pet is allergic to by paying attention to where he scratches. Dogs that are allergic to pollen, mould or dust, for example, will often bite at their feet and legs. They may have itchy ears and weepy eyes as well.

Although food allergies can cause itching almost anywhere on the body, dogs with food allergies often chew or scratch at their ears and back end.

Is bloat serious?

Bloat still remains a bit of a mystery to vets. Symptoms of bloat or torsion vary from a severe gas attack to immediate death. This disease occurs mostly in deep-chested, large dogs although any dog can bloat. Treatment must be immediate and may require complex surgery. Symptoms are swelling and tenderness in the abdomen with or without nausea or gas production. You can try to prevent by feeding small, more frequent meals, by moistening your dog's food with warm water, and by restricting activity and large quantities of water after meals.

What are the most common parasites?

Fleas, ticks, ear mites, roundworms, and tapeworms.

Is it very important to get rid of fleas on my dog?

Adult fleas are parasitic and live by sucking the blood of their hosts. They are the biggest cause of skin disease in dogs. A heavy infestation may result in anemia. Fleas can transfer some infectious diseases from one dog to another. Fleas can transmit tapeworms to the dog.

How does a dog get infected with roundworms and are they harmful?

Dogs can become infected by eating an infected dog's feces and by eating another animal that is infected. Puppies can become infected through their mothers. Toxocara canis infection can produce noisy breathing and coughing, especially during suckling in puppies under two weeks old. In older puppies, up to three months of age, there is persistent diarrhea with vomiting, whining and a pot-bellied appearance.

How can you tell if your dog has worms?

The best way would be to have your veterinarian test your dog for worms at frequent periods. Sometimes, you can actually see the worms in the dog's faces.

Can humans get worms from dogs?

Some worms can infect humans such as the roundworms, tapeworms, heartworms and hookworms.

Is it a good idea to deworm your dog, and if so, how often should you do it?

Yes, it is advisable to give your dog a deworming treatment at 6-month intervals.

Can your dog pass on any diseases to you?

Yes, external parasites transmissible to man include fleas, sarcoptic mange, and the fur mite and ringworm fungi. Internal parasites are roundworms, tapeworms and hookworms and heartworms. Human beings can become infected with rabies, canicola fever caused by *Leptospira canicola* and Weil's disease due to *L. icterohaemorrhagiae* (this is more common than canicola fever). Bacteria may also be implanted in bite wounds. Salmonellosis, *Campylobacter* infection, and tuberculosis are other bacterial diseases.

How long is the average length of pregnancy?

The average length is around nine weeks (63 days), but there is a good deal of variation depending on the breed.

Is general anesthesia safe?

In the vast majority of cases, yes. Although, there are individuals who may react unfavorably to a particular drug.

How do I give my dog a tablet or capsule?

Just conceal it in a tidbit of meat or cheese. You could also crush the tablet and add it to something appetizing like sardine oil or his favorite can dog food. If this doesn't work, open the dog's mouth, place the tablet at the back and ensure that it is swallowed.

How should I clean a wound?

The wound should be cleaned out within the first six hours of injury. In the next six hours, bacteria multiply considerably. Any large foreign bodies should be picked out and any soil washed away. It will be easier to wash the wound, especially in longhaired dogs, if the area is clipped of hair. Clean the wound using a pad of clean gauze or even paper towels. Soak the pad in water with a small amount of antiseptic or peroxide. Gently dab away and wipe away the dirt and/or pus. Dab the wound dry with clean gauze.

Help! What do I do if my dog gets into a fight with another dog?

If you are close to a water hose, start spraying both dogs. If the animals will not stop fighting, try spraying them right in their mouths. This should give you the chance to grab them as soon as they separate. If you run into another dog, while walking, keep your dog on a leash. You can also walk away from the fight and call your dog from a distance. This will weaken his confidence and therefore his aggression.

Do dogs ever get fitted with casts?

Yes, fractures of the limbs below the elbow joint in the front limb and the stifle joint in the hind limb can be effectively treated with casts and splints.

What diseases should your dog be vaccinated against?

There are eight important diseases. Canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, canine parvovirus infection, rabies, leptospirosis and the three most common causes of kennel cough, namely canine adenoviruses, canine parainfluenza virus and bordetella bronchiseptica.

Is kennel cough simply the result of barking a lot while in the kennel?

