

2. GENERAL CARE

2.1 Grooming

The daily grooming session provides a very good opportunity to check your dog for bites, scratches, sores, etc. The quicker these problems are detected, the easier they are to treat. Most dogs enjoy being groomed, as it is a time for individual attention.

Grooming should be carried out using the techniques shown to you when you trained with your dog.

All equipment should be washed at least once every week in lukewarm detergent.

2.2 Bathing

In general, bathing is not good for your dog's coat, so it should be carried out only if your dog has:

- A soiled coat (for example, after rolling in something unpleasant).
- Skin trouble for which your vet has recommended a special treatment.
- A parasitic infestation, in which case your vet may advise that your dog be bathed using a special shampoo rather than treating him/her with the customary aerosol-based applications.

If your dog goes swimming, it is advisable to rinse him/her thoroughly afterwards with fresh water.

ALWAYS CHECK THAT WATER IS SAFE FOR ANIMALS TO SWIM IN. MANY INLAND WATERWAYS AND BEACHES ARE POLLUTED AND UNSAFE. IF WATER IS NOT SAFE FOR PEOPLE TO SWIM IN, THEN IT IS NOT SUITABLE FOR DOGS EITHER.

After bathing or swimming, give your dog a thorough rubdown with a towel and either keep him/her in a warm place to dry or, if the weather is fine, take him/her for a free run – but make sure that he/she keeps moving.

2.3 Parasites and Parasite Control

Parasites cause harm to their hosts generally in two ways – by damaging specific organs or tissues, and by robbing the host of vital nutrients. Classic signs that internal parasites have infected your dog include:

- Dull, rough hair coat
- Pot-bellied appearance
- Poor growth
- Gastrointestinal disturbances ranging from diarrhea to constipation or vomiting
- Lack of energy
- Anemia
- In severe cases, death

Heartworm

Heartworms are the most life threatening of all canine parasites. These worms, which can reach a length of 14 inches, live in the heart of the dog and put stress on the heart, restricting blood flow to the organs and causing organ failure, which can lead to death. Since heartworm is transmitted from dog to dog by mosquitoes, virtually all dogs are at risk.

Prevention of heartworm is achieved by keeping your dog on the monthly heartworm medication that it will be on at the time of graduation. GDTx uses Heartgard and this tablet, which should be given with food, will be due on the first of each month. Also, your vet will carry out heartworm checks at each routine six-month visit. A six-month supply of Heartgard can be obtained from your vet during each routine visit.

Roundworm

Dogs can become infected by roundworm by accidentally swallowing roundworm eggs in the soil. These eggs hatch into tiny worms that move from your dog's intestines to his/her liver and lungs, then back to the intestine where they mature. Left untreated, the infection can damage your dog's liver, lungs, and brain. Death is possible.

Prevention is achieved as follows:

- Administration of the monthly Heartgard tablet, which acts against roundworm.
- Fecal tests done at each six-month routine vet visit.
- Always keeping the dog's breaking area clean of feces.
- Washing food bowls after each meal.
- Remembering to wash hands after cleaning up behind your dog, as roundworms can infect humans if the eggs are accidentally ingested.

Hookworm

Another commonly occurring parasite in dogs is the hookworm. Consuming food or water contaminated with infective larvae may infect dogs of any age, or the larvae can penetrate the dog's skin to establish an infection.

Heartgard is a multi-worming tablet which works against hookworm.

Whipworm

Dogs become infected with whipworms by ingesting ineffective whipworm eggs. The eggs are very hardy and can remain viable for long periods of time in the environment. Once an area is contaminated with whipworm eggs, dogs using the area are destined to be plagued repeatedly with this parasite. Adult whipworms live in a portion of the dog's intestinal tract called the cecum. Infected dogs are often troubled with bloody, mucus-filled diarrhea. In many cases, whipworm eggs cannot be found in the watery stool, making it difficult to make a diagnosis.