

Tips provided by [PAW Rescue](#), they are a fantastic information resource!

HEALTHCARE

When to go to the veterinarian:

Begin a relationship with a vet now, before you need one in a panic. Bring your medical records. While your rescue dog should be current on shots, altered, and heartworm-tested, you still need to buy heartworm preventative, and you may want your vet to thoroughly examine your new dog. See your vet when a problem arises or if your dog continues to have housetraining accidents.

Medical checklist:

- Keep up on all shots.
- Give heartworm preventative year-round in this area. Heartworm disease is deadly.
- Regularly check between toes for debris.
- Check and clean ears once a week.
- Red eyes can mean conjunctivitis or allergies.
- If a dog pays excessive attention to his anal area, he may have parasites. See your vet.
- Ask your vet for flea prevention recommendations. Some brands contain tick control too.
- Get a dog tooth brush and toothpaste and brush at least 4 times a week.

Heartworm disease & prevention:

Heartworms are deadly parasites transmitted by mosquitoes. The larvae lodge, grow and reproduce in the heart, eventually causing lung, liver and kidney failure and death. By the time symptoms such as lethargy and shortness of breath emerge, the dog has probably suffered organ damage. This disease has become much more common in recent years and can be contracted year-round. Treatment is very hard on the dog. Heartworm disease is easily prevented with monthly pills available from your vet. Keep dogs on preventative year-round. The dog must have a blood test to make sure he is not already infected.

Cleaning your dog's ears:

If dirt, wax and excess moisture are not routinely removed, ear problems can result. Here's how to clean your dog's ears at least once a week to keep them healthy:

- Make a solution of 1/2 white vinegar and 1/2 lukewarm water.
- Pour the solution into the ear.
- Gently massage the base of the ear to distribute the solution.
- Put a cotton ball over your fingertip and wipe the outer ear clean.
- Let your dog shake out the excess solution.
- Clean the ear again with a clean, dry cotton ball. Repeat as needed.

When to visit the vet: Objects stuck in the ear...redness or swelling...excessive tenderness, scratching, head-shaking... debris, discharge or foul odor.

Flea/tick control products:

Products include topical liquids applied every 30-90 days and monthly oral tablets. Some kills adult fleas and ticks, some keep flea eggs from hatching, some combine heartworm preventative. Ask your vet for recommendations.