No, kennel cough or canine respiratory disease is a highly contagious disease, which can be produced by a number of infectious organisms acting singly or in combination.

If a dog keeps shaking his head, does it mean there is anything wrong?

Yes, almost certainly the external ear canal of one or both of his ears is severely inflamed, a condition known as otitis externa. Ear mites are another culprit and will cause your dog to shake his head and scratch his ear. Foreign bodies in the ear canal can be responsible for ear irritation also. Consult your vet.

My Doberman puppy is 15 weeks old and weighs 29 lbs. After the ear cropping, he became sick and lost weight. Is this ok?

Just weighing a puppy is not going to tell you if he/she is over, under or normal weight because every pup grows differently. The best way to judge this is to just look at the dog. Are any ribs or hipbones showing? Does he look thin to you or fat? Talk to his breeder or someone who knows the Doberman breed that can see him and ask them if the pup is in good weight.

I have a 4-month-old Dobie. At first, she had these things under her neck that looked like moles. I took off her collar to see if they would go away but she keeps getting more on other parts of her body. What are they?

Most moles are caused by a virus of some sort. Take your dog to a vet.

My Doberman excretes bloody diarrhea every time I feed him a branded food. Is this related to the dog food or are there other causes?

You need to first get a fresh stool sample and along with your dog, go to the veterinarian. First you must check for internal parasites.

Chapter 7

Doctor, this is an emergency

If your Dobe is not well and you don't know whether his problem is serious, we suggest you take him to a vet as soon as possible. Whenever possible, call the vet ahead, so he can prepare for your arrival. Keep the phone number of your vet, or the nearest 24-hour emergency clinic near the phone to save time. When you call a veterinary clinic, be as descriptive as possible when trying to explain the symptoms displayed by your pet

A First Aid Kit

Here are a few basic things you should have at home. This is not the complete list but some of the things can help you in a minor emergency.

- Gauze sponges
- Triple antibiotic ointment
- Rubbing alcohol
- Ear syringe: two-ounce capacity
- White petroleum jelly (Vaseline or similar)
- Eyewash
- Sterile, non-adherent pads
- Pepto Bismol tablets
- Generic Benadryl capsules: 25mg, for allergies
- Hydrocortisone Ointment: one percent
- Sterile stretch gauze bandage: three inches by four yards
- Buffered aspirin
- Dermicil hypoallergenic cloth tape one inch by 10 yards
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Custom splints
- Vet Rap bandage
- Bandage Scissors
- Blanket
- Tweezers
- Muzzle
- Hemostats
- Rectal thermometer
- Ziplock bags

*Finally, your dog's papers, including the dog's health record, medications, local and national poison control numbers, regular veterinary clinic hours and telephone numbers, and emergency clinic hours and telephone number.

Before you rush him to a vet, here are a few things you can do:

Bleeding: apply direct pressure with a clean cloth.

Heatstroke: get your pet indoors and hose him down with cool water. Then place towels soaked with cold water over your pet, and ice packs in the armpits, along the belly, or between the legs.

Fractures: restrict movement, wrap or splint the limb, and cover any open wounds with a clean cloth.

Suspected poisoning: take the container/label of the poison you suspect to your vet.

Eye trauma: prevent pawing at or rubbing a painful eye. If the eye is protruding from the socket, place a moist clean cloth

Shock: wrap your pet in a blanket to conserve body heat, loosen or remove any collar, and clear the mouth of any fluid or food.

One final word of caution. Keep all dangerous substances in a pet-proof cupboard. Make sure there are no pills lying on the floor.

Chapter 8

The Golden Years

It is difficult to watch a loved one growing old. You need to show more concern and take a lot of care. At seven years, the Doberman is considered a senior or a Veteran, according to the Show language. They are beginning to or already have slowed down. The usual signs of old age, like in the case of human beings, are arthritis or muscular aches & pains. For many, the spirit is willing, but the body is just not able to cope with the work

They may need a different diet, and the medical needs will probably change. Heart problems and cancer are major concerns. Teeth can also be a problem as the Doberman ages. Be aware of your senior and check them every day for lumps, bumps and anything that looks different. Pay close attention to the skin, joints, teeth and activity level. Many Doberman start to gain weight as their activity level slows. Be aware that a Doberman in proper weight is the best condition for his overall health.

Getting used to the changes

Accepting that your Dobe is no longer the agile animal that it was, may take some getting used to. The most obvious change is the slowing down. Your Dobe waits instead of running to pick up something. They dominate other dogs in the house with a stare; they stroll along at your side instead of trying to rip the leash out of your hand; they crawl up on the bed, curl up and go to sleep instead of racing around with covers and pillows flying everywhere.

There is a lot that is special about health care for old dogs as well. Geriatric medicine is a relative newcomer to the veterinary specialties. It is of little concern in food animals, slaughtered long before old age, or in racehorses too old to run anymore. Rather, it is a branch of veterinary medicine largely reserved for companion animals.

The special needs of a special period

To understand his unique needs, we must try to understand the process of aging. The underlying cause of aging has not been defined, although there are many theories. There are, however, aging factors that can be anticipated. Smaller breeds live longer. Obese pets have shorter life spans. Outdoor animals have a shorter life expectancy. Neutered animals live longer.

Generally, Dobermans begin to have diseases associated with aging in their 7th to 10th year. Many of the effects of aging can be predicted. Decreased metabolic rate plus lack of activity decreases caloric need by 30 to 40 percent. Their immunity decreases.

Most medical problems involving older patients are chronic rather than acute. Chronic diseases require lifelong treatment with intermittent patient monitoring and modification of the treatment regimen as conditions change. The common characteristic of all aging systems is progressive and irreversible change, which may be hastened by disease, stress, malnutrition, lack of exercise, genetics and environment.

Most elderly animals have a unique combination of multiple organ disease with varying levels of dysfunction. Poor health and old age, however, do not have to be synonymous.

Annual examination

The importance of the annual physical exam cannot be overemphasized. A hidden disease before it becomes apparent can add years of life to the old dog.

Fight Age

There are specific ways to combat the effects of aging. As the skin loses elasticity, hair is lost and normal oil secretions become waxy; the resultant hair coat may be dry, dull and lusterless.

External applications of oil-free moisturizers or oil-based coat conditioners offer help, but over bathing with harsh shampoos may aggravate a dry coat. To prevent the skin from freezing, dogs lose large amounts of skin moisture in cold weather, especially Dobermans with no undercoat.

Buy a sweater or coat and use it regularly if the wind chill is below freezing. Or let your old friend wear one of your sweatshirts when it's chilly. As the dog ages, its skin loses elasticity and that combined with a loss of muscle mass may result in bedsores, or pressure point calluses which can become infected. Provide thick soft bedding and rubber mats to help cushion the dog that is losing his natural padding.

Teeth

Proper dental hygiene includes brushing a dog's teeth at least twice a week and routine dental prophylaxis. Chronically infected teeth cause pain and bad breath as well as a constant source of bacteria in the blood stream with a chronic assault on internal organs causing life-shortening kidney and liver disease. Regular dentistry is a vital part of geriatric health and can add years of life to the geriatric pet.

The Body

The function of the esophagus is decreased by loss of nerve cells that can result in chronic inflammation of the stomach lining and heartburn. Gagging is common. Eating grass should be discouraged. As liver, pancreatic, and intestinal function diminish, absorption of food decreases. Motility in the colon may decrease resulting in constipation. Metamucil as a source of fiber may be beneficial. "Senior" and prescription geriatric diets are very helpful as well.

The Heart

Cardiac output decreases 30% in the last one-third of life. Congestive heart failure develops as a result of chronic valve disease or cardiomyopathy. There are many drugs and drug combinations used to treat heart disease, but great care must be exercised in their use.

Some are eliminated from the body by the kidneys while the liver removes others. Remember, the geriatric patient probably has some sort of progressive liver and/or kidney disease as well as heart disease. Ongoing reassessment of kidney and liver function are a necessary part of heart treatment.

Constant adjustments in therapy may be necessary. Drugs that control blood pressure, strengthen heart muscle contractions, prevent irregular heartbeats, dilate air passages in the lungs, and remove excess fluid are often used.

These are potent medications with potentially serious side effects. Continual monitoring and adjustment is a necessity. The heart patient should be allowed free exercise as long as heavy breathing, weakness, coughing, fainting, or fatigue does not occur.

Extremes of temperatures should be avoided if possible. If you live in such a climate, keep your old dog inside where it is warm or cool, and expose him or her to the elements only when necessary and then only for very short periods at a time. In advanced heart disease situations, a high degree of excitement should be avoided when possible.

Kidneys

A gradual decline in kidney function is a normal part of aging. Kidney failure is one of the top four causes of death in old dogs. Progressive renal failure can be slowed with the use of diets containing low amounts of highly degradable protein and reduced salt and phosphorus, but there must be adequate amounts of fat and carbohydrate to meet daily caloric needs. .

Drugs that prevent high blood pressure, low blood calcium, and vitamin deficiencies help. Water, free choice, should always be available to the geriatric patient, even if it means more work on your part to let them outside more often.

Urinary incontinence is a common geriatric disorder that can be caused by urethral malfunction, urinary tract infection, and diseases that cause increased water intake, like kidney disease or diabetes. The precise reason for incontinence must be ascertained before proper therapy can be instituted. Hormonal dysfunction and bladder tumors may complicate the condition. Absorbent padding used in human hospitals and nursing homes and extra soft padding will keep the old incontinent dog dry, more comfortable, and prevent bed sores.

The Respiratory System

The respiratory system of aged dogs is susceptible to infection (pneumonia) and obstructive diseases like asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Decreased lung volume and thickened mucus contribute to the problem. The cough reflex is weakened. There are medications your veterinarian can prescribe that will help but, again, a precise diagnosis is necessary. Respiratory disease often mimics or exists in combination with heart disease. Respiratory allergies are rare in dogs.

Hormonal Changes

The aged animal experiences a significant decrease in the secretion of hormones by the thyroid, testes and ovaries (if still intact), and pituitary gland. The adrenal glands may oversecrete, resulting in Cushing's disease (another cause of increased water consumption, like kidney disease and diabetes) or undersecrete resulting in Addison's disease.

Mammary glands may become cystic or develop cancer. Spaying before the first heat eliminates almost all mammary tumors, but this beneficial effect is lost if the spay is done after 2½ years of age.

Prostate diseases, including hyperplasia, cancer, cysts, and infection are the most common genital disorders of aged dogs, especially Dobermans. Treatment for all prostatic disease is castration.

Other specific treatments include surgical drainage of cysts and abscesses and antibiotic therapy, but these are often unsuccessful over the long term. Chronic prostatic infection is life-threatening because of the frequent resultant septicemia (blood poisoning). Prostatitis in the male Doberman should never be compared to that in man. The anatomy is different. The chemistry of prostatic fluid is different.

Non-cancerous prostatic disease in the Doberman should be considered potentially dangerous. Many male dogs meet an early and untimely death because their owners refuse to castrate them.

Bones and Muscles

Old dogs lose muscle and bone mass. Reduced oxygen supply due to circulatory changes and decreased use of oxygen by the muscles compromises their function. Intestinal absorption of calcium is decreased resulting in thinner, more brittle bones. Cartilage becomes less well lubricated. Arthritic areas develop between the vertebra and in the joints.

Degenerative joint disease (DJD) occurs; resulting microscopic fractures in the joints and thickened joint fluid. Obesity compounds the effects of arthritis.

You can do a lot to make your old, arthritic dog more comfortable. If you have slippery floors, put down a rubber mat, rug, or carpeting in the areas where your dog walks and spends much of his or her time. Help your dog up and down the stairs, up on the bed, and into the car. Don't let them lie in cold drafts or get soaked out in the rain. Provide lots of soft bedding.

Loss of Memory: House Training

Often the first sign of senility in dogs is the loss of house training. Other senile changes include disturbance of the sleep/wake cycle; inattention to food; inattention to surroundings, including people and other animals; and an apparent inability to recognize familiar people and places, or to respond to familiar commands.

The aged brain is chronically short of oxygen as a result of poor blood supply. The effects of stimulus are prolonged. Short-term memory is impeded but long-term memory is apparently not affected by reduced oxygen. Tremor and motor hesitancy result from impairment of brain function. Treatment of senility and cognitive dysfunction in the dog is currently in its infancy.

Geriatric patients often have a multitude of conditions that make them more sensitive to anesthesia. Except in the case of unexpected emergencies, a complete physical exam should be given to fully assess the risks prior to general sedation.

Follow your Intuition

Perhaps the greatest ally you have in supporting the old dog is your own intuition, defined as the act of knowing without the use of rational process. In other words, you just know something is different or not right. If you suspect something is wrong, get professional help. Do not give in to denial. Too many owners refuse to admit their dog is getting old. Too many decide that nothing can be done because of the age of their pet. Act on your intuition. Don't succumb to denial.

Don't Give Up

Too many dogs have been put to sleep before their time because owners don't have the time or the will to care for them. The excuse is, why suffer loss of dignity. Loss of dignity is not the equivalent of accepting help. Old dogs love being pampered, helped up and down the stairs, and up on the bed. They don't object to being let outdoors more frequently, fed more often and given medication on a regular basis. This doesn't mean they should be left to suffer.

Please do draw that fine line between a little discomfort and pain and a very serious and irreversible issue. Do consider also, the other end of the spectrum: Are you too selfish to give him up even though he is almost gone? An honest answer doesn't make the immediate decision any easier. But it does give you a sense of having done the right thing after the grieving period we all experience has passed its most intense phase.

Ask Us

Our 11-year-old Doberman is getting multiple warts. One on her front leg she continues to wash and bite which causes it to bleed. She is so old we're fearful to have her anesthetized to have them removed. What should we do?

As our pets age they seem to get more vulnerable. To protect your dog you will need to make some clear-headed decisions. Some of her skin masses may be harmless. Others, like the one she keeps licking, could be malignant and dangerous. Check with your vet.

What other dog diseases come with old age?

Kidney failure, progressive thickening and distortion of the mitral valve of the heart, bacterial infections of the urine, enlargement of the prostate gland in males, periodontal disease, degeneration of the cartilage lining the joints, slipped discs, obesity, constipation, urinary and/or fecal incontinence.

If my dog goes blind in old age, should I have him put to sleep?

No, many dogs that are partially or totally blind manage very successfully in familiar surroundings. Dogs adapt well to this handicap, particularly if blindness comes on slowly and if they remain among people they love. Similarly, with dogs that become totally deaf, they do very well if you appreciate that they cannot come when called or respond to other verbal commands. Please take care to and make sure they are safe.

What can I do about incontinence?

You need to consult your vet. But, meanwhile set up a couple more litterboxes in your home. Make sure there is at least one on every floor. Dump solid waste daily and change the litter frequently. Many dogs will refuse to use a box if it is not kept clean enough.

How do I take care of my dog during winter?

When your dog comes indoors, thoroughly wipe his legs and stomach and always check his pawpads. Encrusted snow and ice may cause them to bleed. You'll also want to wipe off any salt and other chemicals used to melt ice. These can hurt your dog if he ingests them while licking his paws. More dogs are lost during the winter than during any other season. That's because they can lose their scent in snow and ice, or panic in a snowstorm and run away. Always be sure to keep your dog on a leash at all times.

Ever since my sister left to work in another town, my Dobe looks sad. What do I do?

Dobes, more than any other breed, are very sensitive. They love to be around people and will take it to heart if the person they love is not there. Dogs can develop ulcerative colitis (an inflammatory disease of the colon) when suffering mental distress. See your vet. A thorough exam will either indicate that your pet is actually ill or just simply suffering from separation anxiety.

Most dogs do adapt with time and will in the course of two to three weeks return to their normal character. Some dogs, however, do go into deep depression, and they are well served by the use of anxiolytic drugs (those that relieve anxiety), such as Valium or elavil. Again, you would need your veterinarian's participation to help determine if this is necessary. Drugs should always be combined with behavior modification, which may require the help of a dog trainer.

My dog is flatulent? Is that normal?

Flatulence is caused when bacteria in the digestive tract break down food items producing gas. This may be very disruptive and disturbing to you, but it is rarely a serious health problem for the dog. It is true that some breeds are more prone to flatulence, but all dogs can suffer from it.

What should I do about it?

You can try eliminating soy products. This may make quite a difference. Soybeans are loaded with proteins that can be hard to digest, producing a lot of gas in the dog's digestive track. Find a dog food that does not contain soy.

Stop giving him table scraps. If you are changing his food too often, stop doing that. If you give your dog too many doggie biscuits it can stir up some gas in the digestive track.

Finally, exercise your dog. A lot of exercise will help move the gas while your dog is still outside leavening less for inside the house. It may also help move his bowels which will lessen the gas episodes inside the house.

Does a Dobe sneeze?

Sneezing is uncommon. However, if your Dobe is sneezing, check for allergies. Also, see your vet.

Are Dobs generally healthy?

Yes. However, they are susceptible to some hereditary diseases.

Where do I find breeders in my area?

The best advice I have for this is to contact the AKC or DPCA and try to get information about local Dobermans clubs; they should be able to refer you to breeders. Do keep in mind that this does not mean the breeder is good. You still have to ask questions and visit if you can.

How long do I have to tape the ears before they stand?

Depending on the crop, it could take weeks or months. Some ears stand in 8 weeks and others take longer. The most important thing is not to give up. If you take the ears down and they fall, tape them up again. Also, ears should be taken down, cleaned, aired, and put back up within a few hours unless there is a good chance the ears will stand. Taking ears down and leaving them floppy for a day or two at a time will do no good.

I have heard that red Dobermans are vicious and fawn Dobermans are more calm, is this true?

Color has no bearing on the temperament. The main factor in temperament is the breeding behind a Doberman and how the puppy is raised.

How do I go about finding a “King” Doberman?

Dobermans are bred as a medium size dog. Breeders who are advertising a larger size are not breeding according to the standard and clearly are not concerned about the preservation of our breed. Dobermans were bred as working dogs and have much agility. If the size increases, you lose both the agility and function of the dog. The Doberman standard states Dogs should be 26 to 28 inches tall, 27 1/2 being ideal-Bitches 24 to 26 inches tall 25 1/2 being ideal. If you like a really large dog, go for a larger breed.

My puppy is all of a sudden afraid of new things. What is wrong?

Actually your puppy will go through many stages of growth and development. Understand these stages and react to your puppy properly. Please socialize your puppy until they reach adulthood. This will help him lose his fears of new faces and things.

How much does a puppy cost?

You should get a good Doberman puppy for about 800USD and above. The price varies from breeder to breeder, depending on whether the dog is considered “show quality” or not. Many breeders sell a puppy as “pet quality” because for one reason or another, the breeder doesn’t feel the dog can become an AKC champion. This does not mean that there is anything wrong with the overall health, looks or temperament of the animal.

Is it tough to look after a Blue Doberman?

Blue and fawn Dobermans often suffer from Color Dilution Alopecia (CDA). CDA is a form of follicular dysplasia (FD). Reds and blacks can suffer from FD. The symptoms of CDA include bilateral balding, which commonly begins on the flanks or along the topline and spreads down the back. However, they are healthy despite a thin coat.

Thyroid problems are often assumed to be CDA in blue Dobermans. Many vets who see a blue Doberman with a thin coat may just assume that the cause is CDA and overlook or fail to recommend a thyroid test. Get a thyroid test done.

Is it wrong to hit a Doberman?

Definitely. Try to train him by being firm, not by punishing him.

Is training very important? My pup is so young.

Many people try to win their new puppy's love by letting the puppy always have its way. The pup is showered with affection and attention because he is so cute and cuddly. Buckets of affection are a wonderful thing for most puppies, but it must be tempered with respect. If you give in to your puppy's every whim, your pup will never learn self-control and self discipline and more importantly, never learn to respect you.

Chapter 9

Spaying and Neutering

Spaying and neutering means that you really care for your pet. There are a host of reasons to get your pet spayed or neutered. First of all, if your dog does not meet the Standard, neutering or spaying shows not only a deep concern for your own Doberman, but also a respect for the breed as a whole.

Your altered pet will be able to participate in most AKC performance events such as obedience, tracking, and agility, but cannot compete in conformation classes where Championship points are awarded.

Next, behavioral aggression, scenting territory, and wandering are all reduced or eliminated completely by neutering

Neutering of both sexes is best by 6 months of age (before hormonal maturity) for an ideal pet. The procedure, can be done by your local veterinarian. This surgery does not cause obesity in dogs; only over-feeding does.

Spaying

Spaying is the surgical removal of the reproductive organs (ovaries, uterus, fallopian tubes) of the female animal. Bitches can be spayed when in heat or pregnant. This can usually be done up until a few days before delivery. These surgeries can take longer, and can therefore cost more. Spaying before having a first litter or heat cycle is usually a simpler procedure.

Some important points about spaying:

- * Removal of the ovaries and uterus Ideal age is 4 to 6 months. If spayed before the first heat cycle, your pet has a less than 1 percent chance of developing breast cancer.
- * If spayed after one heat cycle, your pet has an 8 percent chance of developing breast cancer.
- * If spayed after two heat cycles, the risk increases to 26 percent chance.
- * After two years, no protective benefit exists.
- * Pets with diabetes or epilepsy should be spayed to prevent hormonal changes that may interfere with medication.
- * Eliminates the risk of ovarian and uterine cancer.
- * Eliminates unwanted pregnancies

The right age

Females and males should be spayed or neutered by 6 months of age. Currently some clinics are performing surgeries on animals as young as 8 weeks of age. Older animals can be done as long as they are in good health. All sterilization surgery, is performed under general anesthesia by a licensed veterinarian.

The heat cycle for dogs is once or twice a year starting as early as 6 months of age. Duration is 3 weeks. The gestation period for dogs is 63 days.

Neutering

Neutering is the surgical removal of the reproductive glands (testes) of the male animal. The outer is left, only the testes are removed. The appearance depends upon the dog's age at the time of the surgery.

Some important points about neutering

- * Removal of the testicles and spermatic cord. Ideal age is 4 to 6 months.
- * Eliminates the risk of testicular cancer, the second most common tumor in male dogs.
- * Greatly reduces the risk of prostate cancer and prostatitis.
- * Reduces the risk of perianal tumors.
- * Reduces roaming and fighting.
- * Eliminates or reduces spraying or marking in males neutered before 6 months of age or before the onset of these behaviors.
- * Eliminates the risk and spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
- * Eliminates unwanted litters.

More than 4 million pets are euthanized in U.S. animal shelters each year simply because they have no home. Many are puppies and kittens less than 6 months old.

Health Benefits of Spaying and Neutering

Spayed animals no longer feel the need to roam to look for a mate. The result is that they stay home and have less chance of being involved in traumatic accidents such as being hit by a car. They also have a much lower incidence of contracting contagious diseases, and get into fewer fights.

In males, neutering decreases the chances of developing prostatic disease and hernias, and eliminates the chances of developing testicular cancer. It also reduces problems with territorial and sexual aggression, inappropriate urination (spraying) and other undesirable male behaviors.

In females, spaying decreases the incidence of breast cancer (the rate goes down to almost zero if the spaying is done before the first heat cycle!). It eliminates the chance of developing a serious and potentially fatal infection of the uterus experienced by many mature unspayed animals (pyometra).

Spay surgery also eliminates the heat cycle and associated mood swings and undesirable behaviors, messy spotting (in dogs) and the attraction of all available males to your yard.

The simple fact is that spaying and neutering greatly increases the lifespan of your pet and increases quality of life as well

Heat

Estrus (heat) is the mating period of female animals. When estrus occurs, animals are said to be 'in heat' or 'in season.' Dogs generally have their first estrous cycle at 6-12 months of age. Some females of the large breeds, however, may not have their first estrus until they are 12-24 months of age.

The complete cycle takes about 6 months, resulting in 2 estrous periods each year. Individual variation occurs, but a given female's pattern tends to be repeated regularly.

The estrous cycle can be divided into 4 stages:

Proestrus: This stage begins with the appearance of vaginal bleeding. It normally lasts from 4 to 9 days. Male dogs become very interested in the female; however, she will not yet mate with them.

Estrus: This is the stage in which the female will accept the male and conception can occur. The vaginal discharge is more yellowish than bloody. Ordinarily, the stage lasts for 4 to 13 days. Your female will stand still and hold her tail to the side when you touch her back or a male dog tries to mount.

Metestrus and anestrus: These 2 stages are periods of ovarian activity, but with no significant outward signs. False pregnancies frequently occur during metestrus.

Ask Us

What does it mean when my dog goes into heat?

Heat or estrus is the time during which a bloody discharge first appears at the vulva of a female. During this stage, she is sexually receptive and therefore can become pregnant.

What can I do for my dog when she does go into heat?

Assuming you are not a professional breeder, keep your female dog out of sight during this time. Dogs can perform remarkable feats to reach a female in heat. You should keep her away from males for at least three weeks from the onset of bleeding or until all signs of her heat are gone. You can also buy doggie diapers if her bleeding is a problem. It is recommended to have your dog spayed.

When should I expect my Dobe to go into heat for the first time? She is now almost 7 months old.

Bitches come into season anytime from 6 months of age to 15 months. Some come in at 5 months but the average is about 8 or 9 months of age.